

It's easy to make a difference here

12 April 2010

One of the wonderful things about living in South Africa is that there is no shortage of need. There is also no limit to the ways in which you can assist those less fortunate. When you employ someone you probably affect the lives of about ten people. Ten litre paint tins make excellent stools, and last winter I found our gardener using a discarded exfoliating glove to keep his hands warm (I did get him some real gloves for his now very smooth hands)! When a friend returned from a few years in Switzerland she complained that there was nowhere to send second hand clothing or furniture. Isn't it great that you can find a use or 'user' for most things here, and that there are so many hundreds of ways to make someone else's life a little easier.

Since our last letter in January, our school has successfully completed its first term. We held a small celebration to mark the opening on 31 January. We have since set up a Facebook page to keep 'fans' up to date with visuals of our progress, and the kids in action. Please join our fan page on: <http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#!/pages/LOVE-Trust/422297700721?ref=mf> . As we charge through 2010, we have began planning for the next phase of our school. We are hoping to purchase the two adjacent properties to the school and build additional classrooms as we begin our first Grade R class next year. The purchase of the additional property will facilitate the construction of our primary and secondary school. Our financial needs are great and we will obviously rely heavily on your generosity to realise the Love Trust vision.



Other ways in which to assist are both in kind and in time. Our volunteers have been incredibly creative! One lady donated bags of knitted squares and this resulted in the formation of a sewing group to transform the squares into blankets. Three young men – otherwise known as the Cycling Amigos – cycled 10 000 kilometres around South America to raise awareness for the Love Trust. Many others have volunteered time to teach sport, paint a hopscotch court, or assist with holiday care.

While most of our energies have been ploughed into building a school that is physically and academically excellent, we have not forgotten that our children come from families and communities that are fraught

with social challenges. We cannot only focus on the child at school but our philosophy has always been to work with children in the context of their families and communities. Hence the critical role our Community Liaison Manager, Ruth Nkomo, plays. We hope to someday employ a full time social worker and offer a place of safety to those children who need it.



The story below, written by principal Robyn Kynaston, is a demonstration of the challenges our children face. It is also an example of how children at Nokhupila school are benefitting from the level of care they are receiving at the school – care they would not have received if not for your generosity.

“Entle and his older brother, Simenhle, came to Nokhupila Preschool in January 2010.

The two boys come from a destitute family living in abject poverty in an informal settlement in Mayebuye (bordering Tembisa). Their mother, Sweetness, is desperately ill, and is too weak to care for her two little boys and their younger sister.

Initially, the boys seemed to thrive from the good food and care received here at school, but it wasn't long before their respective teachers picked up apparent neglect. Entle and Simenhle frequently came to school unwashed and unfed. Their behaviour at school was often a reflection of the insecurity that pervades their lives.

We followed up, made numerous phone calls and finally got agreement from the family to meet with them.

Ruth Nkomo, our Community liasan, and Ann Mathews, our school doctor, made a house visit early in March and were appalled, both at the level of need, and at Sweetness' health condition.

The whole situation needed urgent intervention – Sweetness needed urgent medication (Sweetness' mother compounded the desperate situation by instructing her to not spend the government funding on medication, as intended, but to remain ill so as to qualify for the grant).

Ruth and Ann prayed with the family, handed over easy to prepare food, and spoke sternly to the family about prioritising Sweetness' recovery and the care of the children. Two weeks later, nothing had changed, and it became apparent that we would have to intervene. Sweetness was deteriorating physically and emotionally, and the plight of the children was distressing.

Ruth got in touch with her contacts and called in a few favours. We got consent from Sweetness to take her to the clinic and then the hospital – she understood that if she was ever to care for her own children she would have to get well and strong for their sake. On Friday last week, Sweetness had the necessary treatment and medication was dispensed. She has been admitted to a place of care that will afford her the opportunity to recover, and where her health will be monitored carefully.

Entle and Simenhle are being looked after by family members during the school holidays, but we are concerned for their well being once they come back to school. They will probably need to be cared for at a place of safety until Sweetness is able to cope on her own.

It is our greatest desire that these two precious little boys will not only find happiness and security at this special school, Nokuphila, but that there will be a time when they, and their family, come to know Christ personally, and the great love God has for them.

Robyn Kynaston

PRINCIPAL