

It is not the critic who counts

November 2012

*“It is not the critic who counts;
not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles,
or where the doer of deeds could have done them better.
The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena,
whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood, who strives valiantly;
who errs and comes short again and again;
because there is no effort without error and shortcomings;
but who actually strives to do the deed;
who knows the great enthusiasm, the great devotion,
who spends himself in a worthy cause,
who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement and who at the worst, if he fails, at least he
fails while daring greatly.
So that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat.” -
Theodore Roosevelt*

- Some children in Limpopo have yet to lay eyes on the textbooks they needed this year.
- 60% of South African children do not meet the reading and numeracy levels set in the national curriculum
- 15% of South African children cannot read and calculate at the most basic level
- Only 33% of teachers in grades 4-6 score more than the minimum required in their subject

And the Minister of Education awarded herself an impressive 8 out of 10 for her performance.

Being critical and cynical in our country today is very easy. Ditto that for anywhere else in the world today. 2012 has tested us in many, many ways. But as Roosevelt pointed out, we can choose how we respond. That is not to suggest we ignore the enormous challenges, but we can choose to talk about problems with solutions. We can keep working towards something better.

At the beginning of this year, the management team of Love Trust set themselves a number of key objectives:

1. To secure land to accommodate the construction of Nokuphila Primary and Secondary School
2. To amplify fundraising efforts with a focus on corporate donations
3. To further grow the Teacher Training Centre and bursary programme for prospective teachers
4. To further solidify the Love Trust Association
5. To investigate models of providing high quality private school education for the poor – with a focus on sustainability
6. To strengthen our operations and governance capabilities

After 18 months and exhausting many, many options, we were able to purchase property to accommodate Nokuphila Primary and Secondary. The property is a few hundred metres from the preschool and is a wonderful piece of land with all the potential to accommodate the world class educational facility we envision Nokuphila Primary and Secondary to be. Renovations are currently underway and from next year, Grade 1 and Grade 2 classes will be housed there, with lower Grades (pre-school) remaining on the original site.

In 2013, we will be serving 220 learners in 9 classes from Grade 000 to Grade 2. With a new intake every year, efforts to cover our running costs intensify. We also have significant capital requirements – the construction of classrooms; a teacher training facility; school hall; admin block and sports facilities. The need for a dedicated resource became increasingly evident. Earlier on this year, Lindsay Owen was appointed by Love Trust to fulfil the role of dedicated fundraiser for Nokuphila School. Her services have already proved invaluable and she has been a great addition to the team.



The Teacher Training Centre is undoubtedly a fantastic success. Megan Helsby has almost single handedly grown the centre to accommodate 75 trainees. These trainees are preschool teachers from both Nokuphila and other preschools in the greater Tembisa area. Equipping existing untrained teachers, as well as those wishing to pursue a teaching career, with the necessary skills creates employment opportunities that otherwise would not have been possible. A very exciting development has been the SAQA accreditation of our training. This is the South African Qualifications Authority with the ultimate authority to endorse any form of education. Teachers undergoing the 2-year SAQA accredited pre-school teacher program offered at Nokuphila, are now in a far better position to seek out employment opportunities as well as further their education.



We currently have 5 students who are in a 4-year program to become fully qualified primary school teachers. The students follow the UNISA curriculum and write the UNISA exams, either a BSc or BEd degree. We provide these students with practical exposure at Nokuphila, opportunity and financial assistance for them to successfully complete the 4-year course. We hope to grow this programme to 5 students per year, so that we can send out 5 qualified teachers each year into the community.

The Love Trust Association hosted its third annual conference in October. This was attended by 33 delegates from affiliated organisations across the country. Many have applied for membership of the association and we hope that through the association, our efforts to face overwhelming social challenges will not only grow but prove more effective.

We have spent a great deal of time investigating sustainable ways in which to provide high quality private school education to the poor. Our search has led us to what we call “Self-Sustaining Schools”. These would be schools that don’t rely on donor funding for their existence. Rather, we have looked at much cheaper facilities that don’t necessarily fit preconceived ideas of what a private school should look like. All funds go directly to staff salaries which would be received in the form of fees. The fees would still be positioned at the lower end of the market but would be high enough to cover salaries and administration of the school. It is without doubt that the critical difference in education lies with the teacher, and not the facilities.

We have been fortunate enough to rent facilities from the Christian Care Centre in Hillbrow, which has capacity to house a number of classrooms. Initially, we are hoping for one Grade R and one Grade 1 class, and we are currently in the process of preparing for 9 January 2013 when the doors of Hillbrow Independent School will open for the first time! For further information go to: www.hillbrowschool.co.za

Another key appointment was made by Love Trust to strengthen our operations and governance capabilities. With the growth of Nokuphila, other affiliated ECD centres and schools across the country we recognised the need for dedicated focus in these areas. Erik van den Top comes with many years of experience in the private sector and his contribution will see a renewed professionalism and efficiency in the way we do things.

It is with great pride that we look back on 2012. We will not tire of seeking ways in which to provide hope for our country and the beautiful people who call it home. We have been enormously blessed by all the people involved in Love Trust – from volunteers who assist our teachers in preparing for their Unisa exams; to the teachers who go above and beyond their job descriptions; to our maintenance staff; and of course our donors. We work for all of you who share our vision of something better, and we wish you a very blessed Christmas!

If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen. (1 Pet 4:11)

SARAH CAIRNS

