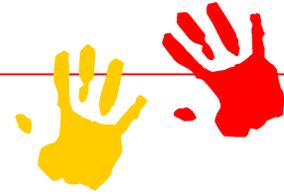


# HANDS OF JOY

Newsletter No. 45 August 2009



"A man can't stand in the same river twice. Each new day flows fresh and unique..." Water of Life by Phil Doran

## UPDATE

It's a time of uncertainty all over the world with the words "economic recession" and "global warming" often repeated. We have all witnessed the American elections and gained some insight into the positive impact of President Obama on the African people. In South Africa, we also have a new "people's" President, Jacob Zuma. There has been much speculation around him but we have chosen to pray and be positive about his time in power. Great excitement, considerable job creation and much needed road repairs have been generated by the upcoming international soccer matches - both the Confederation Cup and the 2010 Soccer World Cup!

It's an enormous relief to learn that, although the vast property of Riversands has been sold to a developer as Riversands Golf Course Estate, the school will remain in its present location. This concern about what will happen to the school, has been with us for the past 8 years or more. We know just how vital the school is to the community and how most of the structure and facilities at Riversands, have been raised by donated funds.

Once again, we are so grateful for your support of Hands of Joy and the wonderful opportunities it enables us to give the children for change and growth...

## ART CENTRE

At the end of last year, the children proudly displayed their hand painted cushions before taking them home. (see cover photo) And this year, Jill and Theresa have taken the children through an exercise involving emotion where they painted Picasso like self-portraits where one side of the face conveyed sad and the other happy emotions.

Jill was concerned when one of the girls began to speak of how she only felt happy and safe at school as her mother's boyfriend had treated her badly and she was afraid at home. Jill was able to bring this to the attention of her teacher. In this situation, Nurse Thandie may need to call in a social worker to intervene and it's a relief to have such a network through the Health Care Centre.

Thandie is pleased that the students generally seem healthier and partially attributes this to the nourishing food they are receiving from Milly and her team of volunteer Moms at the soup kitchen.

As the weather turns cooler, she has begun to deal with the usual symptoms of colds and flu and pray for the children who come to her in need...A generous donation of school shoes, has made it possible for her to distribute to those without decent shoes. This is a privilege but after experience, she has learned to consult with the teachers to decide who is in need...

As you can imagine, Thandie and her youngest daughter Nomvula, are filled with grief after the death of her eldest daughter Nolwandle in July 2008. Before the accident, Nomvula was hired as a producer for a local television show. The com-

counselling for both Thandie and Nomvula with a Methodist minister, named Leon Nqaba, who lives near their home in Vosloorus. After her initial visit, Thandie was relieved to be able to meet with someone who understood her grief and could give insight. I have spoken with him on the phone at her request after she met with him and was impressed with his kindness and wisdom.

## STUDENTS AND THEIR STORIES

We have made arrangements to meet this year with some of the boys in the Health Care Centre to listen to their concerns, help them make plans for the future and offer encouragement. Tshepo Phiri finished his high school subjects at Saturday school and has written exams in May. He hopes to find work after he has his matric but is still looking in the meantime.



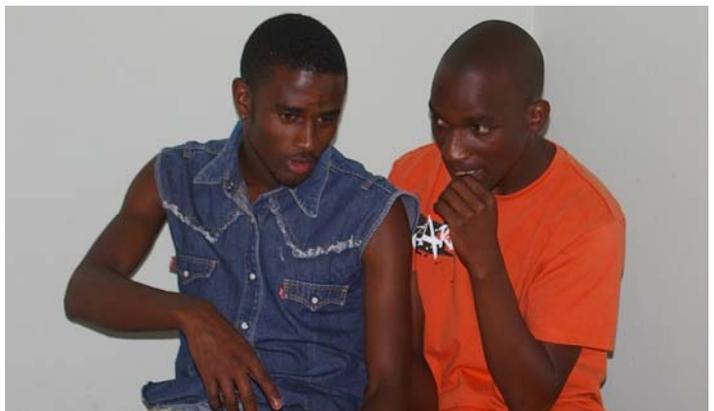
**Tshepo and Zama**

Tshepo and his friend Zama, were keen to set up a Call Centre in Diepsloot with Zama's previous experience and they presented us with a basic business plan. After investigation, it was decided the risk of phone theft was just too high and they needed to pursue other options...It is extremely difficult for young graduates to find work or even skills training opportunities and many have become disillusioned.

Although Gibson is extremely busy working at the prison, we keep in close contact by phone and sms. It is a lonely path he has chosen at present as he opted for night watchman duty so he can finish his studies in tourism and progress to study criminal investigative work. He is obliged to work most weekends but sees this as an opportunity. We have discussed the possibility of Tshepo learning brick making skills with the man who is building a house for Gibson's mother Salome on the land where her present shack stands.

And Petrus Morobane will graduate at age 24 with a Business Administration Degree from CIDA College in Johannesburg. He currently has a part time position with a bank and is hoping this will become full time once he has graduated.

Hands of Joy has supported Petrus through High School and provided a portion of his living costs while studying on the CIDA Scholarship through the card making business. Many of you will remember purchasing our hand printed cards! Petrus is enthusiastically writing "his story" and I have the first few pages in hand. One of the most powerful entries is his memory of when he was close to death with TB and Pneumonia. One day, I will publish the complete, edited story for you to read...



**Jonas and Petrus**



**Nurse Thandie**

pany held her job while she recovered from her injuries and now she is working full time. All this has been possible, after she was lovingly mentored by Veronica who used to work with us before moving to the Cape and sponsored to study Media Arts at YWAM University in the Cape.

Through a series of amazing connections, we have been able to arrange grief

The Machiteles are another family we have assisted and given encouragement to over the years. The oldest son, Tshepo works at a local grocery store and continues to write music and play his guitar. While his younger brother Duke has graduated from high school and received the Senior Year Arts Certificate for dance.

Duke has returned home to nurse his father after living with a foster family for a few years. His mother left when he was small and he believes his father is suffering with AIDS. Both boys have had a volatile childhood and since their father has been ill, there has been much healing and forgiveness.

Although he has no financial resources, Duke wants to develop his talent for hip hop and modern dance and is prayerfully hoping for an opportunity to study in the near future. We have met to investigate this with a Social Worker named Happy who is responsible for Community Development with Youth and knows Duke from a Photographic trip to England he was sponsored to participate in a few years ago.



**Duke dancing**

The two orphaned sisters who were sponsored last year to attend Bophelo Impilo Boarding School last year had a difficult Christmas holiday. Thandie has become their legal guardian and they were forbidden to see their Granny for a time by the courts. At Christmas this ban was lifted and the Granny secretly sent them to visit relatives in the Eastern Cape - not a safe area for young girls...We were distressed to learn of this and the girls were not back in time for school. They only returned a week later. The older sister Princess has since run away again and her whereabouts unknown.

Thandie met with the Magistrate who says at the stage, since Princess is almost 18, (age of consent) she cannot be helped. However, her sister Zandile, is back at school and stayed with Thandie over the recent school holidays.

#### **NEW DEVELOPMENTS**

It has come to our attention that some of the girls who graduate from Riversands Primary at age 14 or 15 don't ever attend the overcrowded and often dangerous public high schools. Instead they are enticed to live with older men in their shacks. This is a compelling motive to seek out and sponsor young girls who show potential and are eager to study towards their future. This year, we have been able to sponsor two more girls to Bophelo...Mavis Morobane did very well in her first few years of high school winning an Entrepreneurial Skills Award and often asked for assistance to attend a superior high school. Her dream is to become a business woman and she realised the standards at Iterelle High School would not equip her for the further education necessary to achieve her goal. When a family from the US who have lived in the Congo and visited South Africa, contacted us eager to sponsor a student, Mavis came to mind. She is extremely grateful for the opportunity

and has adapted well to boarding school –even to assisting some of the other girls with their studies!



**Mavis**

Another girl named Lesego has also been sponsored to attend Bophelo after tragedy struck her family. She attended Riversands and was a bright student. After primary school, her mother left Diepsloot with Lesego and two younger siblings as the father was abusing her. She then began living with another man in Pretoria, who murdered her in front of the children.

One of the teachers from Riversands brought Lesego to Nurse Thandie, when she heard that she was no longer attending school. The children were living in abject poverty in Diepsloot with their Granny. Thandie was able to contact a social worker named Hitler (nothing like his name) who has helped to arrange for some provisions for the family and is working on Child Care Grants. Then she proceeded to contact friends of Hands of Joy who agreed to sponsor her this year to Bophelo Impilo. Boarding is an excellent solution and Lesego is in grade 9. Mavis has befriended her and she is beginning to adjust. A caring mother and daughter team from the Lone-hill Village Church visits these girls with provisions they need and offer encouragement.

At the end of the first term, the two new girls we have sponsored to Sekolo Sa Borokgo School, Patricia Moithonsi and Zanele Mogoathle have done well. In fact, Patricia who is being sponsored by South Africa's Randburg Rotary Ann's and Canada's Bolton Rotary Club, received 5 distinctions out of 10 subjects which is cause for celebration!

In Art class at Riversands last year, Patricia spoke candidly of the difficulties in her life since her mother died and her family moved to the squatter community of Diepsloot. On his own as a car mechanic, her father has struggled to provide for her and 2 siblings...Patricia is thrilled at the opportunity to be studying at SSB – even though she has to be up at 4:30 and is away for the whole day, including travel. As is Zanele, who is also from a single parent family with 3 children in Diepsloot. I taught her two older sisters and remember them fondly. It's a pleasure to see these girls flourish and support one another. And the young man, Tommy who is now in his 3<sup>rd</sup> year at SSB is taking on more responsibility.



**Zanele and Patricia**

## CONCLUSION

I am especially grateful for the ongoing support we receive for the Health Care Centre from Ridgeway Ministries International and for the annual support from Islington Evangel Centre which has been used in countless ways to sponsor the children and programs!

And to the many individuals around the world, including family members, businesses, Rotary Clubs and friends, who continue to remember us.

As you have read, lives are being changed in ways that will affect generations to come. And I am so encouraged! I have not written about all of the students and their progress but will continue their stories in the next newsletter...The students also are so grateful for the hope and opportunities they have been given through your prayers and support.

In his book Sacred Romance, John Eldredge writes, "Our hearts cannot live without hope. Gabriel Marcel says that 'hope is for the soul what breathing is for the organism'...love may be the greatest but hope plays the deciding role."

May God bless You and your families,

*Lou Ann*

## HANDS OF JOY — Mission Statement



### Primary Objective

To introduce and teach Art and Church to underprivileged African children at **Riversands Primary School** in a manner that will enrich their lives by stimulating faith, creativity and confidence.

### Secondary Objectives

Where possible, to meet the children's immediate physical needs for food, clothing and medical attention.

To develop ways to empower unemployed parents and former students by teaching skills and creating job opportunities thereby helping to restore confidence and the ability to provide for their families.

To sponsor Christian students who show some potential to attend special high schools. The aim is to continue a scholarship fund that will sponsor gifted, responsible students in both Art and Academics to attend secondary schools for continuing education. This has been largely dependent on overseas donations.

To further sponsor students who have achieved their aims in high school to continue their studies.

**HANDS OF JOY** is a registered charitable organization. If you wish to contribute to it please contact:

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