



Charity no. 1138863



Newsletter - No. 30

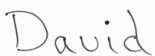
August 2015

Chairman's Letter

Dear Friends,

It is some time since we made contact with you and I apologise that you have not had news from the Udobo School for a number of months. We have had difficulties with a lack of resource within the Trustees, but I am pleased to advise that we have now recruited Rev. John Allan, vicar of All Saints, Alrewas, as a new Trustee and that Cath Hughes, Patrick and Susan's daughter-in-law has kindly offered to fill the vacant Secretary role with the Trust. We welcome both John and Cath to our number and we had a positive team meeting in July to meet each other and discuss how we best support each other.

Within this Newsletter we have encouraging news from the Udobo School and we have news that will make you cry. Administration processes in South Africa are incredibly complex and just when you think progress is being made, another request for information slows the process again. We all continue to pray for Rev. Ansie Liebenberg and the staff at the school as they continue to battle with and against bureaucracy. The encouraging news is a direct link from the support you give to how the school can benefit the education of the children with new equipment, upgraded facilities and ongoing staff costs. You will be able to appreciate this fully through the many photographs included in this Newsletter. I hope you find the contents encouraging, challenging and uplifting and that you can continue with me in praising God for His goodness to the supporters of Udobo School, both in South Africa and here in the UK, which, of course, includes you. I continue to thank you for your support for the Trust and with the help of my fellow Trustees and our new Secretary, Cath, will keep you informed of life at the Udobo School.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Chair of Trustees

News from South Africa



*A collage of the South African flag
made by the children at Udobo School*

Rev. Ansie Liebenberg, the school's senior fundraiser, wrote to us in April with this short update.

In Durban we have had the one disaster on top of the other!

First we had Eric Manicom the Treasurer robbed at the bank – with the Udobo money! Then we had our youth pastor's toddler drowned in the swimming pool on the church property! Worst week of my life! The funeral on Saturday was so traumatic. And in the meantime we had such an outburst of xenophobia attacks in and around Durban – it is absolutely crazy – 4 deaths already reported.

On top of all this pain and heartache our circuit is the lucky winner to host the annual Synod.

Thank you for all you do for the school at the moment it is a ministry that brings lots of joy and hope for the future ... and there are not too many of those these days.

I had a strange call from the Department of Education in South Africa this week – something about the school is now on the registered list and we can continue with our plans to add grade 1,2 and 3 to the curriculum. But I have not got anything in writing yet – so will have to wait and see.



Udobo School

Ages 4-6

031 4690029

A School for the Community

Office Hours 07:15 - 14:00

Anne Snyders, the School's Principal, wrote in February 2015

I greet you in the precious name of Jesus, author and finisher of our faith without Whom we would not have our school.

I thank God for the business of the school – there has been a flurry of activity at the start of our new year. We filled up immediately and could have made up an extra class with the children on our waiting list.

We are very excited to have a special needs child in the school (we have previously had children with challenges but this little girl is our first in a wheelchair). She is unable to walk, has very poor muscle tone in her hands, is still in nappies and can communicate a bit in a mixture of isiZulu and English. She is however, our joy – she smiles broadly and attempts to move with the songs that are taught. She is bringing out the very best in our other children as they deal carefully with her and try to amuse her.

So far, our first fundraiser of the year has been a fun morning on the 13th February where the children dressed in red and white (if they had clothes of that colour) and we made special cards, iced biscuits, danced and had water play. I loved watching the abandonment with which they played in the water – to watch a child totally engaged and living in the moment is so special, time means nothing to them.

I have a stable teaching staff but need to employ two assistant teachers as one has left us and we need another as we have an extra class of younger children. It is very difficult for the teacher to dish up meals, watch the toilet routine and keep an eye on the children waiting, once they have finished in the toilet – they run out of eyes! We have had a lot of interest in the posts and will do interviews as soon as possible.

Our Social Development does help and we are very grateful for it and thank God for the money, but it is unfortunately not the total answer we were hoping that it would be. The payment is only for children whose parents earn less than R1800.00 per month. This is a Catch-22 situation because the parents need to earn something to pay for rent and food and cannot pay us but they earn above the stipulated amount. Some of our parents exist by selling pieces of chicken or fruit on the side of the road – they then earn more than the R1800.00 and their child is not considered for help by Social Development. We receive R16.00 per day that the child is at school and last year we had 19 children for whom the school received that money and we are waiting to hear how many will be subsidized this year. We have 10 children who don't pay any trust contribution.

This school remains a miracle as month by month God provides and we remain so grateful to all at 'Action Udobo' who partner with God to keep this a place of excellence. Thank you.

The school programme runs according to the government requirements so our children move seamlessly into the local schools when they leave us. We were thrilled to hear that one of our past pupils who actually repeated Grade R as she was not school-ready in our opinion, has excelled through school and has been accepted at the 'Oprah Winfrey' school. Another past pupil who had challenges was also held back to receive further help before he left us, is doing amazingly and last year won the country wide Math Olympiad as well as the Science Olympiad.

We strive that each child who leaves us is confident and positive about school. Not every child can excel in the sporting field or academically but if they can speak up for themselves and be aware of who they are in Jesus we have done our job.

Anne wrote again in July 2015

The Second Term: 13th April - 26th June 2015

This is the term I enjoy as I teach for an hour each day during the months when the office is a bit quieter. The first and last terms are spent in interviews and administration so I am not always able to teach. The children are so delightful – when I am able to spend time with them I am reminded of why the school exists!



I look at each child's book every day so as to be aware of what is happening in their lives



We have a student with us for a few weeks. She is a teacher from the Nkizumu Special School and she is studying further and needs practical experience at a school such as ours. She is very helpful to the teacher's who don't have assistants.

Whimsical but true!

We have been affected by the Xenophobic attacks in that we have a large community of Zimbabweans living in Montclair and they are very frightened by what is going on. We had a service in the Montclair Methodist Church on Saturday 18th April which many people attended and our Bishop Mike Vorster delivered a message of support and encouragement. On 23rd April we had a mother come in to remove her daughter as she was returning to Zimbabwe. This was very sad as she kept talking of the wonderful grounding her daughter was getting at Udobo and asked if she could reapply should they come back to South Africa.

The walk-through between the offices and main school was completed during the holidays with shelving and a display table having been built. We have moved the containers of toys across. The "Theme Table" looks impressive and is now visible to parents as well as our children. The school is looking very attractive.



The creative room where the children paint and create

The second term began on 13th April and we organised a parent/teacher morning on the first Saturday so that the parents could come and discuss their child's progress with the class teacher.

We had a visit from the Nursing Sisters from Clairwood Hospital. They check that all the children's vaccinations and vitamin A drops are up-to-date. This year they brought a nutritionist who weighed and measured each child and then advised if the child was underweight or suffering from malnutrition. She identified seven children and provided them with large packs of fortified porridge and vitamins and various foods. The parents are then able to access more from the Hospital. I felt this was a wonderful community service.

As usual we receive bread every Tuesday from 'Seven Loaves'. We collect fresh fruit and vegetables from the KZN Market every two weeks and with the money we are receiving from Social Development we purchase fish and meat so our children are well fed. The Daily News Milk Fund is still supplying us with full cream powdered milk which we add to the breakfast porridge.

Every Friday we continue to have assembly in the Methodist Church and the children are told a story

and are given incentives (one per class) every week. Eventually everyone has had a turn to take something from the incentive box. The birthday box is also there for the children who have had a birthday that week to choose something. We take birthdays very seriously and the women from the church bake a cake for each birthday.



On Friday 8th May we had a fun day at school where the children dressed in Autumn colours and were treated to juice, popcorn and a movie.



On 22nd May we were visited by the Lions of the South Durban branch. They presented each child with a beanie and a jersey, very useful as winter approaches. They also provided the children with juice and a hotdog meal. The Lions continue to support our school in various ways and at our final assembly usually give a stationery pack to the children who are off to Primary School. The Lions used the theme "Christmas comes early" and brought along Father Christmas much to the amusement and bemusement of the children – although one child cried the rest were highly entertained!



We find that parents are applying for placement at our school earlier each year and we already have parents enquiring and filling in documents for 2016.

On 5th June we had our annual Scooter Race and Sports Day. This is a fundraiser as we ask each parent to get family and friends to sponsor their child for the scooter race. As usual it was a lovely event, very well supported by parents and much enjoyed by the children. The looks of concentration on the children's faces as they whizz down a little slope are priceless. Our parents thoroughly enjoy the parent races and the novelty events we organise for them. Even though it was a cool day it did not stop them from taking part in the balloon toss and getting soaked! We made about R8000.00 for which we are very grateful.



In mid-June we had a visit from a delegation of women from the Women's Auxiliary of the Methodist Church Connexion. They were from different branches and were very impressed with the work being done at Udobo School.



Our final week has been all about finishing off reports as well as tidying the school in preparation for our three week winter break. On Thursday 25th June we had a pyjama party where the children came to school in warm pyjamas, enjoyed a cup of hot chocolate and marshmallows and watched a movie.

This was tremendous fun. The children danced to up-beat music when they became tired of sitting, then resumed watching the movie. Wendy Kirsten from the Church Office also arrived in her pyjamas and enjoyed a cup of hot chocolate with us! Inez



Goswell, a friend of the school, made each child a beanie and scarf in soft wool and beautiful colours – absolute works of art and made with such love for 100 children – amazing and the children were thrilled!

Friday is early closing and the holiday begins. The Grade R children take home a holiday work book to keep them busy and also consolidate what they have learned this term. I entrust my staff, children and their families into the hands of God that He would protect them and allow them to have a good rest.

God bless you all.
Anne Snyders (Principal)

We will watch over the
children of the Earth.
Guide them safely from
the way of harm. We
will guard with our lives
their hopes and dreams.

For they are all that we
have, all that we are.
And all that we will ever
be.

Improvements at Udobo School

April - June 2015



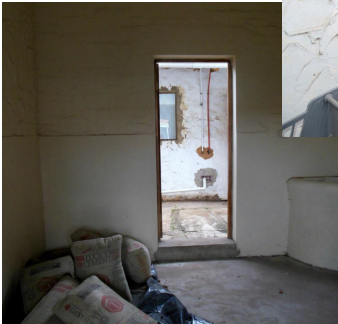
This doorway was created to allow access from the office block to the school (previously we had to walk through the toilets).



Into bathroom



Outside of school



The walkthrough between the office and the school was given a ceiling, floor and was painted as well as having a door hung.



The ceiling being built



The walkthrough painted

Here the room is taking form. The right corner still has the ring where horses were attached as well as the feeding trough – we kept this as a reminder of from where we have come!



A new store room



Shelves being fitted in the walkthrough



Progress !.....the shelves take shape.



Bicycles bought by Action Udobo



Toy boxes into shelving

The shelves packed – please note that most of the toys have been bought with money gifted to us from the U.K. Thank you so much for your graciousness to us. I thank God everytime I think of you (often).

A new phone line

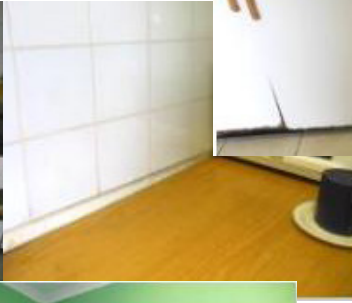


A new line for when extra work must be done



Secretary Lizette enjoying the clarity of the new phone

A new kitchen



The kitchen before the transformation with broken doors and old worktops



Child helping to carry in meiliemeel



Cupboards removed



New cupboards ready to go in



The team at work



New cupboards and shelves in place



A new trampoline



Before the trampoline was placed



Digging the hole

Repair works



A wall that was sagging and dangerous



The new trampoline in place



Neatly fixed



The entrance and driveway had been worn away and have now been repaired



Financial Matters

The financial accounts for 2014 were accepted by the Trustees at our annual meeting and following independent examination, have been filed with the Charity Commission.

In addition to regular donations, a Harp concert was arranged in Nottingham and other activities undertaken by Alrewas Monday Drop In and All Saints Alrewas. Our grateful thanks to all who organised and supported these activities.

Grants were provided to the School towards teaching salaries of ZAR 15,000 per month throughout the year. A further ZAR 40,364 was provided towards teaching materials and ZAR 28,000 towards maintaining and improving facilities at the School. Our cash reserves have increased temporarily due to timing of projects with a long 'wish list' by the school as and when we are able to help!

2014 was a more settled year after the exhaustive efforts creating the new Resource Centre the previous year and the challenges that presented for all involved. Our reserves provide confidence to continue the monthly teaching grant at ZAR 15,000 per month whilst looking to provide additional support where considered appropriate and funds permit.

Thank you to all our regular supporters for your ongoing commitment enabling us to provide the much needed facilities the School requires to support disadvantaged children in Durban.

John Sharman
Treasurer

Alrewas Methodist Church

Derwent Harps

directed by

Helen Naylor

SATURDAY OCTOBER 10TH

7.00 PM

in support of



(The UK Friends of UdobO School)

Tickets £10.00

(including Supper)

from Patrick & Sue Hughes - 01283 792248

[Action UdobO is a Charity registered in England No. 1138863]



To advance the education of
disadvantaged children of pre-state
school age attending the Udobobo School,
Montclair, Durban, South Africa.

If you are able to receive an electronic copy
of this newsletter to save trees & printing & postage costs,
then please email Action Udobobo Newsletter at
cathandsimon@gmail.com.

Many thanks.