

ACTION UDOBO

Charity no. 1138863



Newsletter - No. 31

September 2017

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From the Chairman

It is a long, long time since we wrote to you about the work of Action Udobo. The Trustees met at their AGM on the 8 May and approved the financial statement for the last financial year. The Trustees expressed their concern that you have not received a newsletter on the charity's activities since August 2015. There are reasons for this, but the Trustees wanted to reassure you that the charity is still fulfilling the purpose for which it was created, even if the flow of information has dwindled to a trickle.

However, let us try to rectify that now and offer you some news from the UK and news from the school in Montclair.

After years of sustained, sometimes hectic growth during which Action Udobo funded many developmental projects, Udobo School has experienced some difficulties in the last year or two. The departure of Rev. Ansie Liebenberg, Minister of Montclair Methodist Church in late 2015 not only deprived Montclair Methodist Church of its minister, but also Udobo School of its principal fundraiser and energiser. At the same time the financial control of the school was being transferred from the Trust administered by Montclair Methodist Church directly to the governing body of the school, in order for the school to become independent and potentially eligible for State financial support. Understandably, the creation of a new governing body and the necessary changes in administration have preoccupied the school over the last year, and no proposals for the funding of new projects have been made to Action Udobo. The bulk of your contributions over the last year have gone to support teaching salaries, to the tune of 15,000 South African Rand per month, to help ensure the quality of teaching is maintained. Quality of teaching and learning is the key to the success of any school, and it is this which has established the high reputation of Udobo School in the local community, and won the approbation of the State Education authorities.

David

Chair of Trustees

Rev. Ansie Liebenberg moves to Australia



Ansie, along with her husband, Willie, was the minister at Montclair Methodist Church and they made the decision to take a big step and move to Australia for four years. They left South Africa at the end of 2015 for a new venture in their lives, we wished them well and God's love and grace to go with them. A new minister has been appointed, Rev. Roy Govender, but he has been posted to the church

for one year. Rev. Phillipa Cole will join Montclair in 2018 and has been appointed for 5 years and will be more involved in the school's affairs; how time flies! Ansie was tireless in her efforts to publicise the school, both in South Africa and abroad, including the UK and she is already proving to be a huge act to follow, hence some of the lack of information coming from South Africa to us.

Anne Snyders, School Principal, co-ordinates communication

Anne's role as Principal of Udobo School keeps her very busy and she is now picking up the reins of communication as one of her many responsibilities. We have received general information concerning the school over the last eighteen months and include some relevant messages for you, as UK supporters of the school. What has been lacking is more detailed information on financial projects that we could provide monies for and, importantly, specific financial information regarding the viability of the school in the light of rising costs, increased inflation and poor exchange rates from Pound to Rand, which directly affects our buying power. There will be more detailed information later in this newsletter.



News from Udobo School



To everyone who reads this I pray that this will give you more of an insight into how our children are developing – they are cute, loving, full of joy, polite and in most cases confident little people and I am so proud of them. Thank you for anything you do for them as every gift of prayer, interest shown or donation encourages us so much. We thank God for your faithfulness in supporting His school.

We continue to look to God for finances and are incredibly grateful for the gifts we receive. A special word of thanks to those who faithfully give to us every month. I have to mention our U.K. supporters, without whom we would not be able to continue our work in this corner of God’s vineyard. You are all so special to us and what you do is reflected in the children who have moved through this school over the past twelve years and are doing so well ‘out in the world’.

Anne Snyders, School Principal

1st Term 2016

We have our fabulous new jungle gym with which ‘Action Udobo’ U.K blessed us. There is a climbing wall, a fireman’s pole and a cargo net. The children are challenged by it and so proud when they manage to meet the challenge. A group of our youngest children 3 going on 4 decided that our little girl in the wheelchair ‘wanted’ to climb the net.

The teacher stood by while a group pushed from below and three pulled from above. They hoisted her onto the platform where she began singing

- the others quickly joined her and sang with her. A special moment!



2nd Term 2016

Sport's day was a wonderful morning. We always get good support for this day and when it came to parent's races there were so many people wanting to take part we had to run heats! The children did five different novelty races and the tug-of-war and were extremely entertaining. They approach all they do so seriously and even if they were still busy after everyone else was finished they still carefully completed the activity.



We ended the term with an excursion by bus to Mitchell Park – a huge park which has a playground area as well as a small zoo. The bus ride alone is very exciting for our children and they chatter happily for days before the outing in anticipation of the event! The zoo has beautiful birds and the children were astounded that one bird 'spoke' to them. They saw tortoises, buck, raccoons, meerkat and exotic monkeys and much more. The teachers came back



very impressed by the good behaviour of our children so they had also had a pleasant time. The children came back from their trip very anxious to share what they had seen – one of the smallest boys told me he had seen the 'money bird' – I thought he was mispronouncing the word until his teacher told me she had shown them the Blue Crane on an old 5 cent piece and her little ones had recognised the real thing at the zoo.

3rd Term 2016

Our 'Trashion Show' fundraiser

is always such an enjoyable morning. The parents create the most amazing outfits from waste and the children model the creations with such poise. It is a great way of developing confidence and the children love the shouts of encouragement from the audience and many 'play to the crowd' by blowing kisses and waving. Our judges as usual had a difficult time choosing winners and we even had to make a few new categories!



A group of boys from Westville Boy's High School came to work at the school. They asked if they could tell the stories at home time and this was a great hit especially as many were drama students and told stories they had made up and using different voices...the children were enthralled. It was so good for both the young men and our

children as both benefitted from the interaction. The Westville boys also helped prepare food and serve in God's Kitchen (where our church serves around eighty people twice a week) and that was quite an experience for young people who come from a more affluent part of Durban.

4th Term 2016

Our end-of-year function was lovely. Each class presented a dance, a skit, Bible verses as well as lots of singing - staff had worked very hard to produce something enjoyable!



The graduation was moving as always as we watched our little ones step up to receive their certificates of completion of their Pre-primary years. Some children had been with us for three years and we had walked the journey with them and now had to say goodbye.

1st Term 2017 Unfortunately, we had many no shows at the start of the new year as children had been sent either to farm schools or the Eastern Cape to relatives. We are still not full which is disappointing as we know that there are more children out there needing to be at school.



New parents and children waiting for registration

February has been a hot and humid month so when rain arrives it is always cause for celebration. Our JoJo water tank (bought by Action Udobo UK) filled up and we are able to use that water for flushing toilets and washing hands – it is such a blessing for us to use water that would have been lost and now saves us from using municipal water for our bathrooms.

The children continue to delight me – we have children whose home language is isiZulu, isiXhosa, Shona, Afrikaans and now French as well. It is so wonderful when English suddenly makes sense to them and they are able to share not only their needs but also their feelings and emotions.

2nd Term 2017 The second term of the year is rapidly drawing to a close. Winter did finally arrive with lovely fresh mornings and mild days – we are truly blessed to live in such beauty – the trees around the school are green and still full of birds. We often have visits from a troop of monkeys. They visited when we had a display of healthy food and they helped themselves to all our bananas after carefully peeling them and leaving the peels behind – cheek!



Our Sport's Day took place on a blustery day – it was however, well attended by enthusiastic parents and children! The children raced in their class colour shirts and each group was cheered by the supporters. We had a podium for the first three home and Teacher Amos had made medals as well.

The parent races are always wonderful, so many parents took part that we had run heats! They also played musical chairs which was such fun as well as the water balloon toss – our parents are such good sports who didn't mind being splashed despite the cool weather!



Soul Action visits Udobo School



Soul Action have been connected to the school in Durban for a few years and earlier this year they made a trip to the school. What was different this time, was that they brought with them a group of people from the 'Hub Church' in Hitchin, Hertfordshire,

friends of the Chair of Trustees. Martha Inch, who is a leader in the church said: "We visited the Udobo school in early February as part of a trip to Durban with Soul Action, a charity we support as a church. Phil and Rachel have worked closely with Anne over a number of years and were keen to show us the work that she and the team do. We visited a number of different projects and schools over the week we were there, and going to Udobo was a highlight for many of us. We were welcomed by Anne, who we immediately warmed to, and she explained some of the history of the school. We were then able to visit the different classrooms and were each given a Valentines card by a different child as it was Valentine's Day on the day we visited. We spent a short time talking to the children (not wanting to disturb their learning too much) and had a look around the playground and other facilities. It was great to chat to Anne and to see her vision and passion for the school and her heart for the children. The students all seemed very happy and were enjoying their learning. We even got to sing happy birthday to one child who then went around each classroom sharing his cake - a lovely touch I thought! We really loved our trip to Udobo and have recently put together a box of cards and gifts to send to them from the children at the hub."



Our visitors are presented with friendship day Valentine cards

Leading UK supporter passes away

It was a real shock, and very personal to the Trustees, when we heard that Janet, Sue's sister and Patrick's sister-in-law had passed away suddenly. Janet had been a prodigious supporter of Action Udobo with her fundraising activities. We continue to hold Sue and Patrick in our prayers and continue to smile as Janet always did, when serving the Lord.

UK Trustees commit to increased support

Following a review of the financial situation of Udobo School provided in the last month and the lessening power of our donations to maintain similar standards to past years, the Trustees have decided to increase their monthly giving to Rand 20,000 per month. Although this is significantly more than we receive in regular monthly donations from our supporters, we are confident that with increased publicity, fundraising activities and good stewardship through Gift Aid tax reclaim, we can sustain this level of commitment for the foreseeable future. We have also recently agreed to fund further educational equipment from 50% of the proceeds of the Good Friday Sponsored Walk amounting to £1,400 organised by the North Hertfordshire Methodist Circuit of Churches.

Action Udobo Trustees

David Latter (Chair)

Rev John Allen

Patrick Hughes

Susan Hughes

Peter Lang

John Sharman

If you or someone you know wishes to make a regular donation to Action Udobo, please see the enclosed Standing Order Mandate and Gift Aid declaration form.

If you have received a printed copy of this Newsletter and could receive future copies by email then please help us to save trees and the costs of printing and postage by emailing Action Udobu Newsletter at cathandsimon@gmail.com. Many thanks.



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