

ACTION UDOBO

Charity no. 1138863



Newsletter - No. 32

September 2018

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New Action Udobo Website



www.actionudobo.org.uk

Have a look at our new website and find out about the charity, its history, what we do, who we are and how you can help.

New Trustees Needed

We are looking for new Trustees to join us at our annual meetings and share our passion for Udobo School. If you or anyone you know would consider becoming a Trustee then please get in touch at actionudobo@gmail.com.



David Latter, Chair of Trustees



John Sharman, Trustee and Treasurer



Peter Lang, Trustee



Susan Hughes, Trustee



Patrick Hughes, Trustee



Revd John Allan, Trustee



Cath Hughes, Secretary

Welcome Revd Philippa Cole

In the previous newsletter, we reported on the departure of Revd Ansie Liebenberg. Earlier this year, Revd Philippa Cole was appointed as minister at Montclair Methodist Church, with oversight of Udobo School. Philippa, or Rev Phil as the children at the school call her, has been a blessing for the school after a 2 year gap. Anne Snyders, School Principal, said “she is a young woman who loves Jesus passionately, she is an academic of note but her love of all people is tangible.”



News from Udobo School



Anne Snyders, School Principal, shares the latest news from Udobo School.

This year we seem to have gone full circle and are once again serving the really poor of the community. I have taken on children who are totally free as the parents (usually a mother or grandmother) have nothing. People desperately want the best education for their children but have very little to give as a fee for the child to be at school. I do try to get a tiny amount because it really gives these parents a sense of contributing towards their child's education rather than getting a handout. The meals these children enjoy at school are usually all that they get to eat. The great thing is that here in their safe place they all have the same chance to learn and to reach the potential that God has placed within them. Placing children in a happy, safe space also frees mothers up to find work to improve their financial situation, so it is really a win-win situation.

We have 3 Grade R (or Grade 0) classes, 1 middle group (Grade 00), which is a very popular age group and is bursting at the seams, and our youngest group Grade 000. We have seen a need to create a space for what we have been calling our rising-3 group, this simply means children in their second year who are potty trained.

The advantages of having these tiny ones are many fold as we find that they are like sponges as they absorb new language, learn the school routine, have the chance to develop their large muscles by climbing and digging as well as experiencing the fantasy, cognitive, media, creative and computer rooms.

This year we have the most challenging year we have had in a while - we normally have one or two children who require special help and for whom we search for the school that best suits the child when entering Primary school. However, this year we have had behavioural challenges and little ones who are possibly on the autism spectrum - we are encouraging assessments for these little ones just so as to know how to best help them. Udobo has become known as a place that seeks to help which is exactly what I believe God wants from us.

1st term 2018 We named 14th February Friendship Day and the children dressed in red, white or pink. We organised lots of fun creative work, games on the church field and a special lunch. Lizette Platjies, our amazing secretary, baked each child a cupcake which was greatly enjoyed.



We did a Promotion at our local mall in March. We spoke to many people and had lots of interest shown. Each staff member had an hour each to promote and it was wonderful as our Zimbabwean teachers were able to speak in Shona to the very large

population of Zimbabwean people and my isiZulu speakers could chat to the local population. We would like to do this again in November when parents are looking to place their children for January when the new school year begins.



The second last day of school was an Easter fun day - we do tell the children the true meaning of Easter but we also think a bit of fun to end the term is necessary. Our local Pick-n-Pay managed to

organise chocolate marshmallow eggs for our egg hunt as well as hen's eggs so that the children were given a chance to discuss the eggs and then mix them and then the children had egg sandwiches for lunch.



The parents want their children in uniform so we now have t-shirts and shorts, long sleeve t-shirts and a smart tracksuit. We have had requests for school bags and after going back to the drawing board a few times we now have a strong school bag made especially for our needs which also shows our logo to the community. These bags cost R180.00 which is about the cost of any child backpack in the



local shops. We do have families that cannot afford the bag so ask people to sponsor a bag for one of the really needy children.

We continue to get wonderful support from Action Udobo. Words fail me as to how to express just how grateful we are to them – our children are incredibly beautiful and talented and so worth everything we bring to their lives.

2nd term 2018 We had a visit from the Methodist Health Desk who were very impressed with what they saw. We are always grateful when people can see the effort put in to keep the school clean, the nutritious menu and that we look after our little ones if they feel ill or get hurt. It has been quite a term for having visitors - a group of ladies from St Winifred's church visited us in May and we had a lovely morning showing them around, and in June a group of ladies from the Woman's Auxiliary spent an hour looking over the school and being hugged by the little ones. If you ever feel a bit low, I recommend a visit to Udobo - you will come away feeling very loved. All our visitors are amazed at the wonderful gifts we have received from Action Udobo - our media centre, the trampoline, jungle gyms, computer desks for the children, air conditioners, the list is endless - we are incredibly indebted to our English friends!



CROW, the Centre for Rehabilitation of Wildlife in Yellowwood Park, offered free entrance to the Reserve for our Grade R children as well as two guides to show the

children around. We managed to get lifts for the children and gave them a picnic lunch and juice boxes donated by members of Montclair Methodist Church. It turned out to be a wonderful day and the children saw zebra and the smaller creatures and learned about medicinal plants.



The 25th May was our Sports Day which was thankfully not as windy as last year! The children had enormous fun but my favourite thing is always the parents' events! They took part in musical chairs and balloon toss. We had so many parents taking part that we had to run heats.



Two friends from Makro spent the morning with us and donated peaks for the children to wear. We buy non-perishables and cleaning materials from them and are attempting to get as many people as



possible to use Udobo as a beneficiary on 'Makro' cards in order to get a rebate from the store.



To close the term the children went on a trip to Mitchel Park. The bus ride alone was so exciting for the children! They saw birds and animals, there is a play park and a huge stretch of grass where they could play before

having their picnic lunch. A trip like this is especially good for the quiet, shy children because they become so excited that they just have to share what they have seen and done!



The need is just as great today!

As we sit in the comfort of our homes in the UK listening to all the shortcomings of our National Health Service, schools, economy and well being, how often do we stop and think about the plight of others less fortunate than ourselves? This is how Action Udobo (formerly Friends of Udobo) came about - to try to do something for the children in a rundown area of Durban, South Africa, where they had little hope for their future. The state did not provide a good school in which to learn, nor doctors or hospitals offering affordable healthcare and an economy with rampant inflation.

The people of the local Methodist Church in Montclair, Durban had a vision - to use part of their premises to educate the children from an early stage, to enable them to get a better start in life preparing them for school and a learning environment. Children that would be walking the streets scavenging for food started to come, barefoot and hungry, to learn and get a good meal once a day.

There have been many trials and tribulations along the way but the joy of seeing how the children progress and develop is reward for all the effort and hard work of a dedicated team led by the School Principal, Anne Snyders. Hundreds of children have passed through the school over the years who we have helped through our support from the UK.

Action Udobo provides financial support every month to help pay the teachers, the cook, the school secretary and principal. One of our early projects was to finance the installation of an Eco Water tank to harvest rainwater for flushing the toilets to reduce the significant cost of water. We improved the premises to provide a resource centre, subsequently named after us! The tables and chairs for the children to work at and the puzzles and books from which they could learn. The outside was landscaped, trees cut back and a Jungle Gym provided with ride-on trucks and scooters. A computer was provided to help with the school administration and accounting, a washing machine and wash trough were provided along with many other improvements, too many to detail.

We have seen the benefits reflected in the children with some earlier pupils going on to further education - who knows if we could play a

part in shaping a future President of South Africa! The need, however, is as great today as it was yesterday. We are committed to providing ongoing support to enable the school to continue and that is where you can help. The school is situated in a deprived suburb of Durban where local fundraising is very difficult. The school is, therefore, dependent on support from us and yet barely breaks even month by month. We in turn rely on regular donations from subscribers to continue to fund teaching salaries and provide additional resources as funds allow. Unfortunately, our funds do not stretch as far today due to inflation and exchange rates, so if you are able, please consider making a regular donation by monthly standing order. We are registered with the Charity Commission and HM Revenue & Customs enabling us to claim Gift Aid on all eligible donations. If you are already a subscriber, thank you for your continued support and maybe you could consider increasing your giving to help compensate for this reduced buying power. Please spread the word so that we may continue with our aim to give hope to this community through the work of Udobo School.

Thank you.

How to Donate

If you wish to make a donation to Action Udobo, please see the enclosed Standing Order Mandate and Gift Aid declaration form or visit the Donate page of our website at www.actionudobo.org.uk/donation/.

Fundraising in the UK

Thank you to All Saints Alrewas who selected Action Udobo to benefit from the takings from their Harvest Supper last year and donated £525.

Thanks also to Alrewas Methodist Church who are donating their coffee money to Action Udobo for a six month period this year.

Perhaps you or your church or organisation could consider fundraising for Action Udobo. Every little helps.

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 Udobo Newsletter at actionudobo@gmail.com. Many thanks.



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

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