

13TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
OF MORNING STAR CHILDREN'S CENTRE.
6TH JULY 2012
GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

To provide an interdisciplinary daily program of optimal care
for HIV/AIDS children
so that they can experience the very best quality of life possible
in a Christian environment.

Our current statistics are:

- ✓ 100 children attend our Welkom Centre on a daily basis, 20 of whom are in our own little Primary School.
- ✓ 40 children attend our Kutlwanong Morning Star Centre.
- ✓ Over 430 of our children are now in primary schools in the surrounding townships
- ✓ We have tested the blood of over 2200 children since our inception in 2000.
- ✓ 252 of our children have died over the past 13 years. (Only 6 in the past year).
- ✓ Over half of the children on our register now access anti-retroviral drugs.
- ✓ We have 64 children on our waiting lists, the majority of whom are from Thabong. (Although not attending our Centre on a daily basis, many of these families receive assistance with food, clothing and with government grant applications).

STAFF MOVEMENTS OVER PAST 12 MONTHS:

- Mr Stephen Lengau – employed as new driver at beginning of 2012
- Mr Stephen Kutumela – temporary gardener whilst Johannes Mololeki on sick leave/ long-term convalescence
- Ms Josephine Shibane - resigned in April 2012
- Ms Paulinah Ntjoboko – suspended whilst awaiting outcome of disciplinary enquiry.
- Ex-educator, Mrs Selina Thobi, volunteers in our school twice a week and teaches Sesotho to the children from Grade 3 upwards.

EDUCATION:

Morning Star Primary School continues to operate efficiently under the able leadership of experienced educators, Sarah Wilkins and Dipuo Mahlangu. Our present 20 pupils range in age from 7-15 years and are in Grades 1-6. Several of the children join us in the course of 2012, too weak/ill to cope with mainstream education or not in possession of the required SA birth certificates – and, thus, barred from attending government schools.

Many thanks Sarah, Dipuo and Selina for your magnificent contribution to the educational side of Morning Star and for bearing with me when I keep adding additional needy children to your already overwhelming work load.

Our two Grade R classes (Welkom/Kutlwanong) continue to function well under the excellent leadership of teachers, Portia Khobi and Tshidi Mohapi. Once their ECD Level 5 Training Course (held over a 2 year period) finishes at the end of 2012 there'll be much rejoicing at Morning Star! They've carried a heavy load over the past months and we've all had to make many sacrifices along the way.

Both Welkom & Kutlwanong pre-schools have come a long way since the arrival of experienced teacher, Sarah Wilkins, from the UK almost 2 years ago now. All our Morning Star teachers have benefitted from her vast experience and God-given skills and it's good to know that our educational programs are in such capable hands. In addition to the monthly teachers' meetings Sarah convenes, regular curriculum planning sessions take place, as do her observations of the teachers 'on-the-job'.

We have very enthusiastic pre-school teachers in Mamosa Rantso, Melanie Cornelissen, Mmasabata Tlhobo and Annah Matiyase and it's always a treat to pop-in unexpectedly – both in Welkom and in Kutlwanong – and to observe little children enjoying themselves so much. A special thank you, too, to the additional Morning Star staff members who assist our teachers each day, ensuring that our children are all stimulated, kept busy and play in a safe environment.

MORNING STAR VOLUNTEERS:

Morning Star is privileged to have the services of both overseas and local volunteers at our 2 Centres. The latter are utilized in our kitchens, preparing meals/washing dishes and with the cleaning of our premises/windows. They receive no remuneration for their efforts but are rewarded with a food parcel each month as a 'thank-you' token.

Our overseas volunteers are ever a joy to have in our midst and always take a special interest in the neediest of our little ones, giving them the individual nurturing that we struggle to find time for each day. In the midst of all the love and care they provide, they're also sharing their skills and talents with our staff – even when they're unaware of it.

Since our last AGM we've enjoyed the assistance of:

- A team of lecturers and students from Colleg Morgannwg, Pontypridd, Wales, for the first 2 weeks of August 2011.
- Steve & Lindsay Knibbs (Bedford) – September '11
- Sophie Jones (Hook Evangelical Church) – October 2011.
- Iris Barcroft and David & Jan Isherwood (Trentham Parish, Stoke-on-Trent) – Oct. '11.
- Bethany Rigby in October 2011 and May 2012
- Nicole Correia (Hook Evangelical Church) – November '11.
- Bill Muddyman & Linda Gardiner – January 2012
- Brenda Beckett and a group of Sunday School teachers from All Souls (C. of E. London) – February 2012.
- John & Wendy Harris (Mirfield) – February & March '12.
- Naomi Higton (Manor Park, Worcester) – March '12
- Madeleine Robertson (Perth, Australia) – March/April 2012
- Dave & Jan Isherwood (second visit) – April to June '12
- Sam Eastwood (Manor Park, Worcester) – May/June '12
- Naomi & Lydia Bond (Harrogate) – July 2012

We have several UK volunteers hoping to spend a year with us in 2013 and we are, thus, busy looking for a house/townhouse in Welkom to rent for them. God willing, as more and more overseas volunteers come out to assist us for lengthier periods of time – and not requiring salaries – we'll be able to cut down on our present staff quota so as to stretch our budget to meet the growing demand on our resources in the midst of the worldwide economic recession.

TRANSPORT:

Morning Star was blessed to acquire a 4th mini-bus (Toyota Quantum) at the beginning of 2012, thus relieving the stress so regularly experienced when one of our older vehicles breaks down and has to be repaired. This means that, at the moment, we are the proud owners of 2 Toyota Quantums, 2 Toyota Siyayas and a 25-seater Toyota Hino Bus.

Our oldest Siyaya is now semi-retired and only used to transport our single load of Dunamis children each weekday or assist when one of our other vehicles is out-of-action. It is still costing us a lot of money in repairs, though, and we're now seriously contemplating trading it – and other second Siyaya in for 2 newer vehicles. (Board decision at tomorrow's meeting)

A very big thank you to my Operations' Manager, Elizabeth vd Westhuizen, for the magnificent job she does managing our fleet of vehicles and to our 5 drivers, Sam, Chris, Andries, Stephen and Jacob for always being so willing to 'go the extra mile'.

OUR OTHER REGULAR ACTIVITIES:

- Weekly In-Service Training for our Child Care Workers takes place early every Monday morning in Welkom and on Tuesdays in Kutlwanong.
- Monthly Support Group Meetings – geared towards our children's parents/ carers – takes place in Thabong and Kutlwanong Townships each month. The above meetings are ably chaired by our professional nurse, Sr Pulane Leeuw.
- Monthly food parcels go out to over 135 families per month these days. The numbers supplied has escalated over the past 12 months as more and more folk struggle to feed their families during the present economic climate. Last month's food parcel order amounted to close to R30 000.00 – an astronomical amount indeed – forcing us to look, again, for ways to cut down/streamline the recipients. The suffering out in the Townships is mind boggling and, as ever, we remain totally reliant on the generosity and monthly monetary commitment of our overseas supporters – and on our Lord – to meet this hugely important commitment.
- Early morning devotions continue 4 mornings a week and are attended by all female staff members not on the transport runs. What a privilege to come under sound Biblical teaching at the start of each new day and to have the services of fine preachers like Vincent Nkhobo, Joshua Bolaji, Frans Manako, Phil Carmichael and Louis O'Tool at our disposal. A big thank you to them all for their sustained commitment to Morning Star and for so faithfully preaching God's Word in our midst.
- Our second-hand clothing shop is open once per week and the amount of money generated here each year continues to astound us. Special thanks to Jane Blane and her team – Louise, Alison, Dina and Margie for their ongoing dedication to this cause and for their willingness to keep sorting, marking and disposing of all clothing donations.
- Our Teenager Meetings for children 13 years and over continue once every 3 months. On average, 50 – 60 youngsters attend these functions and enjoy the activities, refreshments and sound Biblical teaching provided. A special thank you to Pastor Frans Manaka for his special interest in this particular group of children and for the sustained effort he makes in being present at all our meetings.
- Gogos(Grandmothers) Club meetings are now only held once a year – and at Christmastime. These functions are always popular, well attended and a success. Our 2012 function is scheduled for Saturday, 24th November and will include a Biblical message, a hearty meal, Christmas gifts all round and suitable entertainment for the aged attendees.
- Our vegetable-growing competition in the townships remains an important part of our annual calendar. Between 30-40 individuals start off enthusiastically each August/ September but, unfortunately, several do lose interest along the way and give up. For those that persevere the rewards are great and the R1000.00 1st prize is always an incentive to keep going. One of our mothers, Anna Ramosebi, continues to head-up and oversee this project and does a very good job assessing and photographing the gardens she visits every 2 months. We remain indebted to Welkom Rotary Club for their monetary assistance in the past and trust they'll be able to support us in the coming year as well.

FUNDRAISING:

Fundraising for an Organization the size Morning Star has grown into over the past 12 years remains a colossal task. Close to R300 000.00 per month is needed for us to sustain our various programs. Fortunately, Morning Star still receives funding from the Free State Department of Social Development and also remains indebted to the Free State Department of Health for our rent-free premises at the Kopano Complex. We realize what a benefit these facilities have been over the years, especially as we've not had to pay towards them in any way since our inception in January 2000. We are grateful, indeed, for the partnership we enjoy with these 2 government departments and for the assistance they give us in caring for our children.

Regular pledges/donations from overseas donors continue to make up the bulk of our annual income and are increasingly relied upon to meet our monthly commitments. An annual trip to the UK is undertaken to update sponsors on our work here and to seek additional monetary assistance. Over the past 2 years Glenys Barham and John & Wendy Harris have driven me to my various meetings in England and Wales and this, in itself, has been a huge saving for Morning Star. In May this year Joshua Bolaji joined me in raising funds/awareness for Morning Star in the UK and it remains to be seen how our trip will benefit us long-term.

Val Bekker continues to be our Correspondence Secretary all the way from George in the Cape Province, keeping our overseas donors updated re: their child's progress and acknowledging parcels/monetary gifts received this end. We are indebted to her for the magnificent job she does as we continue to search for a suitable replacement for her.

TSHEDISANANG WOMEN'S PROJECT

Our sole remaining job creation program, Tshedisangang Women's Project, has taken on a new dimension over the past 18 months with ABSA Foundation providing funding for the initiation of a new venture, the manufacturing of school uniforms for local Matjhabeng schools. An additional 16 women have already been trained in the usage of sewing machines/overlockers over the past 18 months and are at varying stages of proficiency. We're hoping to identify a few additional schools to sew for still so that there'll be enough work to keep our women busy all year round.

Sad news is that our Tshedisangang Overseer of many years, Paddy Winson, is retiring at the end of 2012. She will be hard to replace indeed! We're in the process, at the moment, of identifying a new overseer for the Project and are trusting God to lead us to the right person in due course. A very big thank you to Paddy for her amazing contribution over the years and for investing so much of her own life and time into making Tshedisangang what it's become today!

BOARD OF GOVERNORS:

Board meetings continue every quarter and are generally well attended. How privileged we are to have the calibre of men and women on our Board that we do and to have enjoyed the services of our acting Chairman, Mr Noel Wright – all the way from Kwa Zulu Natal – for another year. He, too, is stepping down from the role he's played on Morning Star's Board all these years and handing the reins over to someone younger than himself. His long-term commitment to our Organization will ever be remembered and his wise counsel sorely missed.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our Board Members for their support and input to our Organisation over the past year. Your rich contribution and willingness to involve yourselves in our strategic issues are ever an encouragement and blessing.

I would also like to thank my staff – particularly the Management Committee – for their unwavering support of me and Morning Star over the past year. The last 5 months have been difficult ones for me, what with Hospersa Union now on board here and having to deal with

difficult staff issues. But, through it all, God has been ever gracious and, as in the past, gone before us. As long as I keep my eyes fixed upon Him, the Author and Perfector of my faith, and remember that He has put me here and that Morning Star is His Project, I'll be able to continue serving Him faithfully in this place and striving to make a meaningful difference in the lives of as many suffering, impoverished children as possible.

A big thank you, too, to my husband, Ron for bearing with me so patiently, for providing a listening ear for my woes and for all the jobs he does at/for Morning Star. Thank you too, Ron, for collecting/transporting our overseas volunteers so willingly and for picking up clothing and household donations for Morning Star from all over Gauteng.

And, as always, all praise and thanks to our Lord Jesus Christ for keeping us yet another year and for proving to us, once again, that in His strength all things are possible. My prayer remains that Christ will ever be at the centre of what this Organisation stands for and that the staff here will be continue to be used of Him in the lives of our beloved children.

EBENEZER

Thus far has our Lord been our help