



Morning Star

Children's Centre

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14TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
OF MORNING STAR CHILDREN'S CENTRE.
21ST JUNE 2013
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, 22 of whom are in our own little Primary School.
- ✓ 41 children attend our Kutlwanong Morning Star Centre.
- ✓ Over 500 of our children are now in primary and secondary schools in the Matjhabeng Region.
- ✓ We have tested the blood of almost 2,300 children since our inception in the year 2000.
- ✓ 258 of our children have died over the past 14 years. (Only 6 over the past 12 months compared to 25+ in our earlier years).
- ✓ About 2/3rds (two thirds) of the children on our register now access anti-retroviral drugs.
- ✓ The number of children on our waiting list has dropped down to 14 (from over 100). This is attributed to the fact that the majority of unborn babies are now being born HIV negative because they're given ARV therapy whilst still in utero.

STAFF MOVEMENTS OVER PAST 12 MONTHS:

- Driver, Andries Mathobisa, and child care workers, Josephine Shibane and Paulinah Ntjoboko left us for a various reasons during the latter half of 2012. We acknowledge their contribution to Morning Star for the time they were employed here and trust they're happy in their new jobs.
- Sadly, former driver, Chris Pereko, died on 27th February 2013. Chris was deeply respected and loved by all attached to Morning Star, both staff and parents/children alike. He was a true gentleman and we miss him deeply.
- New drivers, Kgotso Lengau and Eric Makhetha, have replaced Andries and Chris respectively. Both men have endeared themselves to us already and we're deeply thankful for the way our drivers are working together so well these days
- Mr Stephen Kutumela – employed as a fulltime gardener from January 2013. He replaces Johannes Mololeki who has been suffering with ill-health for many months now.
- Cleaner, Evelyn Monyatsi, retired officially at the end of 2012 but is still volunteering at Morning Star three days per week.

- Mrs. Paddy Winson retired as overseer of the Tshedisanang Women's Project at the end of 2012.
- Ms Camilla Moholobela has been transferred from Kutlwanong to Welkom Morning Star.
- Former receptionist, Thato Nkonoane, left us at the end of 2012 to take up nursing training at the beginning of 2013. We are extremely grateful to her (and to Mandisa Wana, who often stepped in to assist at short notice) for the efficient way she performed her duties in the short time she was with us.
- Thato Nkonoane was replaced with Tshenolo (Mamsie) Mokatsane from the beginning of February '13 but the latter was only with us for 2 weeks before resigning after being offered a better paying job with mobile company, Cell C.
- David & Jan Isherwood from Stoke-on-Trent, England, are volunteering at Morning Star for the whole of 2013 and, after Mamsie left on 18th February, Jan was offered the job as receptionist in her place.
- Vincent Nkhobo started working half-day from the beginning of March 2013 and left our employ completely at the beginning of June to take up the position of fulltime pastor of the Kutlwanong Reformed Baptist Church. He is still assisting us with staff /school children devotions at both Centres each week and sharing from God's Word at our monthly support group meetings in Kutlwanong and Thabong.
- Tricia Dargie (afternoons) and Teboho Moloi (mornings) are now assisting Liza Mans, our accountant, in the financial office on a volunteering basis until the end 2013.
- Retired teacher, Elizabeth Ramoisa, is presently teaching Sesotho to the few pupils in Sarah Wilkins' class twice a week. Ex-employee, Selina Thobi, performed this function for much of 2012 and we are grateful to her and to Elizabeth for their vital input in this regard.

EDUCATION:

Morning Star Primary School continues to operate efficiently under the able leadership of experienced educators, Sarah Wilkins and Dipuo Mahlangu. Our present 22 pupils range in age from 7-16 years and are in Grades 1-6. Our oldest child, 16-year-old Tshepang Mosieloa, is on permanent oxygen and has been in Bongani Hospital for the better part of the last 12 months. Several older children have joined us during the first half of 2013, including 14-year-old Catherine Booie, who suffered a stroke in February which left her paralysed down the one side. Happily, she's much improved since starting here and, hopefully, will return to mainstream education at the beginning of 2014.

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

The children in our two Grade R classes (Welkom/Kutlwanong) continue to thrive under the excellent tuition of teachers, Portia Khobi and Tshidi Mohapi. These women have now finished their Level 5 ECD training and are busy applying their new-gained knowledge in their classrooms. Hopefully, their graduation ceremony will still happen in the not too distant future and their diplomas materialize in due course.

Both our Welkom and Kutlwanong pre-schools are functioning well and we have teachers Mamosa Rantso, Melanie Cornelissen, Mmasabata Tlhobo and Annah Matiyase to thank for this. All except Melanie have now completed their Level 4 ECD training and we're truly amazed at the difference this course has made to our staff's teaching abilities. A special thank you, too, to the additional Morning Star staff members and casual volunteers who assist our teachers each day, ensuring that all our children are stimulated, kept busy and play in a safe environment.

MORNING STAR VOLUNTEERS:

Morning Star continues to enjoy the input of both overseas and local volunteers at our 2 Centres. The latter, our own mothers/guardians since the beginning of this year, are utilized in our kitchens with the preparation of meals/washing of dishes and also with the cleaning of our premises/windows. These women have chosen to volunteer here to say 'thank you' for the help they receive from Morning Star.

Our overseas volunteers are ever a joy in our midst. They're always willing to go the extra mile and tackle any task allocated to them and are a true example of Christian love and compassion. And in the midst of all the 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 (and in addition to long-term volunteer, Sarah Wilkins, who's now been with us for 3 years), we've enjoyed the assistance of:

- Alison & Ellen Reakes-Williams and Lydia Higton (Worcester) – August 2012
- Aase & Gareth Wilkins (Shrewsbury) – September 2012
- Sue Whare (Newcastle, Australia) – Nov/Dec 2012
- Bill Muddyman & Linda Gardiner (Esher, Surrey) – January 2013
- David & Janice Isherwood (Trentham, Stoke-on-Trent) – for the whole of 2013. Dave & Jan have been a particular blessing; filling gaps that we, previously, didn't even know existed. Dave transports a group of our children on a daily basis, attends to all repair and maintenance jobs, interacts with the children, attends to our IT work and runs errands when/where necessary. Jan is now our fulltime receptionist and is doing a brilliant job in our front office! She also keeps our website/Facebook page updated and vital, something that nobody else here has the time or skills for! We dread the day the 2 of them finally leave us! I really don't think we're capable of functioning efficiently without them anymore and are praying that their initial year of volunteering here will stretch way beyond their original commitment!

TRANSPORT:

Morning Star's fleet of vehicles continues to upgrade and expand in the most remarkable way! We can clearly identify God at work in this regard, directing events and touching the right people's hearts at exactly the right time! Earlier this year we were able to trade our Toyota Hino Bus and dilapidated, old bakkie in for a new Toyota Quantum, a good second-hand bakkie and a new Toyota Avanza. We are now, thus, the proud owners of 4 Quantums, an excellent bakkie, 2 Avanzas and our little Kia Picanto. (Mind you, despite all these vehicles at our disposal, some days we still struggle to find an available car to transport us from A to B! Astounding, but true!) A very big thank you to Operations Manager, Elizabeth vd Westhuizen, for the magnificent way she manages our fleet of vehicles and oversees our 5 drivers, Sam, Kgotso, Eric, Jacob and Dave Isherwood and a very big thank you to them all for always being prepared 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 – take place in Thabong and Kutlwanong Townships each month. The above meetings are ably chaired by our professional nurse, Sr. Pulane Leeuw, and have been particularly well supported since we enforced attendance to guarantee delivery of monthly food parcels.
- Substantial food parcels go out to over 160 families per month these days. The need for food assistance continues to escalate as more and more folk struggle to find jobs and provide for their own families. The suffering out in the Townships is immense and, as always, we are totally dependent on God, the generosity of the community and our faithful overseas supporters, for meeting this hugely important need.
- Early morning staff devotions continue 4 times per week and we are extremely blessed to have the services/input of men of Vincent Nkhobo, Joshua Bolaji, Frans Manako, Phil Carmichael and Louis

O'Tool's calibre. 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 – some days in excess of R1000.00! 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 our clothing donations.
- Our Teens Meetings for children 13 years and over continue every 3 months. On average, 50 – 60 youngsters attend these functions and continue to enjoy the activities presented, the refreshments provided and the sound Biblical teaching they enjoy. A big thank you to Pastor Frans Manaka for his special interest in this particular group of children and for his sustained effort in being present at all our meetings.
- Gogos (Grandmothers) Club meetings are now only held once a year – at Christmas-time. These functions are always popular and well attended. Our 2013 function is scheduled for Saturday, 30th November, and will include a Biblical message, a hearty meal, Christmas gifts all round and suitable entertainment for our aged attendees. The aim of these meetings is to thank our grandmothers – who are now our children's primary caregivers – for the unexpected role they're forced into once their grandchildren are orphaned because of HIV/ AIDS and have no other suitable home to find refuge in.
- Our Vegetable-Growing Competition in the Townships remains an important part of our annual calendar. About 30 individuals start off enthusiastically each August but, unfortunately, up to half loose 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. Anna Ramosebi, one of our mothers, continues to head-up this project and is adept now in assessing and photographing the gardens she visits every 2 months. We remain indebted to the Welkom Rotary Club and Mr Strydom (Bevan's) for their monetary assistance and support each year.

KUTLWANONG CENTRE

Our satellite centre in Kutlwanong Township continues to operate efficiently under the consistent management of Holygate Mahlunga and assistant, Anna Matiyase. Each staff member employed here plays her/his role in delivering the best possible care to the children they're responsible for. It's always a pleasure to visit Kutlwanong and note how the children are thriving there and how well the staff perform their duties without management's constant oversight.

Kutlwanong Reformed Baptist Church

What a joy to inform you that the Kutlwanong Reformed Baptist Church – which uses our Kutlwanong premises over weekends – has now been in operation for about 18 months. Vincent Nghobo, the pastor there, is proving such a blessing in that community and is excited about the spiritual growth taking place within his congregation. Several young men have been baptised over the past year and weekly prayer meetings and Bible Studies are now also in operation.

FUNDRAISING:

Fundraising for Morning Star these days is a huge challenge as about R280 000.00 is needed per month to keep our Organization functioning efficiently. Fortunately, Morning Star still receives monetary assistance each month from the Dept. of Social Development and 'in kind' support from the Dept. of Health by way of our rent-free premises at the Kopano Complex in Welkom. We are grateful, indeed, for the partnership we enjoy with these 2 government departments and for the assistance we've received from them over the past 14 years.

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. Mostly, we only have enough money in reserve to see us through for a further 2 months and, more often than not these days, we are forced to arrange urgent transfers of funds from the UK to cover our expenses here because we don't have a sufficient cash-flow this side of the equator.

An annual fundraising trip to England/Wales is undertaken to update all our supporters on our current position back in SA and to source additional monetary assistance where possible. Elizabeth vd Westhuizen accompanied me for

the first half of this year's trip and Glenys Barham, from Worcester in England, drove me to Wales and to the remainder of my English destinations once she'd flown home. All-in-all, 30 presentations were given, 40 new children sponsored out and over R200 000.00 donated as a direct result of the 2013 trip. Special thanks go to Peter Barham who put a new Power-Point Presentation together for me again this year and to Glenys, his wife, who coordinates these annual trips and sorts out my itinerary so efficiently.

Retired staff member, Val Bekker, continues to be our Correspondence Secretary from all the way down in George, keeping our overseas donors updated re: their child's progress and acknowledging parcels/monetary gifts received this end. We are truly indebted to her for all she continues to do for Morning Star, fully aware, at the same time that she's battling increasingly with health issues and would dearly love to hand this job over to somebody else. Sadly, Val's husband, Danie, died on the 6th June '13. Our hearts go out to her and her family at this time.

TSHEDISANANG WOMEN'S PROJECT

Tshedisanang Women's Project is still in operation but limping along like a ship without a captain at present! In addition to the ABSA Foundation funding ceasing at the end of 2012, forcing us to scale down to only 11 women (5 embroiderers and 6 sewers), long-time project overseer, Paddy Winson, retired last December as well. Sadly, a suitable fulltime replacement for her has not yet been found.

Thankfully, though, a wonderful sewer/organizer, Ilze Weyers, does give us several hours of her time, each week, but this is proving insufficient oversight with women who are just incapable of taking full ownership of the Project – despite some of them having been with Tshedisanang for the past 12 years!

Paddy Winson does pop-in when she can and also assists with the embroidery orders and school uniform ordering/instructions and its lovely still having some contact with her. Once again, Paddy, thank you so much for all the years you gave to Tshedisanang. I know it wasn't always easy and many of your grey hairs are as a result of the stress experienced here. Hopefully, though, you do have lots of happy memories of your time with our women and can recognise that their skills, today, are as a direct result of your input and patient tuition over time. You've invested much of your own life into making Tshedisanang what it's become, Paddy, and we're all – especially me – hugely indebted to you!

BOARD OF GOVERNORS:

Board meetings continue every quarter and are generally well attended. We're privileged, indeed, to have the calibre of men and women on the Board that we do and I'm ever awed at our meetings by their combined knowledge and wise counsel. A big thank you to Joshua Bolaji, our chairman, Kevin Lombard, our treasurer and Johan Pauw, our labour consultant, for the many hours they've put into the smooth running of Morning Star over the past 12 months and for the way they've stretched and encouraged me. My God, You are so amazing! Even in this area of Morning Star You have blessed me 'out of my socks'!

MANAGEMENT / STAFF:

Heartfelt thanks go to my Management Team for their unwavering support of Morning Star and me over the past year. The close bond we enjoy is very special and your individual strengths and skills vital to the smooth running of our Organization. It's not been an easy year in many respects and on several occasions I have been tempted to pack my basket and run away. But we've come through and, amazingly, still love the work God has called us to do.

Thank you, Elizabeth, for your grace and constant Christian witness. You are the perfect 'right-hand support' for me and the best Operations Manager in town! And, Liza, I'm so proud of you! Thanks for all your hard work in the financial office and for maintaining the standards Tim Kelly set whilst he was still with us. You are truly valuable to us and your compassionate heart, a blessing to many.

Thank you too, all staff members, for loving our children unconditionally and for all your hard work over the past 12 months. Most of you give unstintingly of your time and energy and are ever willing to go the extra mile. Your passion and commitment don't go unnoticed, I can assure you; I just wish I could reimburse you as you truly deserve.

And last but not least, a big thank you to my husband, Ron, for all he does for Morning Star and for me behind the scenes. I truly appreciate you, Ron, for collecting and transporting our overseas volunteers so willingly, for picking up clothing and household donations from all over Johannesburg and for your patience with me over the past 14 years. I know living separate lives during the week, for all these years, has not been easy – and the fact that there's no end in sight, frustrating. Nonetheless, I'm at peace, fully trusting that this has been God's plan for our lives, for

reasons He alone knows at present, and that the badly-fitting puzzle pieces will simply slide into place in eternity one day. One thing for sure, God laid the burning passion for the work I do in my heart all those years ago and without it, I could never have lasted here this long!

And, as always, all praise and thanks to our Lord Jesus Christ for meeting every one of our needs for another year (even for this AGM tonight) and for continuing to use a bunch of 'cracked pots' like us to do His bidding at Morning Star. All that's been accomplished here over the years is of God alone and has absolutely nothing to do with Joan Adams and her skills and talents!

It remains an awesome privilege, though, to work in an Organization like this and to be able to minister to the poor and weak of this world and to bring relief where possible. Work like ours also causes one to count one's blessings each and every day and forces one to acknowledge that there's always someone else worse off than us!

My prayer remains that Christ will ever be at the centre of what this Organisation stands for and that we, the staff members here, will ever be used of Him in the lives of the beloved children He sends our way.
