



# Morning Star

## Children's Centre

Reg.No. 009-016 - NPO

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**18<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**  
**28<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2017**  
**GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT**

**OUR MISSION STATEMENT**

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

Our current statistics are:

- ✓ 147 children attend our 2 Centres (Welkom & Kutlwanong) on a daily basis.
- ✓ 609 of our children are now in primary and secondary schools in the Matjhabeng Region.
- ✓ 293 of our children have died since our inception in January 2000 (12 over the past 12 months).
- ✓ We presently have 50 children on our Waiting List but most are HIV- (negative).

**STAFF MOVEMENTS OVER PAST 12 MONTHS:**

- Motshidisi Karreebos re-joined Morning Star in January 2017 as assistant in the Welkom Pre-school when Jacob Ramaisa left us unexpectedly.
- Mapulane Mokoena became Matron Lindsay Leonard's new assistant in October 2016 when Justina Mosothoawane took up employment at the Welkom Medi Clinic.
- Dylean Botha replaced Marietta Salzwedel as the General Manager's PA in January 2017. Dylean resigned in June 2017 and has been replaced by Chantell Erasmus.

- Tebogo Makoko became our Assistant Accountant in January 2017 when Revival Hlongwane moved to Bloemfontein to pastor the Botshabelo Baptist Church.
- Kitchen Assistant, Catherine Joels, was dismissed in April 2017 for theft. She was not replaced. We did an internal transfer and moved Maria Ntlororo into the kitchen in her place.
- Emily Mahlangu replaced Kutlwanong Grade R Teacher, Zanele Mnyembane, whilst she was on maternity leave. Zanele returns to work on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2017.
- Paballo Moloi, one of our Welkom drivers, joined the SAP at the end of January 2017 and was replaced by Mr Tshepiso James Dlamini.
- John Mosupa was taken on as an additional gardener when Tsietsi Thabana resigned in March 2017

### **EDUCATION:**

The educational side of Morning Star continues to develop and expand and our little school operates very efficiently under the able leadership of experienced educators, Sarah Wilkins, Roseline Moshone and Evelyn Tshabalala. Roseline has 14 Grade 1's and 4 Grade 2's in her class this year, Sarah Wilkins, 3 Grade 3 pupils and Evelyn, 13 children in her Special Needs Class. The good rapport and loving relationships that exist between the teachers and their pupils is very special and we are blessed, indeed, to have educators who take their jobs seriously & strive to give of their best. Sarah's input and passion in all she does at Morning Star is truly noteworthy. She's now been with us for 7 years and her position as HOD of Education means that she's also involved in the teaching of the Grade R's and doing creative activities with the Grade 2s & 3s each week, overseeing the weekly planning schedules of both preschools and doing motor skill exercises with 3 special needs children. She's also worked on several Policies needed for Morning Star this year for which we are truly thankful.

A big thank you too, to Ms Ellen Molibeli, a retired teacher from Thabong, who comes in 2 mornings per week to help Sarah's class with their Sesotho syllabus.

Our 2 Reception Class teachers do an excellent job getting their little pupils ready for their formal education and for 'big' school each year. Portia Khobi has been our Grade R teacher in Welkom since April 2001 and her passion and eagerness to 'go

the extra mile' have never wavered over time. Teachers Zanele Khambule and Emily Mahlangu in Kutlwanong have done a good job with their 12 pupils this year too.

Our Welkom pre-school enjoys the enthusiastic oversight of Teacher Sylvia Ntholeng and assistants, Melanie Cornelissen and Motshidisi Karreebos. Sylvia's work ethic and enthusiasm for her job are a great encouragement and we are delighted to have her on our staff.

Julia Klip has been the pre-school teacher in Kutlwanong for over a year now and is busy with ECD 4 (Early Childhood Development) Training at Universal College in Welkom this year.

Our well-established toddler groups (Little Stars) for our 2-3-year olds at both Centres are ever a joy to behold! Selloane Maseloa in Welkom and Merriam Moreboli in Kutlwanong do an excellent job overseeing these two groups of children.

Even though fewer babies born to HIV+ mothers are infected with HIV/AIDS themselves these days, we always have several vulnerable little ones who need our daily care in order to thrive and survive. The Child Care Worker caring for them this year is Joyce Monyane. She has 3 little ones between the ages of 16 – 24 months to mother and love and one, close to 3 years of age, who has cerebral palsy as well as HIV/AIDS.

Of ongoing concern is how many of our HIV+ (positive) school-going children are struggling academically and not progressing year-on-year. Scientific proof that the brain development of a child born with HIV/ AIDS and who is symptomatic in early childhood, is stunted, which, in turn, affects memory and concentration skills, is evident all around us. It could be that up to half of our school-going children (so about 300) are similarly affected. What will become of this group of children is of grave concern to us at Morning Star as we're well aware that they're leaving their Township schools uneducated, with no life-skills to fall back on in adult life.

A big thank you to all my staff involved in the care and education of our children. It's good to know that we are giving our children more than they'd get at other educational institutions and that we are better equipping them for their formal school careers.

### **KUTLWANONG MORNING STAR CENTRE:**

Our Kutlwanong Centre continues to enjoy the able leadership of Anna Matiyase as Manager. Anna ensures that everything operates efficiently and that the 7 staff

members under her do their jobs properly. Each week Sr. Pulane Leeuw and an additional member of Management from Welkom visits the Kutlwanong Centre whilst Pastor Vincent Nkhobo continues to lead staff devotions there 3 x per week. Our garden in Kutlwanong has never looked better and we have Shedreck Hollane to thank for a job very well done. At present, there are 40 children attending our Kutlwanong Centre.

### **TRANSPORT:**

Transporting our children back and forth each weekday remains a massive operation and fuel alone costs us in the region of R25, 000.00 per month. Maintaining 8 vehicles, keeping tabs on licencing deadlines, service plans, our children's safety etc. is almost a fulltime job for Operations Manager, Elizabeth vd Westhuizen. God has truly blessed and prospered our ministry over the years and I thank Him for His provision and for keeping our children safe on the roads.

In the course of this past year gardener, Papiki Monyane got his driver's licence. Having one of our gardeners with a licence is of great advantage as it frees our drivers up from having to take the gardeners to the Kutlwanong Centre, the Kowie Street property or town all the time. Papiki and our new driver, Tshepiso Dlamini, are still to be sent up to Pretoria for the advanced driving course before the end of this year.

A big thank you to our drivers Vusi Sithole, Johannes Wettes, Tokelo Mambo and Tshepiso Dlamini for ever being willing to 'go the extra mile' and being prepared to work longer hours if need be. Your commitment to Morning Star is deeply appreciated.

### **OUR OTHER REGULAR ACTIVITIES:**

- Weekly In-Service Training for our Child Care Workers takes place each week both at our Welkom and Kutlwanong Centres.
- Monthly Support Group Meetings – geared towards our children's parents/ carers – are held once a month in both Thabong and Kutlwanong Townships. These meetings are ably chaired by our professional nurse, Sr. Pulane Leeuw, and are generally well supported. A big thank you to Pastor Vincent Nkhobo for faithfully sharing the Gospel with these audiences each month. Only the faithful preaching of God's Word can change the state of individual hearts and of our Nation as a whole.
- Food parcels go out to our 100 most needy families each month. Due to the to the weaker pound/ rand exchange rate and the knock-on effect this has had on

our income, we've had to cut our food parcels down from 140 to 100 each month, as of the beginning of this year. This means that only families with an income of R760.00 or less per month qualify for a food parcel these days. A big thank you to our local Woolworths Store for keeping Morning Star on as one of the beneficiary charities year-on-year. Their expired food donations each Friday are a huge boost and enable us to give out healthy food to the most vulnerable of our families and to use the excess for the feeding of our own children as well. As ever, we're totally dependent upon God, the generosity of the community and our faithful overseas supporters, for continuing to meet this hugely important need.

- Staff devotions take place each morning from 7.45 – 8.30am. Thank you Joshua Bolaji, Vincent Nkhobo, Phil Carmichael, Kyle Klemcke, Matowane (Frans) Radebe, Louis O' Tool and Tebogo Mokoko (and visiting overseas pastors) for faithfully preaching God's Word in our midst. We are a privileged staff to have benefitted from sound Biblical teaching all these years and my prayer remains that every staff member will be transformed by the Gospel before they die.
- Our second-hand clothing shop continues to boost our coffers and has brought in about R13, 000.00 over the past 12 months. Their annual income is largely dependent upon the number of clothing donations received over the course of each year. We always welcome donations of second-hand clothes at Morning Star so please spread the news! A big thank you to Louise Brady, Alison Geleta, Lee Stewart and Maki Mosimane for their commitment to this cause and for the time they've given to sort, mark and dispose of our adult clothing donations over the past year.
- Our Teens Meetings for children 14 years and over continue to take place every 3 month with up to 87 youngsters attending per time. The ongoing support of these meetings is heart-warming as is the enthusiastic response to Pastor Vincent's preaching each time. Vincent now has a whole hour with these youngsters so as to properly address all their queries.
- A Bible Study for our school-leavers/older teens continues once a month at our Welkom Centre as well. These are chaired by Pastor Vincent. On average, 15-20 youngsters attend and it's encouraging how consistent most of them are.

- At the end of 2016 a group of these young people were selected to attend the Welkom Baptist Church's annual Youth Camp. This was so good for them and thoroughly enjoyed by all. We trust we'll be invited again and that we can add this event to our annual calendar.
- Jeanne Herbst, English HOD at St Dominic's College, has been conducting a monthly "Poetry Jam" at Morning Star since the beginning of 2017. These sessions follow-on from the monthly Bible Studies and have proved very popular with our teenagers. It's an eye-opener for us staff members to note what our youngsters are expressing through poetry – a bit like having a glimpse into their souls!
- Morning Star's annual sea trips remain a firm highlight each year. Thus far 15 trips have been undertaken and 250 of our teenagers have seen the ocean for the first time in their lives. In March this year, 30 children were taken down to Hibberdene, Kwa Zulu Natal – our biggest group yet! 29 of them were 14 years of age and one, a 17-year-old. Sadly, Thabo Sephiri, the 17-year-old, died in June 2017. He was not well on the trip but determined to participate and keep up with every activity undertaken. And we're so glad he could accompany us before his death!
- Our annual Gogos' (Grandmothers') Christmas Party is always a popular event and well attended. This function takes place on the last Saturday in November each year and is geared for grandmothers who are our children's primary carers at home. It gives us the opportunity to thank them and spoil them a bit for the unexpected roles they play in their grandchildren's lives once their parents have died from AIDS-related symptoms. We do get a few grandfathers attending these functions as well who claim they're their grandchild's primary carer at home!!
- Our Annual Vegetable-Growing Competition in the Townships remains an integral part of our yearly calendar. Each August about 30 participants avail themselves of the training on offer and enthusiastically dig their trenches and plant their seed. Unfortunately, several lose interest along the way and give up. For those that persevere the 1<sup>st</sup> prize of R1000.00 is always an incentive to keep going. The winner of our 2016/2017 competition was Ms Julia Motlounge from Kutlwanong and it was amazing to see what beautiful vegetables she grew despite the limited resources at her disposal.

We remain indebted to the Welkom Rotary Club and Mr Johan Strydom from Bevans for their support and monetary assistance each year.

### **FUNDRAISING:**

Fundraising for Morning Star continues to be a huge challenge as about R350,000.00 per month is needed to keep our Organization running efficiently. Almost all of our income comes from the United Kingdom these days and Joan's annual fundraising trips remain the main source.

My 2017 trip took place in June this year and over a period of 3 weeks, Glenys Barham and I travelled 2,200 miles, slept in 17 different beds, banked over 16,000.00pds (including the sale of Pelo&Hart merchandise) and sponsored out 33 new children (of which 27 were to new sponsors). What Morning Star would do without the generous support of our friends overseas I shudder to imagine! We certainly couldn't meet all our challenges and sustain our Organization without their unwavering commitment to our ministry here in Welkom. I thank God for them all and for their sacrificial giving to the children we serve.

The Morning Star Board is in the process of determining how best to fundraise for our Organization in the future as it's uncertain how much longer I will be able to undertake these annual trips and remain the sole source of income for Morning Star.

Local monetary funding and assistance 'in kind' is never frowned upon and we remain indebted to the Free State Department of Public Works for our premises and cost-free utilities at Kopano Complex for the past 17 ½ years. We're never sure when our eviction notice will be served but, whilst all is quiet, we try our best to not "rock the boat." in any way.

No further assistance is received from the Free State Government towards our operations at all. Funding from the Dept. of Social Development ceased 2 years ago.

### **NEW PREMISES – 44 KOWIE STREET, ST HELENA:**

In light of the fact that our Welkom premises don't belong to us and we're never sure when our eviction notice will be served, the Board of Governors took the step to purchase alternative premises in Welkom during the course of this past year.

Financing of this venture and paying for the premises in cash was made possible mainly as a result of the big fundraiser organized by Bill Muddyman & Linda Gardiner at the BT Towers in London in October 2013. This money has been in savings all this time.

Our new premises, 44 Kowie Street, are presently subdivided into 4 flats but were formerly a pre-primary school. Thankfully, they are still educationally zoned which

means we'll be able to continue our operations there should the need arise to relocate. They also lend themselves to future development and expansion. Unfortunately, they were in a terrible state of disrepair upon purchase and are continuing to cost us a lot of money month-on-month. At present, we only have tenants in 2 of the flats and are hoping that the rental agency, Barbour & Thorne, will find additional tenants for the other 2 flats soon.

### **MORNING STAR VOLUNTEERS:**

Morning Star continues to enjoy the input of both local and overseas volunteers each year.

Our own mothers/guardians have served as our local volunteers over the past several years. We employ only those who are already benefiting from our assistance each month – through food parcels etc. and give them the opportunity to say 'thank you' for the help rendered. These women are utilized in the kitchen with the preparation of meals/ washing of dishes and also with the cleaning of our premises/windows. Although there's a fairly high degree of absenteeism and lack of commitment amongst them, we do have several very faithful ones who come each week. We are deeply thankful to them for their services.

We've had a lot of UK volunteers over the past year. Since our last AGM we've enjoyed the assistance of:

- Alison Jelfs (Worcester, UK) – July 2016
- Amy Peat (Sheffield, UK) – July/August 2016
- Peter & Glenys Barham (Worcester, UK) – September 2016.
- Fiona Muliette & Beth Armitage (Worcester, UK) – September 2016
- Emma Keedwell (Yatton, UK) – October to December 2016.
- Steve & Lindsay Knibbs, Rachel White, Nicola Solesbury & Al & Becky Campbell-Grieve (Bedford, UK) – November 2016.
- Bill Muddyman and Linda Gardiner (Esher, Surrey) – January 2017
- Dave & Jan Isherwood – January 2017
- Everton & Jeanette Macleod – February 2017

- Hannah Elliot and Jo & Ed Flexney (West Yorkshire, UK) – April 2017
- Ben Robinson (Ipswich, UK) – April to June 2017
- In September 2017 we have a few folk visiting from Australia but all only for a day or two: They are Judie Turner, Bob & Ellen Iseman, Dave & Chris Pomery & children and Charmaine Wheatley and fellow Rotarians from Queensland. Charmaine & Co. will be giving out free spectacles at MS on 5<sup>th</sup> September and handing over 10 wheelchairs.

Our overseas volunteers are ever a joy in our midst. They're always willing to go the extra mile, tackle any task allotted to them and are generally a true example of Christian love and compassion.

### **MANAGEMENT AND STAFF:**

My heartfelt thanks go to my Management Team (Elizabeth, Liza, Pulane & Sarah) for their unwavering support of Morning Star over the past year. It's a pleasure working with you all and being on the receiving end of your individual strengths and skills. Thank you, Elizabeth, for being the best 'right-hand' assistant I could wish for and for running Morning Star so efficiently in my absence. Thank you, Liza, for all your hard work in the accounting office and for keeping our financial matters on track. I'm ever astounded by the rapid way you work out equations and remember figures and facts! A big thank you to Tebogo Makoko, too, Liza's new assistant accountant, for your integrity and commitment to detail.

Shiwe Nkuna, my Social Auxiliary Worker, what would I do without your assistance and support? Thank you for your willingness, always, to go the extra mile in assisting our never-ending stream of needy clients and for taking the brunt of their rudeness at times.

A big thank you to Dineo Moroane, our Receptionist (the best we've ever had), our efficient clothing control personnel, Lindsay Leonard & Mapulane Mokoena, Tricia Dargie, our Correspondence Secretary, our hard-working kitchen staff, Camilla, Maria and Ntsoaki Sehlabo and our excellent team of gardeners, Papiki, Stephen, Petrus, Shedreck & John. A big thank you, too, to Ron & Elissa Gould who assist in the vegetable gardens each week. They are both in their 70s but have the energy and stamina of people half their age! The gardens are a picture of productivity and we are absolutely delighted with all that's produced for our children's consumption each week.

My special thanks to our faithful cleaners, Bronica and Evelyn. Theirs is not an easy job and I always say they are the most indispensable staff members of all!

## **BOARD OF GOVERNORS:**

I'd like to express my deep appreciation to our Board of Governors for their marvellous support of Morning Star over the past 12 months. No words can convey how deeply each of you is valued and appreciated. My special thanks go to our chairman, Joshua Bolaji, and Treasurer, Kevin Lombard, who can be called upon at any time for advice and for the many hours they 'give' Morning Star each year. Board Meetings continue quarterly and are always well supported and enriching.

Many thanks, too, to my husband Ron for all he does for Morning Star behind the scenes. Thank you for your willingness to pick up overseas volunteers from OR Tambo Airport, for collecting all and sundry in donations from all over Johannesburg and for often fixing things at Morning Star over the weekends.

And, as ever, all praise and thanks to Almighty God for meeting our every need at Morning Star for another year. Despite the weaker pound/ rand exchange rate and the knock-on effect this has had on our income, our children are still well fed, we have enough money to run our 8 vehicles each day and our 40-strong personnel still get their salaries at the end of every month.

For me, what an awesome privilege to serve Christ here and to reach out and minister to the poorest and neediest of our society, year-on-year. Work like ours serves as a daily reminder of how much we have to be thankful for and how much we take for granted.

**In a 100 years' time nobody will care how much money you earned:  
But the world may be different because you were important in the life of a child.**

My prayer, as ever, is that Christ will remain pivotal to what this Organisation stands for and that we, His servants, will ever reflect His glory in all we do and say.

*“Do not be daunted by the enormity of the world's grief.  
Do justly, now  
Love mercy, now  
Walk humbly, now  
You are not obligated to complete the work but neither are you free to abandon it.”*

***THE TALMUD***