

# PASTURE VALLEY CHILDREN'S HOME

## NEWSLETTER-AUGUST 2012

\* In faith

we grow

Psalm 46:7-10 "The Lord Almighty is with us, The God of Jacob our refuge. Come and see what the Lord has done. See what amazing things he has done on earth. He stops wars all over the world; He breaks bows, destroys spears and sets shields on fire. "Stop fighting" he says, "and know that I am God, supreme among the nations, supreme over the world."

This is my prayer for Swaziland at this time. It is a difficult time for Swaziland as I will explain in our news below. But let me start with more positive news...



A while ago I received a letter of request from a preschool in the Magubheleni area for assistance in providing chairs and some tables for their school. These were then ordered and about 2 weeks ago Claire, Megan (a friend of Claire's), Siyabonga and

myself set out for an outreach to that area. We loaded 48 chairs, 12 tables, mops, clothes, food parcels, blankets and other supplies and had to pack things on the roof of the vehicle because there was no more space inside.

Our first stop was Magubheleni Primary school that also runs a preschool. The kids all looked from the fence as we arrived and off loaded the first of the chairs and tables. We unpacked 6 tables each child



was given his/her own chair. We sang "The Love of Jesus is so Wonderful" with them. The teacher was so grateful.

We then went to a second preschool past the clinic. After a drive through a river bed, a forest and some homesteads, we came to the little preschool that consisted of a mud and stick room with a mud floor. It was wonderful and heart-warming to see how much effort the teachers had gone to to teach the children in such an environment. The one room was used for cooking the children a meal each day and the other a classroom. There was hardly any room to put the tables in, but there was great excitement. The



feeding programme had previously been supported by World Vision, but funds have been reduced and

they are no longer able to support these children daily. We left some food and hope to be able to support them in the future. It was a great blessing to be able to see the children each sitting in a chair and praying the Lord's prayer with them as they clutched to their oranges.



We also visited with 2 families that are being supported through our Child Support Programme and were able to bless them with blankets, clothing and food. Each time I visit a home, I am reminded of the great burden and sacrifice so many of these courageous ladies go through daily just to keep themselves and their children and their relatives children alive.



We were visited by the Head Teacher of Gege Methodist Primary school, Mr Dlodlu. He brought 3 caretakers of families that were in need in his area to speak to us to find a way in which we could help each family. From this visit we identified 14 children that need food, school clothes, school shoes and even shelter. We have supplied some food to these families and have bought school shoes which we hope to take to them soon.

The number of children being supported has been increased to 59.

## SWAZILAND TEACHERS GO ON STRIKE!

About 10 weeks ago the teachers at all government schools (Primary and High Schools) went on strike. Government had told all teachers that they would not be giving any increases this year due to an effort to try and reduce country debt. For the first week the children would go to school and then be told to go home. Most children would hang around the school most of the day with no supervision. After the second week the teachers told the children not to come to school at all. We initially thought it was a temporary strike and kept hoping that it would be resolved. After the third week, there was no resolution and we made plans to start teaching the children



ourselves at Pasture Valley. The children all dressed for school and lined up each morning in front of the education centre for Bible reading and prayer. Mike, Gail, Marielle, Priscilla and myself each taught 2 -3 grades. I was so grateful to have volunteers to help us during that time. We soon realized that the children did not know some basic foundation concepts and these had to be retaught. In most cases the children are 2-3 grades behind the South African educational system. The strike continued for 7 weeks until

government declared that all teachers had to go back to school or would not be paid. Some teachers returned, others went to find other jobs and some returned and then did not teach and left the children in the classrooms unsupervised all day. **The reality is that 7-8 weeks ( almost a term) has been lost for the entire Swaziland and the children are the ones that suffered.** The children are now writing exams for the first terms work again and then break for holiday for a month. The king has called all people to his royal kraal (stick enclosure) for 3 days to discuss matters. Swaziland needs your prayers.

### PROTECTION OF THE CHILDREN

Our staff reported a story a few weeks ago that sent shivers down my spine! A small child was left outside a shop by her mother in Hluti (where some of our children go to school) to guard her bags as she did shopping. A stranger grabbed this child and climbed onto a combi (taxi) to Nhlanguano. The child cried loudly and people asked the stranger (a lady) why. She told them the child was missing her mother



and she was taking her to the relatives. She climbed off and several hours later boarded the same combi on the way back with a bucket. The combi driver was suspicious and called the traffic police ahead and asked them to arrange a road block. He left his seat belt off so that they could pull him off the road and check the vehicle. The police opened the bucket to find the child chopped up into pieces. The lady was on her way to sell the body parts to witchdoctors who use the bodyparts for medicine. Their clients are people who want prominent

positions in government. Please pray for the protection of all children in Swaziland.

### MAKING SOAP

Liliana (from Portugal) is a trained aromatherapist and kindly made the time to come and teach the children and ourselves how to make soap from raw materials. The process is fascinating. We were considering looking at making soap with the Bambanani group ladies but would need to consider the safety aspects of the process.



A VISIT FROM THE LAND OF OZ

Who would have believed that it was possible to deliver 8 water tanks to 8 locations in the Shiselweni area within 3 days? This was the task that lay ahead of these amazing ladies from Australia when they came to stay with us last week. Rosalie, Fran and Elizabeth had collected some funds to help Swaziland through a connection near Hlatikulu. They were able to meet the minister of Health and had their mission broadcast on radio. They had a truly cultural experience. It was a great honour to meet them.



#### MISSION HOUSE NOW FINALLY OCCUPIED

With the electricity and water supply finally connected, the van Raaij family moved into the Mission house at Pasture Valley on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of August. The inside is beautifully painted, but the outside will be done at a later stage. The kitchen and bedroom cupboards also need to be installed. Welcome van Raaij family!

#### TEENAGER BIBLE STUDIES

The children still come faithfully to our girls and boys bible study evenings once a week. They have developed so much since it first started and are now leading some of the sessions. It is wonderful to see



how the lessons unfold and the preparation that went into it to share God's word with one another.

#### A NEW MENU

Much training has been done to ensure that the housemothers understand what a nutritious meal should contain. However, there was a tendency towards giving the children the food they are familiar with and repeat the same staple for all 3 meals of the day. A fixed menu outlining salads and vegetables for each day has now been

implemented and we hope it will help towards ensuring healthier children. The vegetable gardens are looking wonderful at the moment and we recently also harvested some honey and gooseberries from the farm.

## T-SHIRTS

One of our previous volunteers sent us a kind donation for the children. We managed to get some T-shirts made up for all the staff and children and they are great for outings and occasions.



## BIRTHDAYS AND FAREWELLS

We sadly said good-bye to Marielle who had been a great help in teaching the grade 4,5 and 6's during the teachers strike. She also painted the dairy shed out really well and it looks like a new facility. We are most grateful to her for her hard work.



sweets.

On Friday we sang happy birthday to for Prescilla who celebrated her 21<sup>st</sup> found a job in South Africa and will be are so pleased that she found something she would enjoy and grow in.

We also celebrated the birthdays of 3 special ladies (Eunice, Nelly and Thandi) this last month. They all put on their Pasture Valley T-shirts and looked so smart for the occasion. We are very blessed to have such wonderful housemothers. Birthday parties are



always happy occasions with lots of singing, opening of presents and lots of eating of cake and

4 of our children and birthday. She has starting this week. We

## BAMBANANI

The Bambanani home based care group workers were visited by a group from Project Glory in the USA last month. They helped with ideas on various designs for necklaces and gave the ladies some pointers about what was popular and what would sell. They have also supported the project by purchasing a lot of

necklaces. This project is going from strength to strength and Gail has done a wonderful role in supporting these ladies monthly with training and buying sessions. The third Mlambo group met this week and more shopping bags were made from recycled plastic. A friend will be coming out this week to strengthen and teach them sewing skills. SOS Childrens homes have also asked if their community carers could join in the sewing lesson.



## THANK YOU

Once again thank you to all of you who have donated so many things and provided funding for the children and all the supporting projects at Pasture Valley.

## PRAYER NEEDED

Please continue to pray for:

- Protection from fires during this dry and windy season.
- Protection of children and ongoing prayer for the children's court cases. There has been no progress.
- For the School trip next week where about 10 of our children will spend 1 or 3 days travelling around Swaziland and learning about their culture and heritage.
- For good health of all the children. One of our children spent a week in hospital last week. Fluid was coming out of her ears and she had sores around her head. She was given daily injections and is much better.
- For the building of the youth house- we are struggling to get a bulldozer to come out and level the land.
- For the children's education and that they are able to catch up the work lost. Please also pray for them as they are writing exams this week. Most of the children have almost finished their exams.
- In thanks for God's provision for our needs

May God bless you!

With love,

Peter, Michelle and all the children at Pasture Valley Children's home