

# PASTURE VALLEY CHILDREN'S HOME NEWSLETTER-

## APRIL 2012

★ In faith we grow

**Psalm 27:10 " For my father and mother have forsaken me, but the Lord will take me up"**

As I write, I hear the voices of the children singing a praise song at the Education centre for our Thursday afternoon church service on the farm. I am reminded that without our Lord, what are we?

### PASTURE VALLEY HOSTS MORE CHILDREN

The Police Child Protection Unit visited us yesterday and brought a child with them. Little Demi (not her real name) was abandoned by her mother at 2 weeks. Her father asked a neighbour to care for his child and then also abandoned her. She is 6 years old. The police are trying to locate the parents and have asked Pasture Valley to care for her on a temporary basis until they can resolve the case. Please pray that they are able to find the parents and for compassionate hearts.



Besides Demi, Pasture Valley also plans to host some of the children that are part of our support programme such as a child that does not have any parents and a blind child. Pasture Valley was also asked to counsel a child that is pregnant and has a lot of issues to work through. We need to give people hope. Hope in Jesus leads to life in abundance!

### MAGUBHELENI ORCHARD PLANTING



Once more we set off to Magubheleni Primary school with a car full of fruit trees, hosepipes, implements and ornamentals. We met with the headteacher and the agriculture teacher. Peter gave the children a lesson on how to plant a tree and the children gladly participated in placing the trees out at the holes dug for the trees.

The ornamental shrubs were placed in front of the classrooms and they looked great.



## CHILD AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

In our last newsletter we shared our vision of supporting the Magubheleni area. We did not know what God wanted us to do there and so we prayed. Yesterday the Principle Secretary of the school board and the headteacher came to visit us at Pasture Valley. They were grateful for the work done there and have invited us to join hands with them to make a difference in the area through their church. There are many poor and child headed families in the area and the headteacher (pictured on the left) and church have identified those in need. The headteacher presented us with a list of 45 children in need. They have invited us to find a location from which clothes and food can be distributed and to see the clinic which is also part of the Alliance Church mission station. We have agreed to meet with their HIV women support group and discuss the families in need and draw up a development plan for 3 of such families. We also hope to assist them with a vegetable garden project they want to do. We were really honoured when we were asked to come and visit their church and to preach there within a few weeks. What a wonderful way of getting to know the community! We cannot believe how God has opened doors for His work to happen in this area.



With the number of children that need support outside Pasture Valley increasing monthly, we realized that we cannot handle this alone. Each child needs follow up and each child has different needs. We are now hoping to appoint a community development officer who will assist us in this task by visiting homesteads and co-ordinating outreaches. Please pray with us as we interview candidates for the position.

### VISIT FROM GRACE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

We were totally blessed by the arrival of 7 families (a total of 30 people) visiting Pasture Valley from Grace Christian Church in Johannesburg. Shortly after their arrival on the Friday evening we had a time of prayer with the group. The following morning the work began as various teams (including some of the older children) set to work by painting David house walls, windows and repainted the beautiful rainbow picture outside. Gutters were put up, gates painted, the kitchen cooking area roof patched and painted and a washing line was erected. A scripture verse was drawn in each of the bedrooms for the children in David house. The little ones were kept busy with craft activities. We all had a traditional “braai” outside that evening. On Sunday we were blessed with a church service at the Education Centre with the worship being accompanied with a trumpet, keyboard, recorder and guitar. May God continue to bless the work of their hands.





We also had a visit from Erica and Heidi from Piet Retief who kindly came out with easter eggs for the children and painted easter eggs as a craft activity with the children. The children had a great time.

## GOOD FRIDAY

This is truly a special day of the year as we remember Christ's sacrifice for us. Somehow, I find it hard to convey how special this event is to the children and how significant it is to our lives. This year we held a service at the education centre in the morning and Gail prepared a craft activity with the children where they pinned their sins to a cross as a reminder of what Jesus did for us. At midday we all attended a service in town and then after lunch I asked all the children to come up onto the mountain with only their bibles, to find a quiet spot on a rock and then to spend that time reflecting on Jesus. At one time I glanced over and saw some of the boys praying and a housemother crying. It was a special time.



## VOLUNTEERS



Priscilla (Poppie) Terblance is currently volunteering at Pasture Valley. She has been a great help with teaching preschool in the mornings and tutoring the older children in the afternoons. She will also be helping out with the holiday programme which will be a great help.

## BUILDING PROJECTS

The outside kitchen cooking area is finally completed and it is much used and appreciated. The children and housemothers love gathering around the fire as a big three legged pot cooks in the centre. We are most grateful to Willie and the van Somerens for all the work done to get it built. It certainly makes a change from sitting under the big mulberry tree!

Now that the outside kitchen area is complete, the focus will be now be on completing the mission house. The walls have been plastered and roof completed.

Please pray with us as we start to plan for the building of a youth house at Pasture Valley. We are thinking of modifying an existing structure near the dairy which has no electricity or water connection. The alternative is to build another structure close to the childrens home, but this will be a more expensive option. The two older girls and Aunty Thandi will live in the youth house and they will take on more responsibility by cooking their own meals and purchasing their own groceries. It is painful transition for all of us, but one that is necessary.



## KINGS BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

Today we attended the king's 44th birthday celebration with the children. The king came to little Nhlngano this year to celebrate the event. Our ears are still ringing from the twenty canon shots that went off merely 50 meters from us! But the children had a great experience and the event was colourful and entertaining.

## WE HAVE A WINNER!

One of our girls walked away with 2 medals at the interschool athletics competition this year for 100 m and long jump. The school selects 2 children to compete against other schools in the region. What is confusing for us to understand is that there are no age group races. All girls aged 11 and above compete in the same race. Since she is only 11 she ended up competing against girls almost double her size and much older and then beat them! She is fast! We are very proud of her achievement. We are hoping to find out more about how we can develop her talent.



## FIRST AID AND HYGIENE TRAINING

Rashes, coughs, sores and broken bones are all part of the mixed bag of treatments that need to be administered almost daily at Pasture Valley.... A first aid course was desperately needed for our staff and housemothers. Lauren (from Peace Corps) kindly offered to give the course. We invited a caregiver from another childrens home as well and the participants were each given a test and certificate at the end of the day. Bathroom hygiene and the importance of dusting training was also given to the housemothers by Lizel these last 2 months.



## BAMBANANI PROJECT NEWS

So much has happened with the Bambanani groups these last few months. A sewing teacher, Sibongile, was selected and appointed to give a sewing course to the ladies over a period of 10 days. The Mbangweni group of ladies have completed their initial course and were delighted and eager to learn. Sibongile is currently teaching the second group at Dwaleni at the moment.

Gail has taught the Holneck- Mlambo group how to make beautiful bookmarks from dried flowers and organizations such as World Vision and CampGlow have placed orders for these bookmarks.



Last weekend Tammy Klopper came to Pasture Valley to teach the ladies how to make beautiful shopping bags from waste

plastic. The ladies left with big smiles especially after being paid for their produce and well deserved efforts. We are still hoping to be able to find shops in South Africa that will sell the products made.

We recently interviewed 4 ladies that have been with Bambanani for 2 years now and asked them if the project had any impact on their lives. I was touched at their responses as they shared that they loved the fellowship, the laughing at the meetings, learning something new and the ability to be able to buy something for their families and themselves. Jobs are not easily available and at retirement age it is hard to earn a living by toiling on the land. The crafts allow them to work with their hands.

## HARVEST FROM THE LAND

The children have just brought me a packet of delicious sweet potatoes- the first of the season. Yesterday they came to me to let me know that the guinea fowls were eating the sweet potatoes and that if we did not get to them first then we would not get any at all. I smiled- it was time to harvest them and the children were just reminding me of this! We fortunately have 2 big fields full. Plenty for everyone.

## ADVISORY BOARD

Pasture Valley has really grown in the last 2 years (by God's grace). Sometimes Peter and I feel overwhelmed by what is happening. We felt that it was necessary for us to have an advisory board with people from our church and community that love Jesus to assist us in making decisions and to whom we could be accountable. We are grateful to all those chosen for your time and commitment.

## HOLIDAY PROGRAMME

The children's school holidays started today and we have a jam-packed holiday programme planned for them including reading, computer studies, crafts and some sporting activities in the afternoons. We would like to teach the children how to play badminton and volley ball this holiday. A trip to South Africa is also planned and bookings made where ten children will visit a Science Centre. The centre also offers career guidance tests and helps children with information on careers available. We are hoping that this will help the children

## PRAYER REQUESTS

Please join us in praying for:

- Health and safety of children daily
- Health and safety of staff, volunteers and housemothers. Gogo Constance was once again hospitalized for 3 days recently due to swollen feet and chest problems.
- Our teenager bible study weekly meetings with the girls and boys separately
- For the planning of the youth house and the transition that will take place later in the year for the 2 girls
- For 4 of our girls who will need to face their relative in a court case tomorrow after being abused. The courts and facing their relative can be extremely intimidating and not very child friendly. Please pray for strength and courage.
- For Sipehelele as he has his front tooth repaired this holiday
- For progress on the mission house building and completion thereof
- For all the children that are part of the support programme. For their health and relationship with Jesus.
- For the appointment of a new community development officer
- For the beginning of co-operation with Magubheleni Alliance Church and for wisdom

**A special thanks to all of you who gave so generously during this period. Thank you for your prayers and kindness shown.**

May God bless you,

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

**Isaiah 7: 9 ... "If you do not stand firm in your faith, then you will not stand at all"**