

# PASTURE VALLEY CHILDREN'S HOME

## NEWSLETTER-DECEMBER 2011

\*In

faith we grow



Luke 2: 10-11 "Then the angel said to them, " Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be for all people. For there is born to you today in the City of David, a Saviour who is Christ the Lord. "

It certainly is a month for remembering the great gift that was given to us and the joy of celebrating Christ's birth! This year has gone past so quickly. Here is a little Pasture Valley news...

### HOLIDAY PROGRAMME

There is nothing that makes my heart glad like the sound of children playing. The boys are making go-

carts outside from scraps of wood and steel materials. Some are riding bicycles.

The holidays have finally started after a long year. The children will have almost a 2 month break from school over Christmas and January 2012. We planned a holiday programme for the children which has included activities such as learning how to type on a computer, how to play chess, manners, electricity use, cooking, baking and making Christmas cards. After this activity the children do some reading or mathematics. In the afternoons, Gail



and Lauren teach 2 groups of 8 children how to swim. The guest house has kindly allowed us the use of their pool and the children have really enjoyed this and have made good progress in their swimming. We have also started to practice the Christmas play where all the children have a part to play and some will be doing some dancing too. There was much excitement as each child was allocated their respective roles. We plan to do the play on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of December.

Peter spent a morning teaching some of the children how to ride a horse. Some of the children were confident and enjoyed the riding, while others were petrified of the horse. Everyone had a turn even if it meant conquering some fears first.

### BLUEBERRY HARVEST

Pasture Valley harvested their first very small crop of blueberries in November. We are very excited over this crop!



We have also planted a large plum orchard this month in time for the first rains. Unfortunately, it was also in time for our first hail storm in many years. The small trees were a bit battered but have survived and we hope to be harvesting their fruit in a few years.

### TRIP TO THE USA

In October Gail and I headed to the States. After hearing so much about the USA from volunteers at Pasture Valley, I was really pleased to finally visit there for the first time. After a brief stay in Washington DC we flew to Columbus, Ohio and a presentation at Jones Middle School. Molly Meily and her Grade 6 class had collected various items for the children such as shoes and stationary and it was wonderful to meet them that day.

We did various presentations at churches and were able to share stories about Swaziland and Pasture Valley. In Sarasota, Florida, I was able to visit ECHO, an organization that strives to teach various agricultural methods to rural farmers throughout the world. We were also graciously received by the Retirement Centre and were able to give a presentation there too. In Washington DC I was able to meet up with some Pasture Valley friends and was blessed by more supplies for the children through Shirley Turner.

We are so grateful to all who helped us during this trip and for all the support we received.



### SCHOOL RESULTS- END OF THE YEAR

This is always a nail biting time for the kids as they await their end of the year results. Some had worked so hard through the year, while some of the children do not do their best. Mike and Gail and many others have helped year round during the daily tuition/homework time where help is given and book resources are available. The housemothers have been assisting with Siswati. God has once again been so good. All the children have been promoted to the following grade from Stella and David houses except for one child. The children who are in the new Timothy house were at a disadvantage as they had to switch schools three quarters through they school year and some of them found the new school environment rather challenging. The change from a rural school to a town school has also been hard. We found that some of these children do not know how to read properly despite being



in Grade 4. So, sadly, many of these children were not promoted to the next grade and will have to repeat the year of schooling.

We are so proud of many of the children that we know did their best and even though they are not on top of their grade, they worked hard and passed. Little Sphe (grade 1) not only came in first position in his class of 46, he came first for his entire grade! Sibusiso (Grade 2) also came first in his class of 58.

### PASTURE VALLEY ACHIEVERS!



Sandile has done really well and received an award for second position in Religious Education in his school. He was also awarded a certificate for Soccer. Well done Sandile. We are proud of you!

### VISIT FROM TIM DELLER AND FRIENDS

Tim Deller and his friends Greg, Travis and Mike visited us in November. We had a small thanksgiving and blessing ceremony and all the children in Timothy house stood behind the ribbon as Tim did the honours in cutting it as its official opening of the house. His contribution to building this house has made the difference to these children and more to come.



### BAMBANANI PROJECT

We have been so blessed by how this project has progressed. The first group of ladies are making beautiful paper bead jewelry and more and



more people are wanting to buy their produce. The third group of ladies have completed making their first paper crosses for Christmas decorations and are learning new skills. They meet at Pasture Valley education centre once a month.

## LITTLE FRUIT TREE ORCHARD PROJECT

We have started with the first of what we hope will be many fruit tree plantings in our region. The aim of the project is to plant fruit trees that will provide fruit to the schools feeding programme for the children and the poor in the community around it. The aim is also to teach the community and the children how to plant and care for fruit trees and to encourage them to plant trees in the future.

Joppa Primary school (about 8 km from us) and their head teacher and staff agreed to plant an orchard near their school which is fenced off. The holes were dug and an assortment of fruit trees were brought including pomagranates, pears, apples, peaches and others. The students participated in the planting and asked many questions.



## OUTREACHES

We have followed up on the homesteads we are trying to support around us. Mealie meal and food was delivered to them. During one of these visits I saw once again how the children had very little to wear.

We want our children to appreciate what they have and in turn learn to give to others. On Thursday we will be packing up little gift parcels of clothes and food (from our garden) and then take small groups of children to various communities around us to distribute to those in need. We hope that they will learn to give to others as they grow.

## THANK YOU



We received a surprise donation from T's Tools in town of a brand new brush cutter. This is appreciated as there is a lot of grass around Pasture Valley orchards, the childrens home and the education centre that needs cutting this time of the year.

Thank you too to so many who have donated clothes, toys and educational materials for the children.

## PRAYER NEEDED

Please continue to pray for:

- We have been approached to help take in some children. We will be going to fetch them on Thursday. We do not know their names or whether they are boys or girls. All we know is that they have no one to care for them and the thought of them being alone during Christmas really saddened me.
- Michael broke his arm while playing soccer and it is currently in a cast in a sling. Please pray for speedy recovery of his arm.
- Constance has recently not been well and has swollen feet and asthma. Please pray for her health.
- Gail, Willie and the van Raaij family children have all been unwell with flu. Please pray for their health and strength.
- The mission house is now at roof height. Please continue to pray for the building thereof.
- We are considering appointing a driver for the childrens home. Please pray for God's wisdom and guidance of this appointment.
- We have a lot of maintenance (cupboards to be made) and building projects (communal eating area) that need completion. Please pray for God's provision for these projects
- Swaziland as a country is struggling financially. Please keep Swaziland in your prayers.
- Thank Jesus for this past year as we have seen the Pasture Valley family grow to 32 children, the appointment of 2 wonderful new housemothers, the completion of the third home and the education centre, the starting of

the building of the mission house and the assistance of the van Raaij family and the many volunteers who have so kindly given of their time to help. We give God the thanks for His provision.

May God bless you and give you His peace and joy in this special festive season as we celebrate Jesus' birthday.

May you have a blessed Christmas and New Year!

With love,

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