

**Newsletter No. 19 – December 2025**

**Twenty students currently in tertiary education**



Thanks to our supporters and the incredible fundraising activities of our young trustees, we have been able to help many of our most determined and brightest of the sponsored students. We started supporting only primary school children. I never imagined that it would be possible to help so many of them get to university. Thank you for making their dreams a reality.

V. McDonaugh

UK Chair

## Help from friends

## Siteki Primary School for the Deaf

### Njabuliso Dlodlu



Njabuliso Dlodlu is a Form 5 graduate and former student at Siteki Primary School for the Deaf. Aided by the Smitherman Foundation in the UK, the SCT supports his work at the school, where he is in charge of maintenance, while also providing a role model and mentor for the students. Following an exceptional performance report by the school's Head Teacher, the Smitherman Foundation has raised his stipend and David Payne and Kate Wilson, who head the Foundation, have given a £200 bonus for his outstanding work.

*Njabuliso with pictures of his work making and repairing furniture at the school.*

## Burglar proofing



The head teacher asked that a donation from Susie Miles, who once worked at the Siteki Primary School for the Deaf, be used to secure the main hall.

*Mrs Thobile Fakudze, Siteki Primary School for the Deaf Head Teacher, next to one of the newly secured windows*

## Pre-school toys and furnishings

Further assistance has enabled the school to convert a storeroom and occasional shelter for the pre-school children during cold & rainy days into a proper classroom. Educational toys, play mats and posters were also supplied to improve their environment and add some fun to learning.



*Toys received by the pre-school children.*





## Sigcaweni Clinic Restoration & Renovation



Sigcaweni Clinic has been renovated and upgraded. It has been given a new lease of life along with the tripling of the clinic's operational and consultation space and improved sanitation. Attendance is increasing and both patient satisfaction and staff morale have improved. The clinic's Head Nurse, Ayanda Msibi, is delighted that increased space allows "for patients to be attended to with dignity and privacy."

Situated on the edge of the drought-prone low veldt in the centre of Eswatini, the clinic is managed by Eswatini Nazarene Health Institutions (ENHI) and staffed by the Ministry of Health.



The renovation was jointly funded with Mbuluzi Rotarians. The Trust's involvement was made possible by a donation from Hampshire GP, Dr Gregory Warner.

Help us support communities, and the organisations assisting them; visit our website at [www.swazilandcharitabletrust.org/how-to-help/](http://www.swazilandcharitabletrust.org/how-to-help/) to make a donation.

## Help from friends

## In Memory of Laura Fish



Family, friends, colleagues, and readers raised £3,547 to honour the memory of author and academic Laura Fish. Thanks to their generosity, four organisations in Eswatini were supported: Swatini Action Group Against Abuse (SWAGAA), Zuzani@Goshen, Phumelela and Eswatini Early Childhood Network.

Laura was in Eswatini at the height of the AIDS pandemic; there she met many child-headed families who had lost their parents as a result of HIV-AIDS. She was committed to helping them, survivors of sexual abuse and young offenders. Her partner, Michael Wild, organised the collection and contacted the Swaziland Charitable Trust to arrange for the funds raised to be used to support projects that were close to her heart.

**Swatini Action Group Against Abuse**, SWAGAA, has been working for over 30 years to end gender-based violence (GBV), sexual abuse and human trafficking in Eswatini. It was instrumental in setting up One-Stop Centres in Manzini and Nhlangano where survivors of gender-based violence can receive coordinated legal, psychological and clinical support from all the relevant government departments. The grant is helping SWAGAA maintain a child-friendly atmosphere at the centres with the provision of toys and play equipment.



**Zuzani@Goshen** serves as a haven and shelter for women and children who are in immediate danger and are fleeing domestic violence. Goshen's mission is to empower women and children to rebuild their lives, reimagine a hopeful future. The grant was used to furnish the kitchen in the newly built hostel with a gas stove, a refrigerator, two gas heaters and a microwave.



**Phumelela** provides mental health services to all citizens of Eswatini without discrimination. The grant supported the reintegration of four young offenders back into their communities. They were provided with seed capital, dignity packs and mental health counselling designed to help them rebuild their lives, regain their independence and reduce the risk of re-offending.

**Eswatini Early Childhood Network** equips educators, caregivers, families, and communities with the skills, knowledge, and resources needed to create transformative learning experiences for young children, including those with special needs. Inclusive play equipment for children with special needs in Manzini was purchased.

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## A day in the life of Khaya Bhembe



12-year-old Khaya lethu Bhembe, tiny but sharp and quick on his feet, is in Grade 5 at Holy Ghost Primary School in the drought-prone eastern low veldt of Eswatini. After Grade 7, he is hoping to go to high school and beams with excitement at the thought of going to Charles Wesley High School. "My Uncle went to Charles Wesley High School and I'd like to go there as well – I like their uniform!" It's quite a distance to his ideal high school but Khaya wasn't daunted by the prospect of getting up at 4:30am, an hour earlier than he does now.

Khaya is a double-orphan living with his partially blind grandmother, his uncle, his wife and their two children, aged four and seven. His mother died when he was 3 months old and his father, in 2021.

Being the oldest child, he normally wakes up early to prepare breakfast for himself and his 7-year old cousin. "I wake up at 05:30 to gather water for heating. We eat at around 6:00, after which the bathwater is usually hot for both of us. We normally take a local kombi to school then walk back." Their grandmother does not have enough money for both journeys, but she insists that they get to school looking neat and clean, even if they get dusty and dirty on their way back home.

"At weekends, I help my uncle herd the family's few remaining cattle. It is quite normal for boys my age. We all grow up seeing our uncles doing it so it is easy for me." Khaya laughed his head off when Sli, the Office Manager, told him that she is afraid of cows!

Khaya joined the SCT scheme in 2022 when he was in Grade 3. He is currently repeating Grade 5 as his performance has been badly impacted by a persistent ear infection. Initially helped by a specialist at the Good Shepherd Hospital in Siteki, some 30km away, the infection has unfortunately returned and the specialist has left. He will now have to seek treatment over 50km away in Manzini.

Regardless of the challenges he is facing, Khaya is determined to do well so that he may achieve his dream of enrolling at Charles Wesley High School.

Khaya is sponsored by the Loveday Charitable Trust. Transport costs are now included in the support offered, along with helping him access medical help.



*Above: Khaya at school. Below: at home with his grandmother.*

## Tertiary Education

### Mzamo Magagula graduates with a BSC in Biochemistry



Mzamo Magagula is thrilled by his success but does not forget that “my achievements would not have been possible without the Swaziland Charitable Trust”.

His journey with the SCT began 11 years ago (2014) at Manzana Primary School when he was in Grade 7. Identified by the head teacher as an able student, he was supported the SCT throughout High School at Dvokolwako, where he completed his Form 5 with exceptional results. This earned him a position at the University of Eswatini (UNESWA) and a government scholarship. The SCT helped him settle into univeristy, bought him a laptop and helped with shortfalls throughout his studies.

When first supported, Mzamo was under the care of his grandmother but living with a family close to the primary school. When he started high school, he was able to live with his grandmother again.

“Without SCT support, it would have been very difficult for me to get this far. Their help with school fees, learning tools and even going as far as assisting me with accommodation while at University provided me with the stability I needed to focus on my studies. The SCT made it possible for me to continue my education, when financial barriers would have stopped me. Their support has changed my life. I pray that the SCT continues helping others and is the hope for them that it has been for me. Words really can't express how grateful I am; the SCT has been with me since I was a kid up until now when I am a man

and all grown up. Thank you.”

Mzamo hopes to continue studying. If he cannot study medicine, his original dream, then he wishes to pursue a Masters in Biology and Chemistry. Mzamo's schooling was made possible by the Riddell family and his university education by Miguel McKelvey.



*Mzamo at Manzana Primary School in 2014.*



## From High School to Tertiary Education – Phetsile Magagula



*Phetsile: former head girl at Mcozini High School and now ready for University.*

Soft-spoken and shy-looking but very intelligent and hard-working, Phetsile Magagula is excited to be starting a new phase of her life: in 2026 she will embark upon a 4-year degree course in Environmental Management & Occupational Safety at the Mbabane campus of the University of Eswatini.

***“I see it as a fresh opportunity to learn, grow and work towards my dreams!. I can’t believe that I have reached these heights.”***

Phetsile dreams of gaining the knowledge and skills needed for a successful career while contributing to her community. “Realizing how far the SCT has come with me, I’ve learnt quite a lot in giving back to the community by all means, so I want to use this chance to improve myself so that I may return to my community and help others,” she said.

Phetsile lives with her widowed mother in the low middle veldt 45kms from Manzini, the country’s commercial centre. She began receiving support in 2018 when she was recommended by the Principal of Antioch Primary School as a good student. Her unemployed mother was unable to pay her school costs. She was 13 years old and studying Grade 6. After Grade 7, she attended the local high school at Mcozini. In her last year, she was appointed head girl, an honour that allowed her to build her confidence and develop leadership skills. She completed Form 5 in 2024 with good results that made her eligible for a government scholarship. Her talent, perseverance and hard work have all paid off and new challenges await.

Phetsile’s schooling was supported by Ruaidhri McDonaugh and her university education was made possible by Jonathan Gilbert’s 2024 sponsored Royal Parks Run.

The SCT currently supports 20 students in tertiary education. Degree courses include Pharmacy, Nursing, Computer Science, Agricultural Engineering & Biological Systems, Tourism Management, Journalism, TV & Film Production, Humanities, Engineering in Electrical & Electronics, Social Work, Nutrition, and Accountancy.

To help support students in tertiary education, visit our website at [www.swazilandcharitabletrust.org/how-to-help/](http://www.swazilandcharitabletrust.org/how-to-help/) to make a donation.

## Siphesihle Shongwe, tech trailblazer!



*Sphesihle with ESSCOM CEO Mvilawempi Dlamini, her grandmother Albertina Dlamini & Macanjane Motsa who is currently serving as the Ministry of Education's Under Secretary.*

In her 2<sup>nd</sup> year of a 5-year degree course in Electrical Engineering and Electronics at the University of Eswatini (UNESWA), Siphesihle has won the Eswatini Communications Commission (ESSCOM)'s award called "Girls in ICT".

"For me, receiving this award is incredibly validating. It means that the long hours spent studying and working on projects beyond the curriculum have been noticed and valued. It's more than a certificate; it's a symbol of my passion for technology. It tells me that I'm on the right path and that my efforts to not just learn, but to understand and create, are meaningful. It's a huge motivation to continue pushing my boundaries and to strive to make a genuine contribution to the field."

Siphesihle is supported by the Baring Foundation.

## Eswatini Hospice at Home



*A Hospice at Home nurse checks a client's blood pressure while on a home visit.*

Eswatini Hospice at Home offers palliative care and counselling for terminally ill clients and their families. They also run a day-care centre, provide training and advice to people with life-limiting conditions and give support to bereaved families.

The SCT has supported Hospice at Home since its establishment in 1990. The latest donation has enabled the reintroduction of its outreach programme following the repair of its vehicle, organised by the Trust in collaboration with Mbabane Motors.

## Hope House Eswatini



*The newly refurbished children's cottage.*

A run down cottage at Hope House has been made habitable thanks to the 2025 grant from the SCT. The Manzini centre is run by Caritas. It offers palliative care to people with terminal illnesses and respite for them and their carers. The cottage is specifically for children and their families.

Hope House receives regular support from the SCT.



## SCT: Lloyd's of London charity awards beneficiary



*Left to right: James St John Davis; Ms Thandazile Mbuyisa, Eswatini's High Commissioner to London; Bruce Carnegie Brown, Lloyd's of London Chair; Vicky McDonaugh, SCT Chair and Rob Mackenzie, SCT Secretary at the Lloyd's of London Foundation Awards Ceremony.*

James St John Davis raised £4,500 for the SCT on the 2024 Royal Parks charity run. In December, he was awarded £10,000 for his nominated charity in the Lloyd's of London charity awards in recognition of his charitable work. The SCT was his chosen charity. The grant will be used to support schools catering for children with special needs, tertiary education and organisations offering palliative care.

The first recipient will be Mbasheni Primary School which needs more water so that agriculture can be expanded and fully integrated into the curriculum. The feasibility and cost of a borehole is currently being ascertained.

Mbasheni Primary sits in the mountains and fertile hills of Northern Hhohho, far from major urban centres. It is an inclusive school which is diligent in its care for children with special needs. In the past, the SCT has supported the school with the purchase of Braille machines to help its blind students.



## Fundraising

Donations mean that we can do so much more. Over 80 young orphans and vulnerable children are in school because sponsors in the UK pay for their school fees and uniforms. Many projects are supported by grants and donations and 30 students have been helped into tertiary education, largely thanks to trustees, Chloe and Jonathan Gilbert and their friends.

## 2025 Royal Parks Half Marathon



*Jonathan, Courtney and little Charlie Gilbert with some of the runners before the start.*

Jonathan Gilbert's runners raised over £10,000 at this year's Royal Parks Half Marathon. This will allow the brightest students finishing high school this December to start tertiary education in September 2026.

The next sponsored run is planned for 2027. If you would like to take part, let us know.

## Chloe's Valentine's Ball



Chloe banished the February chill from a church hall in Exmouth Market, London, with a glamorous Valentine's ball raising further funds to help the brightest 2025 high school graduates go to university.

The event raised over £5,500 for the support of sponsored students in tertiary education.

*Chloe with friends at the February fundraiser.*



## Trust News

### New Eswatini Director, Mrs Janine McCarter



Janine McCarter joined the Eswatini Charitable Trust Board of Directors in October 2024.

Born and raised in Eswatini, Janine began her education at Sidney Williams School in Manzini. She grew up inspired by her parents' dedication to community service; her mother managed Enjabulweni Orphanage, and her father was one of the founders of Enjabulweni School.

In addition to serving as the Internal Auditor for Southern Trading Company (Pty) Ltd, Janine successfully owned and managed her own business for 16 years. She has served on various fundraising committees supporting local causes. Her deep community roots, entrepreneurial experience, and commitment to social responsibility make her a valuable addition to the Trust's mission of uplifting lives across Eswatini.

### New Eswatini Director, Allyson James



Allyson James is a horticulturist and garden designer who has lived in Eswatini for 29 years. Together with her husband, William, she farms in Malkerns, producing seed cane for the Eswatini sugar industry and cultivating macadamia nuts. She brings extensive experience in sustainable agriculture and landscape design, along with a deep commitment to environmental stewardship and community development. Her expertise in the agri-business and agricultural practice will help ensure that the Trust's agricultural projects are profitable and sustainable.

Allyson joined the Eswatini Board in October 2024.

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## Trust News

### Robert Dingizwe Tfwala RIP



*Babe Tfwala at Lwandle Primary School in 2024*

Robert passed away peacefully but suddenly on Tuesday 25 March 2025. He had been a member of the board for 30 years and, with humility and his gentle demeanor, he was a powerful presence. His knowledge and experience of all matters political in local and national circles was of huge benefit to the Trust. His humour, prodigious memory and clarity of thought will be sorely missed.

Swaziland Charitable Trust (Reg. Charity No. 257666, England)  
c/o 59 St Budeaux Close, Ottery St Mary, Devon, EX11 1HR, ENGLAND  
PO Box 245, Manzini M200, ESWATINI  
Tel: +268 5052618 ♦ Email: [admin@swazilandcharitabletrust.org](mailto:admin@swazilandcharitabletrust.org)  
[www.swazilandcharitabletrust.org](http://www.swazilandcharitabletrust.org)

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