

Newsletter No. 12 December 2016

Sir John Riddell Memorial Computer Lab Opened



Head teacher Mavis Mazibuko presents Hugh Riddell with lihiya, necklace and personalised bracelet at the opening of the Hhohho AME Primary School computer lab.

Primary school students in rural Hhohho, northwest Swaziland, can now learn how to use computers thanks to a donation made by former trustee Walter Riddell. The

building, complete with 40 computers, was dedicated to his father who was Chairman of the Swaziland Charitable Trust in the 1980s. The computer suite was opened by his brother Hugh. He was treated to displays of dancing and poetry recitals, while being showered with thanks and praise by local leaders and representatives of the Ministry of Education.



Sibhaca dancing – the celebrations at Hhohho AME were funded by alumni and local businesses.

Hhohho AME Primary School Computer Lab Opening Ceremony



Clockwise from left:

Hugh Riddell witnesses the first computer lesson.

Manager, Phindile Ndabandaba, speaks for the SCT.

Students start proceedings with prayers and poetry.

Swaziland Chair Charles Gilbert follows Swazi tradition, showing his appreciation of the dancing by placing money at their feet.

Head teacher Mavis Mazibuko with UK Chair Vicky McDonaugh and Hugh Riddell.

Drum majorettes – a new addition to tradition.



School Focus: Lwandle Primary School

Lwandle Primary school serves poor communities living on the outskirts of the main commercial city, Manzini. Headed by the energetic and visionary head teacher, Mrs Busisiwe Mamba, the SCT has supported it for many years. As well as sponsoring many orphans, the Trust has also helped with school building and income generating projects.



Clockwise from top left:

School meals are served from the kitchen built by the SCT.

Mrs Mamba in the counselling room, furnished by the Trust.

Donated by John de Havilland, the broiler unit provides practical lessons in agriculture and income generation.

Lwandle Sibhaca display.

Students learn sewing, making free pads for the girls who have no money.



Improving lives

Supporting communities, schools and non-governmental organisations:

Mbita Primary School



Mbita Primary School nestles in the remote hills of Southern Swaziland. Two new houses have eased the dire conditions endured by teachers for years. When visiting in July, we met Mrs Siphiwe Simelane, the teacher who had been living in a storeroom. She proudly showed us round her new quarters.

The children gave us a display of dancing against dramatic hillsides. Even in this remote area we bumped into a group of 6th formers from Cheshire, volunteers coming to paint the local High School.



The new housing built with a donation from the Alice Ellen Cooper-Dean Charitable Foundation.



Mrs Simelane proudly shows off her new kitchen.

Nkanini Neighbourhood Care Point (NCP)



Teacher Miss Mbuli with her charges.

Neighbourhood Care Points provide an essential service for families caring for preschool orphans. Children have a safe place to play, receive a midday meal and are taught the ABC. Board member and *All Out Africa* director, Kim Roques, supports the Nkhanini NCP in central Swaziland. He organised building, fencing, the playground and paying staff. The SCT gave money for the building and equipment.



One of the toddlers showing off the knitted gloved puppets brought by UK teachers and children, helping set up the NCP as part of their 6th Form Challenge.



Board member Kim Roques explaining to carers how the children are taught and what activities are provided at the NCP.

Guba



Bonginkosi Mndzebele explains how the centre trains community members in sustainable agriculture.

This sustainable agriculture project has benefitted again from a generous grant from the Bryan Guinness Trust. They aim to teach Swazi farmers how to plant crops and vegetables without using pesticides or fertilisers. We were taken round by Mr Mndzebele whose enthusiasm for the project was infectious...I am sure with him leading the workshops that many Swazis will use their methods of horticulture. Founder Sam Hodgson and his team should be proud of their success.

St Joseph's High School



Home Economics teacher Phindile Maziya.

A school we have helped over many years, on this occasion by equipping the Home Economics department with shelves and cupboards.

Situated near Manzini, the school provides co-educational boarding facilities. It serves the local community and provides some of the best education available in the whole of Swaziland for children with disabilities.

Nsingizini High School



Beyond the means of most rural schools, photocopiers can make all the difference, especially for reproducing examination papers. Copiers are not supplied by the government.

Nsingizini is situated in the deep south of Swaziland. The nearest town is Nhlangano.

Head teacher of Nsingizini High School, Constance Dladlu with Vicky McDonaugh.

School Kitchens



In the poorest parts of Swaziland, lunch provided at school is often the only meal that children can be sure of. Building all-weather kitchen facilities with food storage can ensure that poor children never go hungry and that food can be hygienically prepared. The success of kitchens built at Nkutjini Primary School (pictured above) and Ndunayithini High School, both serving remote communities in the arid lowveld, has encouraged the Trust to look favourably on applications for school kitchens at Mbita, Qomintaba and St Benedict's. All are schools that the trust knows well and funds are now being sought to improve their kitchens.



Left: Mbita Primary School. Chairman of the School Committee, Meshack Vilakati, school committee member and Head Teacher Cebsole Shabangu in front of the current school kitchen.



Above: Qomintaba High School cook, Constance Thandi Sithole in the school kitchen.



Left: St. Benedict's Primary School: The school cook, Mrs. Nzima prepares dinner with teacher Miss Mavuso and Head Teacher Mr Mango looking on.

Student Support Scheme

Experienced first hand

By sponsor Olivia Stirling



"In July 2016 I fulfilled a long-held ambition to travel to Swaziland and meet Phiwayinkhosi, the young lady whom I have sponsored for several years. It was a lightning week of long days on red dusty roads, beautiful frosty mornings turning into bright, hot days and a lasting impression of welcoming children with smiling faces, singing and dancing for their lucky visitors. Phiwa's school was the first we visited and despite endless photos and lots of giggling, we managed to have a conversation in the back of the truck and I was able to find out a little more about her life. Her English was impressive and she is planning to further her studies in Home Economics when she leaves school in December. It was truly humbling to see first-hand the incredible work and dedication of the teachers in the various schools where the SCT support children, often working with very limited resources. It was also a pleasure to spend time with SCT's Phindile Ndabandaba, who is so knowledgeable of each child's special circumstances.

"I became concerned over some of the school kitchens that I visited, one without even the shelter of a roof. I am hoping to return to this lovely country having helped raise enough money to rebuild the worst at schools with the neediest children."

The scheme evolves

The scheme was established in response to the HIV AIDS crisis, ensuring that orphaned children stay in primary school. The first five children were sponsored in 2004. Sponsors pay an annual sum to cover the cost of uniforms and school fees and when possible extra costs, like the school bus fares, books and educational trips. Promising students are also helped through high school. When funding allows, the brightest students are helped with tertiary education. High school children are supported with uniforms and fees.

In Swaziland, children who fail their end of year exams have to repeat that year. While all children are encouraged to do their best, primary school children are supported, whatever their results, until they are 16. In high school students are expected to pass each year and are only allowed to repeat in exceptional circumstances. Typically annual costs are £70 for primary schools and £350 for high schools.

The SCT has supported over 320 children until now: presently there are 122. The support helps their remaining family keep orphaned children in school. The trust concentrates on supporting children from eight schools but changing family circumstance, like further deaths, declining health of carers or job loss, often results in children being moved to stay with other family members more able to help; these children are still supported. There are fewer high schools than primary schools and the difficulty in securing a place combined with long distances and limited public transport means that children are further scattered. Children have been supported in 35 different Primary Schools and over 60 High Schools.

The scheme would not be possible without the loyal and generous help of sponsors and the dedication and care of Phindile Ndabandaba, our manager.



The eight main primary schools are: St. Benedict's (Hluthi, Shiselweni District), Nkutjini (Matsanjeni, Shiselweni), Holy Ghost (KaShoba, Lubombo), Manzana (Dvokolwako, Manzini), Antioch (Luve, Manzini), Ekutsimleni (Luve, Manzini), Elwandle R.C. (Manzini) and Hhohho AME (Ntfonjeni, Hhohho).

Teacher housing at Antioch. Assembly at Manzana. Singing at Ekutsimleni.

Student Profile: Ciniso Dlamini

Ciniso is in Grade 5 at Holy Ghost Primary School. He is 14 years old, lives 3km away and walks to school. An early riser, he's up at 4am to do his chores, before heading to school, which starts at 7am and ends at 2pm. At school, he likes English and Maths best. At home, he likes playing football: in defence, position 3. He joined the scheme last year and is sponsored by Lucy Acland.



Sponsored children at Holy Ghost Primary School. The school serves an area with frequent and severe droughts and extreme poverty.

“The Charitable Trust really helped because I had nothing; there was nobody to help as my mother and father died when I was young. I live with my father’s sister. We are 4 at home: 2 of auntie’s children and another child of my gran.

“I’ve never failed a year at school and hope to go the high school at eThandweni. It is close enough to walk, nearer than the primary school. I want to be a policeman when I finish school.

“Sometimes, like today, I don’t have anything to eat before I come to school. There’s usually food in the evening but often there’s nothing and the only meal I’m sure of is the one I get at school. There’s no-one at home who works full time but a brother-in-law sometimes gets piece work and earns a little money to supplement the food handouts that we have received since the drought set in.

“Our biggest problem at home is that there’s no-one to help us. We don’t even have good huts: they’re made with mud and sticks and thatched with poor grass.”

Holy Ghost Primary School Library

Head Teacher Patricia Magagula is delighted with the library that the Trust helped build and furnish in 2014:

“Holy Ghost’s exam results have improved considerably since the library opened. The children love reading and we now have a 100% pass rate in English.”

To enable the school to recruit and retain good teachers, the SCT is aiming to build two more houses, if the money can be raised.



Graduates

Many of the Trust's sponsored students have now finished school. Some are in further education and the first of them are now graduating from colleges and universities.

Bongiwe – teacher



Bongiwe Mahlalela is now a fully qualified teacher. She was supported throughout her schooling at Manzana Primary School, St Joseph's High School and Mankayane High by Caroline Egremont.

Bongiwe obtained a first-class pass and received a special award for being the best in her class.

She is now married and teaching at Mkhweli High School in the Lowveld of Swaziland, an area of great deprivation.

Bongiwe in Mbabane with UK Chair Vicky McDonaugh.

Mphumuzi – agriculture student



Mphumuzi Myeni completed his course in Mechanical Engineering at agricultural college in Big Bend. He was supported throughout his entire education by the Deputy Head of Bacon's College Rotherhithe, Martin Winter.

Teachers at Bacon's have continued to sponsor orphans since the school's 2006 - 2011 fundraising campaign, when they supported many projects in Swaziland including building classrooms. Their sixth formers also went to do voluntary work there.

Bakhona – student nurse



Bakhona Nxumalo is now in his second year of nursing school. Sponsored throughout his schooling by the late Brenda Mackenzie, he came from a very poor family. He first started school when Manzana's head teacher accepted four chickens in lieu of school fees.

Bakhona with adoptive UK relatives, Sharol and Rob Mackenzie.

Wandile – student of business management

"Thank you for being everything I needed in my life, I am at where I am because of you my beloved **SWAZILAND CHARITABLE TRUST** you completely changed my life by assisting me with my school fees while I was studying at **EKUTSIMULENI PRIMARY SCHOOL, LAMWANDLA HIGH SCHOOL and MOTHSANE HIGH SCHOOL**.

"I am currently studying in **SOUTH AFRICA** at **GERT SIBANDE TVET COLLEGE**. I LOVE this course because it opens my mind each and every day.

"I hope you all well in London as I am superfine in Africa. **MAY THE ALMIGHTY GOD** be with the rest of the team of **SWAZILAND CHARITABLE TRUST**."

Wandile Zola Simelane schooling was supported by the Loveday family.

Swaziland Charitable Trust

Reg. Charity No. 257666 England

Swaziland Local Board



The Swaziland Board with the UK Chair: Kim Roques, Robert Tfwala, Cebile Manzini-Henwood, Anthony Harding, UK Chair Vicky McDonaugh, Manager Phindile Ndabandaba, Swaziland Chair Charles Gilbert, Rowan Howe, Ian McLeod and Ben Nsibandze.

The July 2016 meeting of the local board in Malkerns was a great occasion with all but one of the local board present. The board meets twice a year to review projects and decide on grant applications. "As UK Chair, I feel very lucky to have such a dedicated and experienced group of people who ensure the Trust's aims are fulfilled."

How you can help

To make a donation, send a cheque or visit www.theBigGive.org.uk and search for orphan support in Swaziland.

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