



MaSiBaMBiSaNe
Let's carry the burden together

MCDC

News

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The office, kitchen and toilets



Two classrooms ready for 2010

The Blessing of God was on Dr Buys' trips

"I was deeply humbled at the way God provided people and resources during my visit to the Netherlands and the USA," says MCDC CEO, Dr Flip Buys, after his extensive trip. He managed to secure enough funds to start with the Mukhanyo Christian Academy next year.

The main donor is the group, Friends of Mukhanyo, in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. It was mainly by the driving force of Beth Rettig, who died of cancer shortly before Dr Buys arrived there. He was just in time to attend and participate at her funeral.

Having lost her parents in a plane crash at age 16, Beth Rettig knew the pain of becoming an orphan. That may be why she was so profoundly touched by the plight of the estimated 2 million South African children orphaned by AIDS when she visited Mukhanyo in August 2007. That may be why, when Rettig was diagnosed with ovarian cancer six months later, she continued to push for the creation of the Mukhanyo Christian Academy, a school to train new leaders and reclaim a lost generation. Her friends say the project has kept her going long after her doctors had given up hope.

Dr Buys told her that a Christian school can give these orphans a future and then South Africa will have a future. "One child can be the change agent that can turn the tide of a nation," he said.

Beth Rettig's dream lives on. In mid-January, the first class of kindergarten and first-graders will take their seats at the interim school grounds on the campus of Mukhanyo Theological College, which Dr Buys started 17 years ago.

New school principal also visited America

Mrs Meriam Mnguni, newly appointed Principal of Mukhanyo Christian Academy, also visited the Friends of Mukhanyo in Chapel Hill. She 'shadowed' the principal of Trinity School for a week to learn all the ins and outs of running a Christian school and also spoke at fundraising events of the school.

"I was really touched by the Friends of Mukhanyo's hospitality and warmth. It was a wonderful experience and I feel really privileged to have been chosen to visit them."

Welcoming our new deputy CEO.

Simon Burdett and his family arrived from the United Kingdom and he was welcomed on November 2nd at MCDC. He was pushed in at the deep end and just had to start swimming the overwhelming MCDC lake, as Dr Flip Buys was still abroad.

Simon's wide experience in management, finance and communication will stand him in good stead in his new job.

He and his family are glad to be back in South Africa. He grew up in Pretoria.

Peer education training kicked off in high spirits



MCDC has been considering several options of doing more on HIV AIDS prevention, especially through a well run peer education program.

Randy Finkbeiner, FDP manager in the field, started to experiment with the formation of teenage youth clubs to learn life skills that will enable them to make value based decisions. **Flip Buys, Randy, Koos Mhlangu**, (Youth Manager) and **Anna Kaura**, (OVC Programs Manager), visited the Tshibogang Christian Action Group in Mafikeng. They have been running an effective programme for some years. They have designed and translated a curriculum that they have field tested..

A team of seven trainers from Mafikeng has now visited MCDC from 23 -27 November to train local facilitators to roll out our own project as from January 2010.

The 22 trainees found the workshops very stimulating.

"What made the training so significant, is that the leader of the team from Mafikeng is a medical doctor who knows all the implications of the pandemic and even speaks seTswana fluently", says Ernest Matsiela, lay teacher at Thembaletu centre. "Dr Oratile Hermann and his team really brought us under the impression of the necessity of such peer groups and they gave us good and relevant advice."



Our OVC Projects Manager had a busy time

Mrs Anna Kaura also travelled far and wide during the past month. She went to Zambia with the team from CABSA (Christian Aids Bureau of Southern Africa) to conduct HIV and AIDS training to a group of Pastors and organisational leaders involved in the ministry of HIV and AIDS. She barely set foot on South African ground again, when she and Simon Burdett had to attend the HOPE HIV Aids Indaba, where issues of sustainability in organisations involved in fighting the pandemic of HIV and AIDS were discussed.

Anna has been appointed as a mentor for CABSA for the Mpumalanga province recently. This means she will be giving support to facilitators in this province when they conduct workshops on HIV and AIDS. These facilitators were trained by CABSA and Anna is to provide them with new information concerning HIV and AIDS and the Christian vision thereof. She is a facilitator herself and runs a few workshops for local pastors and church leaders.



Aids Indaba 2009 opens new visions

Deputy CEO **Simon Burdett** and OVC Programmes Manager **Anna Kaura** represented MCDC at the 2009 Aids Indaba held at the Farm Inn, Pretoria during November. The event was hosted by Global Connections which is the international development arm of Willow Creek Community Church. Twenty three churches and Christian organisations attended the conference, united in their view of sharing the gospel in word and deed with their communities.

Significant opportunities for MCDC from the conference included:

The possibility of forming regional cooperation groups amongst the Global Connections partners. MCDC is participating in the planning to form a Mpumalanga regional cooperation group. Global Connections (and donors generally) wish to form a deeper relationship with partner organisations and cooperate more closely.

Challenges for all partners – and matters for much prayer – include:

Developing greater levels of sustainability amongst partners
Addressing the gap in positive male role modelling and leadership in churches and communities.



Fruitful visit to CABSA offices.

MCDC managers, **Babette Grobler** of Nakekela and **Thelma Tshisonga** of MCDC's Mobile Educational Resource Centre visited the CABSA offices in Johannesburg to get more information and resources about HIV and AIDS.

"More and more people from the community come to our centres and Nakekela to learn about the disease," says Babette. Here she and Thelma are seen amongst the overwhelming wealth of literature on the topic. Left is Lyn van Rooyen of CABSA and on their right is her secretary. CABSA also donated some knitted clothing for toddlers at MCDC.

Young Journalists have first workshop

A project to train our own beneficiaries in the art of Communication was launched in October 2009. Senior orphans and vulnerable children from our centres were invited to write an essay on one of the following topics:

1. I have a dream.....
2. My best friend....
3. The saddest day of my life....
4. The happiest day of my life....

Thirteen heart rendering stories were received and all entrants were invited to attend our first workshop on October 24th. It was a most enjoyable morning, with a game of getting to know each other, practise in using all five senses to become a good writer and a workshop on creative writing. Every centre also chose a name for its own newsletter, which will be published regularly in 2010.

This workshop was followed by a second on December 8th, when one of our own OVC's, **Bongani Xhoza**, gave them a brief view in the world of Communication studies, which he will be completing by April 2010. After this he acted as a famous international singer who grew up in KwaMhlanga and the young journalists had to interview him.



This was quite an exciting process and many very sharp questions were asked. Bongani threw his American accent and airs in a very convincing manner.

"We plan to have a few field trips in 2010 to visit a printing shop, newspaper offices, a radio station and the SABC TV studios. There will also be a workshop every month with reporting, interviewing and photography on the list," says **Kobie Coetzee**, MCDC Communications Manager.

OVC is a shining star



Bongani Xhoza is one of our MCDC beneficiaries who attended the Thembaletu Care Centre. He excelled in his schoolwork and received a bursary to study Journalism at The Vine College in Pretoria. He is now doing an internship as a presenter at the local radio station and at the same time receiving in-house training at MCDC Communications.

He says: "There are times when the world really confuses us, but we should not listen to what the world tells us to do. God created us to His own image and we should listen to what God tells us about life and about ourselves. Often we focus on the wrong things that can destroy our happiness. We should focus on the good things that can determine our future.

"Beautiful things come and go, but what God has given us, stays eternally. If you don't have the things you desire in life, don't give up, because your turn is coming," he says.

We wish Bongani God's blessing on his career in Communications.

Bongani's sister, Eva, is studying Social Work at Mukhanyo Theological College and Unisa.

Beadwork on track again.



Thoko showing off some of the beadwork they plan to make for the local and overseas market: Necklaces, bracelets, ear rings, key rings, place mats, decorated enamel mugs and shoes, and many more



Thoko teaching OVC's beadwork at the centres

Thoko Mahlangu is taking up the beadwork training again at all the centres, teaching the senior OVC's basic beadwork. "This may open doors for them to start their own businesses when they finish school," says Thoko. At the moment they are trying out different designs and looking for means of marketing. One of the possibilities that might find its way to the international market, is to design proper Ndebele patterns and make place mats decorated with beadwork.

This project will be a combined venture with the sewing project.

A workshop on silk screen printing was held in November to streamline production. In this way the project might really get off the ground in 2010.

Thoko learnt traditional Ndebele beadwork from her grandmother "and it's my dream to pass the skill on to the younger generation," she says. She remembers her grandmother in full traditional attire with neck bands perking up her neck to give her that stately posture so characteristic of the Ndebele women.

Friendly new face at reception

Thembi Mtsweni was appointed MCDC's new Office Manager when Rose Skosana had to leave us shortly after her marriage, because her husband was transferred.



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Visiting donor

Gerard Verbeek of Prisma visited MCDC on November 9 to determine how the group has impacted with capacity building. This visit opened our eyes again on quite a few fields where more can be done to the benefit of our OVC's and patients. Here Gerhard is seen in the middle, with some members of the management team. Back: Floris, Simon, Hannelie. Front: Koos and Babette.



Vegies for Christmas!

Funds from churches and schools all over South Africa and even as far as Korea, enabled our Family Development Project team to deliver bags of fresh vegetables to more than 370 homes in the field, together with their monthly food parcels.

This was a first for MCDC. More than 10 tons of vegetables were bought from surrounding farmers and from the market. All available employees and volunteers helped to pack the vegetables on the day before they were to be delivered. All this effort ensured that the families in the field received their vegetables still in a sparkling fresh condition.

Eating healthy food is highly important for people using Anti Retro Viral medication and to have fresh vegetables for

Christmas was an extra treat for our beneficiaries in the field. Estar Maseko, FDP worker, excitedly reported that people lifted her up in the air and carried her around singing and laughing.

Randy Finkbeiner reports: "We witnessed on the receiving end people physically leaping with joy when they saw the entourage of bakkies pulling up with vegetables, maize meal

and groceries. People were all prepared with wheel barrows to take home their Christmas food parcels." **MCDC thank all our donors who specifically sent money for this project, after we wrote in Mukhanyo News about the dire need for fresh food in the field.**

