



Morning Star Children's Centre

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Our Dear Friends,

I thank my God for every remembrance of you all and give Him all the glory!

As I sit here deciding what to share with you in my newsletter, I am filled with an over-whelming sense of gratitude for how God has blessed Morning Star through you and used you to accomplish His purposes in this insignificant place in the world Welkom, South Africa! Who would've thought nearly 18 years ago that Morning Star would've grown to the size it is today and that God's plan for us would involve so many of you! I find this thought truly awesome!

It's been a busy time since I returned home. Even though we closed for the school holidays and had no children coming to Morning Star for the first 3 weeks of July, there have been umpteen matters to attend to and, for me, much work to catch up with. Closing Morning Star over the school holidays is a new thing for us. We don't like doing so but, in the present economic climate, find that we can save quite a bit of money by not transporting the handful of children who keep coming each day. Our little ones are mostly much healthier nowadays too and don't need our daily good nutrition/care as in previous years.

The children have been back for 3 weeks now and it's good to have their voices fill the air and to be able to hug and interact with them on a daily basis once again.

Death has always been a part of Morning Star. In our early years we used to lose up to 25-30 children per annum. The advent of ARV's (anti-retroviral drugs) did see a decrease in our annual death rate but, year-on-year, there are still children on our register who succumb to this dreadful disease, HIV/AIDS, and die from the symptoms related to it. Even when expected, it's always heart-breaking when one of our number passes away! We've had 8 children die since January 2017 and of these, 2 over the past 10 days – 15-year-old Vusimusi Makhebesela on 2nd August and 22-year-old Sibongile Mayo on 3rd August. We are reeling in shock!

Of our 8 deaths since January 2017, 7 have been our teenagers/young adults who have simply stopped taking their 'treatment' (ARV's) and seemingly given up on life. We can't really get to the bottom of why so many of them are choosing to go this route but it is a trend and it is real. Those who have stood by a fresh grave and buried half their hearts in it can tell you what an enemy death is. Death takes a friend from our side, the



child from our arms and the pillar of our homes. It has no pity for the young and no mercy for the old. Death is our last enemy (1 Corinthians 15:26). And yet, for the Christian, it is not death to die. And this is our hope – that our Morning Star children will come to trust Jesus as their Saviour before they die and get to spend eternity in God's presence where there'll no more pain and suffering ever again. This is what we pray for continually. Both Vusi and Sibongile were buried this past Saturday and several of our teens attended their funerals. I've recently become aware of how difficult the deaths of peers are for our Morning Star teenagers. Even those who are presently healthy/achieving well are thinking "Will I be the next to go?"

Last photo taken of Vusi before he died.

Our other sad snippet of news is that 9-year-old Reitumetse Sesedinyane's shack burn down in Hani Park Township on 23rd July and the family lost EVERYTHING! Mum was at work that day so when Reitumetse came home from school in the afternoon, he discarded his school clothes and satchel at the back door of his house, idly lit a piece of paper with a lighter lying around and then disappeared into the neighbourhood to play. Mum was in the taxi on her way home when she was phoned with the news and, upon arrival, found her house alight and the fire department struggling to contain the flames. It was all too late! Nothing could be salvaged! They lost all their furniture, all their blankets, all their clothes and food – just everything! The stove, the fridge, the television set, all burnt beyond recognition! One feels so helpless when something like this happens. There's no insurance policy to claim from and Morning Star is certainly not in the position to rebuild a shack and equip it with furniture. It's a matter of having to start from scratch all over again; working, saving, replacing, bit-by-bit!

The outcome of the CCMA hearing re: the staff member who reported me for unfair dismissal 4 months ago is still hanging in the balance. She didn't come for the initial hearing, (said she hadn't receive notification), behaved atrociously at the subsequent hearing date which, thus, led to arbitration and then didn't arrive for the arbitration hearing. The Commissioner then dismissed the case. However, she challenged this – saying she didn't receive notification – and applied for a rescission. The rescission hearing was scheduled for yesterday afternoon but, once again, she didn't come!! We await the Commissioner's new ruling and trust he'll dismiss the case once and for all and we can put it behind us for good.

Our 3 young girls raped over the past several months are seemingly 'over' this traumatic experience in their lives. How does one actually tell? They've all received some post-rape counselling and all 3 perpetrators are, hopefully, still/back in jail. We heard that the 40 year-old-man who raped Makubu bribed his way out of jail and the case was dropped but, thankfully, some of our SA police still do their jobs properly and have reopened the docket. Our 15 year old teenager, Thando, who fell pregnant as a result of being raped at the end of last year is almost due to deliver her baby. Her little girl will be born at the beginning of September and her mum has decided to keep the child and bring her up as her own.

Our new premises in Kowie Street are proving more of a headache than at first imagined! I've even secretly thought, 'Why on earth did we ever go this route and buy them?' Not only was the original electrical compliance certificate fraudulent, but the previous owner has now disappeared as well – so is definitely not planning to take responsibility for his actions! The 4 flats were also in more of a state of disrepair than we realized at first and we've had to spend close to 4,000pds, already, on urgent repairs. Thankfully, all 4 flats are now occupied and we're starting to reap the benefit of the monthly rentals. Hopefully, the many complaints and problems will soon subside as well.

Thank you for blessing my time in the UK once again. All-in-all it was a very successful trip and I returned home greatly encouraged. It's ever a struggle, though, switching back from my 'other life' to 'my real life'.



I'm on the receiving end of gracious hospitality for 3-4 weeks each year – where I don't lift a finger in the daily mundane tasks allotted to a woman – and then, overnight, I'm back home and plain old Joan Adams all over again! I'm not complaining – just stating a fact! 😊

Whilst in England and Wales in June Glenys Barham and I travelled 2,200 miles, slept in 17 different beds, gave 26 presentations and sponsored out 33 new children. We also sold the bulk of our Pelo&Hart merchandise and banked about 16,000pds in donations and sales.

GLENYS, JOAN and JOSHUA at the Fundraising Function



Our 'gift-card' idea this year went down very well and, all-in-all, 28 x 5pd cards, 41 x 10pd cards and 24 x 20pd cards were purchased. This means that 1,030pds was raised towards the purchase of school shoes and school stationery requirements for the 2018 school year – all of which will be of huge assistance when the time comes. Thank you all so very much!

When I return home after a trip I'm always asked what the highlight was and this year Bill Muddyman & Linda Gardiner's fundraising function for Morning Star at the Cobham International School on 23rd June was definitely at the top of my list. This event took the form of a dinner/auction and, in total, over 37,000.00 pounds was raised. Isn't that just incredible!

MUDDYMAN FUNDRAISING

Joshua Bolaji, our Board Chairman, was flown out for the event as well and it was fantastic for both him, Glenys and I to be part of the ambiance of the evening and to meet a hall full of complete strangers who have been moved by the Morning Star story and who gave so generously to our cause. And this fantastic boost to our coffers couldn't have come at a more opportune time! They were just the injection our bank account needed right now! Thank you, Bill & Linda – for your wonderful friendship and support for almost as long as Morning Star has existed.

***“Only fear the Lord and serve Him faithfully with all your heart.
For consider what great things He has done for you”. 1 Samuel: 12:24***

Love in Christ,

Joan

PRAYER REQUESTS:

1. Praise & thanks to God for a successful UK trip and for keeping Glenys and me for another year.
2. That all 4 Kowie Street flats are now occupied.
3. That our children are mostly well and we have nobody ill in hospital.
4. That Sihle's eczema is so much better and there appears to be a level of improved care at home.

Please pray for:

1. 17 year-old Malesedi who is refusing to take her ARVs any longer and is very frail and weak.
2. 15-year-old Mosongua who is struggling with ongoing respiratory problems/ chest infections.
3. Both Vusimusi's and Sibongile's families as they mourn their deaths. Pray especially for Vusi's grandfather who is broken by his grandson's passing away.
4. Our Morning Star teens with all the additional challenges they have to face in life and Godly wisdom when counselling and encouraging them.
5. Several of our children in abusive home situations – and especially 13-year-old Nthabiseng who has very severe learning challenges and is in an extremely dangerous home environment (drunkard for a grandmother, mother sleeping round, illegal miners (Zama-Zamas) always on the premises consuming drugs/alcohol).
6. Wisdom for our Board of Governors concerning strategic issues and future fund-raising for Morning Star.
7. Joan's health – her 2nd hip has now gone too and news of the terrible state of her lumbar spine is of grave concern. Pray for wisdom for the doctors concerned regarding which operation is most urgent.

Please take note of the following:

- Monies deposited into Lloyds not reflecting the donor's name are impossible to acknowledge.
- Please transfer your giving from CAF to Stewardship. There are still too many names on the CAF account to close it down. PLEASE assist us urgently with this issue.
- Stewardship – there are quite a lot of new sponsors whose names are listed under the "Once-off gifts" and not "Regular/ongoing contributors."
- 2018 Morning Star Calendars are available from Glenys Barham.
- If you're planning to send your sponsored child a Christmas gift, please send surface (slow mail) before the end of August – to allow for delivery.