



# Morning Star

## Children's Centre

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Dear Friends,

What a Mighty God we serve! In the 2 weeks since my letter went out to you all, our financial position at Morning Star has completely turned around. The response to our plea for God's intervention in our hour of great need has been overwhelming. And totally humbling. I stand amazed at what our Gracious Lord has done through all of you. We're finding ourselves singing "Praise God from whom all blessings flow" over and over again each day here. Our treasurer, Kevin Lombard, has just let me know that our bank balance has greatly improved and that we can even give all our staff a small bonus for Christmas. What a surprise they're going to get when they receive their December pay cheque towards the end of this month!

From the bottom of my heart, thank you so much for your prayers, your monetary gifts and for even increasing your monthly sponsorship support, in several cases. We're confident that we'll be able to keep our doors open in the New Year and continue reaching out to our children and their families as we've done in the past (with increased caution) for another year. One UK couple has even pledged to cover Albert Duvenhage's (new general manager) salary for a year. Isn't that just mind-blowing!

God willing, by this time next year, our UK Morning Star Charity will be up and running and the profits thereof beginning to make their way into our South African bank account.

Morning Star is officially closed for the Christmas holidays. There are just a few of us still at our desks, finishing up with our paper work. Our drivers have been busy delivering the December food parcels and we also have the vegetable garden competition's final assessments this week. Hopefully, by Friday 13<sup>th</sup> December, we'll all be done and able to go home and relax until we reopen on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2020.

Talking about drivers, I'm not sure if you picked up from the latest prayers points on our website that one of our Morning Star drivers, Tokelo Mambo, died during the night of 29<sup>th</sup>/30<sup>th</sup> November. He appears to have had a massive heart attack in his sleep. He was due to take some of our children to a Christmas function that Saturday morning, as well as pick up our frailer grandmothers for their Christmas Party at Morning Star. When he didn't collect his vehicle as planned, we knew something was terribly wrong. Praise God for our UK volunteers here at the time, Everton & Jeanette McLeod and Jeanette's sister, Elaine Pearson. They stepped up and got our Grandmothers' Christmas party on the go, even entertaining our 'Gogos' (grandmothers) in song, whilst Elizabeth and I rushed around trying to organise/sort out the issues that arose as a result of Tokelo's sudden death. Tokelo lived with and cared for his elderly mother. What a shock she had when she found him dead on his bed on the Saturday morning. What a shock for all of us at Morning Star as well – just 6 weeks after Liza Mans' unexpected death mid-October! Tokelo was well liked and very popular with our children and staff. His passing has left a huge gap in our midst. Pastor Revival Hlongwane officiated at the funeral in Thabong Township and the Gospel went out loud and clear to the many mourners who were in attendance that day.

Albert, our new General Manager, begins at Morning Star on 13<sup>th</sup> January. For the first 2 months he'll be job shadowing in every department, so that he can get a feel for all we do here. If all goes according to plan, he should be taking over my role at the beginning of April 2020. This means that I need to get out of the way and not be at Morning Star at all for a while. Thus, God willing, my UK trip will take place slightly earlier than usual next year and Glenys and I are looking to doing our round trip from 26<sup>th</sup> April – 17<sup>th</sup> May. If you'd like us to visit you, please contact her at: [glenys.barham@gmail.com](mailto:glenys.barham@gmail.com) as soon as possible.

A big thank you to all our sponsors who've sent gifts or deposited an extra sum of money into our bank accounts for 'their child' for Christmas. Each gift has been gratefully received and will go a long way in meeting each child's individual needs this Christmas. Unfortunately, we've had a few donations referenced just "Happy Christmas", with no indication of where

from/whom the gift is for? Unless a sponsor puts theirs/the child's name down as a reference, we have no way of matching the amount with specific children. So, in this case it's just "Happy Christmas Morning Star" 😊

A big thank you to Linda Gardiner and friends and Endemol Shine in the UK for the 157 Christmas Shoe Boxes filled and sent over for all our current children this year. What an amazing service this is! Linda has been administering this service for many years now and, these days, endeavours to have the boxes ready to be shipped to us by the end of July, to ensure that they reach us on time. One year they didn't arrive until Christmas Eve and, as you can imagine, this caused untold stress all-round.

We benefit from our local Santa Shoe Box drive as well which means that a good number of the 700 children on our register receive a gift at Christmastime.

God has seen us through another year. He has met all our needs according to His riches in glory. May He ever be central to the ministry that is Morning Star Children's Centre and continue to lead and guide us well beyond our 20<sup>th</sup> birthday on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2020.

Love in Christ,

Joan.

Praise and Prayers:

1. Praise and thanks to God for the enormous encouragement received from so many of you in our great hour of need. It appears that over 40, 000pds has been raised in response to my cry for a miracle.
2. Praise and thanks that Teboho Moloji has agreed to stay on at Morning Star next year to administer our finances in place of Liza Mans. I couldn't think of a better person to fulfil this role.
3. Praise and thanks that we've had only 2 deaths in total this year – and none of children below the age of 14 years.
4. Praise and thanks for our recent spate of UK volunteers. What a joy they always are in our midst! Praise & thanks too, that UK volunteer, Sandra Rycroft, is safely home and that she had such amazing medical travel insurance whilst here. Not only was her unexpected hospitalization and gall bladder surgery in Welkom covered, but a doctor was flown out from England to accompany her home and have her admitted to a Leeds hospital upon her return.
5. Please pray for all our children over this Christmas period. Pray that they remain healthy and strong and for their safety, that none are physically or sexually abused.
6. Pray for Albert as he takes over as Morning Star's new General Manager and for me as I step aside and begin my new role. Please pray that that I'll be a God-glorifying witness during the transition process.

***A BLESSED CHRISTMAS TO YOU ALL.***

