



The Christian Care Centre

# Morning Star

## Children's Centre

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"In 100 years time nobody will care how much money you earned;  
 But the world may be different because you were important in the life of a child"

Dear Friends

05 – 03 – 2018

I've been meaning to start this letter to you for the past 2 weeks already but, in the rush of fresh dilemmas that present themselves at Morning Star each new day, most needing immediate attention, have been prevented from pursuing my heart's desire!

2018 has been ushered in with a burst of activities! To think we've already begun the month of March utterly astounds me! Admitting new children, dealing with the umpteen school-going children's uniform & stationery requirements, implementing changed staff positions, organising our 2018 sea trip, dealing with two burglaries at our Welkom Centre and addressing fresh social crises that crop up keeps us busy each and every day. Yet God is good and each day is a gift!



All-in-all, 38 new children were admitted to our 2 Centres this year. We now have 110 little ones at our Welkom branch and 40 at Kutlwanong. Our Organisation has grown beyond my wildest dreams and sometimes my heart is filled with trepidation as I stop and consider my lack of skills in heading up an Organization of this size.

Our new children settled quickly and we were amazed that there were so few tears their first day. Of course, they're as cute as ever and, as always,

have quickly endeared themselves to the Morning Star staff. A few of our new toddlers are very vulnerable and quite frail but, from past experience, we know that soon and largely as a result of good nutrition, most will burst forth as new blooms and go from strength to strength under our loving care. Surprisingly, of the 26 new children at our Welkom Centre, almost half are infected with HIV/AIDS! In an age where all women attending the ante-natal community clinics are automatically screened for HIV/AIDS and their unborn babies put onto ARVs in utero as a precaution, this came as quite a shock! That such a huge percentage of them are still born HIV positive is an indication of how many slip through the cracks and whose mothers fail to attend the local health clinics during their pregnancies at all.



Sadly, we had a death over the Christmas holidays. Our teenager/young adult, Vincent Disenyane who had been seriously ill since October 2017, finally succumbed to his illness and died on the 22<sup>nd</sup> December. His Morning Star peers were deeply shaken by his death and are still struggling to come to terms with it and with all the others who passed away during the course of 2017.

7 of our 10 deaths last year were as a result of teenagers aborting their ARV treatment regimes. We so long to get to bottom of this problem and know what more we can do to prevent it from happening.



We had a thoroughly hectic first week back at Morning Star in January. These 5 days had been allocated for our school-going children to come into Morning Star for back-to-school stationery requirements and uniform needs. Over the first 2 days, 230+ sponsored children and their guardians descended upon Morning Star for assistance! It was like a bad nightmare! Queues and queues of people, from early morning to after dark at night! All hot, thirsty, hungry and impatient for assistance! We were still seeing clients up to 7.30pm that week and those of us involved all went home well after dark!

I had to interact with each and every one and, with the assistance of my PA and social auxiliary worker, determine whether their sponsorship support was still active, what grade they were proceeding to, what of their needs was most urgent and how best we could assist. We had a predetermined budget set by the Board of Governors to work towards – and we did so to the very best of our ability – but by the end of the first 2 days found that we'd already spent R90,000.00! (About 6000pds depending on the exchange rate at the time!) That left just R10,000.00 for the remainder of the week – resulting in all our unsponsored children receiving only a small token from us. We had 32 children starting Secondary School this year – a new record – and mainly because they're on ARVs (anti-retroviral drugs) these days and living longer and enjoying better health.

On Monday 18<sup>th</sup> December – in broad daylight – and whilst a skeleton staff was going about their work at our Welkom Centre, thieves crept into our school playground compound where all our Quantum buses are parked and our garden store is located, and stole our new weed-eater/brush-cutter, our generator and a wheelbarrow, to cart them away in. We were devastated! With the frequent power outages in this country and now the real concern that our electricity is going to be cut off for set periods each day from the end of this month (as a result of our municipality being in arrears by a few billion rand), we're really going to struggle to operate efficiently at Morning Star each day. We can't even claim from our insurance for these stolen items because the storeroom wasn't electrified and thus, not alarmed.



Electrifying the storeroom was down for discussion at our Board Meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> February so great was our distress when we arrived at work on Monday morning, 12<sup>th</sup> February, and discovered that this same storeroom had been broken into over the weekend again and, besides causing a lot of structural damage this time, our 2<sup>nd</sup> brush-cutter, jerry-can full of petrol and gardener's boots were gone!

We've had the police in twice but they're doubtful that any of these items will ever be retrieved. They were probably all over the Lesotho border before we even realized they were stolen! And, whilst we have so many 'squatters' living in the dilapidated premises behind Morning Star, it's doubtful that the petty thieving going on around us all the time will come to an end soon.

We've replaced the brush-cutter and the boots – we had no choice really – and we're praying that someone will bless us with a generator again. The one stolen was a donation.

What has taken up a huge amount of time and effort over the past month is trying to determine what financial support Morning Star still enjoys and how many of our children are still actively sponsored. In essence; tidying up our Donor Base. This has long been on our back-burner, but CAF (Charities Aid Foundation) informing me that they were closing our account down at the end of February 2018 forced us

to prioritize this exercise. We've since discovered that much of the financial aid we thought we got in each month has long stopped and that many of our children are, all of a sudden, left without UK support. This, of course, means that we have to curtail our assistance to these unsponsored families considerably and work smarter with our finances each month.

Our Board of Governors has reached the conclusion that we can no longer afford to rely solely on my annual UK Trips for new income and that an external fundraiser needs to be employed to assist with this vital role. Going forward, I can't be sure how much longer I'll physically be able to undertake my annual fundraising trips to England & Wales anyway and, additionally, many of our long-term supporters are now elderly too – just like me! ☺

What else can I share with you?

1. Our 2018 sea trip is scheduled for 21<sup>st</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> March this year. Accommodation will once again be provided at The Mercury Holiday Home in Hibberdene, down the south coast of Kwa Zulu Natal. 20 of the 28 children going this year are sponsored and include: Matebello Mokone, Keketso Masolang, Motshidisi Molehe, Disaletse Hlakoane, Mamello Tseisa, Poeletso Mbongi, Vuyelwa November, Mampe Mdebuka, Makubu Sefuli, Malehlohonolo Fischer, Busisiwe Busakwe and Maria Mahumane (girls). Thabo Moholobela, Thabiso Mautsoa, Thabo Mkhabela, Katleho Ntai, Siphesihle Mdolomba, Goitsewang Mogwera, Phumlani Tose and Mpho Lekale (boys). They are all wildly excited, especially now that this long-awaited excursion is only 2 weeks away. The UK couple who sponsor these annual trips year-on-year will never really know just what a fantastic treat this is and how much we all appreciate their long-term assistance and support.

2. The Prize-Giving Ceremony of our Annual Vegetable Competition in the surrounding townships recently took place. Each year about 30 of our mothers/guardians enter, all hoping they'll be the beneficiaries of the generous monetary prizes at the end but, sadly, some lose heart along the way. It's hard enough growing vegetables successfully when one has water-on-tap and a fence around one's property to protect the growing plants from fowls, cattle and human thieves, but when one has none of these means, it's easy to become disheartened and give up. If only all the entrants each year would continue with their gardens, even when not entering the competition, and have fresh vegetables – always – to serve to their families!



3. God willing, my 2018 fundraising trip to the United Kingdom will take place over the latter 3 weeks of May this year. As a result of my recent health issues, this trip will be far less strenuous and stressful and presentations cut by almost half. I'm so sorry I won't be visiting you all but trust you'll be able to preview the itinerary circulated in due course and make your way to the nearest venue. Please contact Glenys Barham at: [glenys.barham@gmail.com](mailto:glenys.barham@gmail.com) for further information

As you can see, there's much to pray about. We do not know what 2018 holds but we do know that God holds the future in His hands. As ever, our Lord is on His throne, high and lifted up and we'll continue to trust Him as we move forward through the next 10 months of 2018.

*“You have been my help; do not leave me or forsake me,  
O God of my salvation”. Psalm 27:9*

Yours in Christ,  
Joan.

## PRAYER REQUESTS:

Praise and thanks for:

1. God's amazing provision for another year. Morning Star turned 18 years old on 24<sup>th</sup> January and, over this period, 2800 children have passed through our doors and benefitted from our services in one way or another.
2. Our Lord's hand upon our children during our shut-down period over Christmas. Although there were a few seriously ill over Christmas, only 1 died.
3. Sihle Mdangi's improved skin condition. He's had several of his teeth pulled out recently and this has resulted in an almost immediate improvement to his dermatitis.
4. The good news that Pastor Revival Hlongwane has moved back to Welkom and will take up the position of Morning Star Chaplain from April 2018.

Please Pray for:

1. Our sick/frail children – Malesedi, that she continues taking her ARVs now that she's in a new foster home; Teboho Molise – scheduled to join us on our sea trip, but still very weak; little Itumeleng Motshabe, weighing just 8kgs at 18months of age and recently discharged from a long spell in hospital and baby Daniel Mofokeng, starting to thrive slowly now that he's been removed from his totally dysfunctional home and placed in foster care.
2. Vincent Disenyane's family – especially his sister, Lizzie, as they mourn his death. And Matshidiso Lesige's mum – gangsters broke into her shack on 25<sup>th</sup> February and viciously raped her in front of her children. Thankfully, the children weren't raped as well.
3. That many more CAF sponsors will urgently transition to Stewardship or Lloyds so that we don't lose their monthly support.
4. For Pastor Revival and the Welkom Baptist Church as they search for premises for an imminent church plant in Thabong Township.
5. Wisdom for the Morning Star Board in the succession planning issues at stake.
6. For the Team from Tenterden Baptist Church volunteering at Morning Star from mid-March to shortly after Easter. Pray for travelling mercies and that their time here will be fulfilling and a real blessing to all.
7. The country South Africa – we have a new president but the corruption and rot here is so deep and every government department so fractured that it'll take a generation to sort it all out – even if all our political leaders are men/women of integrity. Below is just a small example:



*“The standard of education at South African government schools, especially in our African Townships, is pathetically low and of huge concern. The results of an international study of child literacy reveal that South Africa came stone last of the 50 countries surveyed for reading ability among school children. More alarmingly, the study also found that 78% of Grade 4 students cannot read for meaning in any language, even in the language with which they are most familiar. This means that the students in question failed to meet the lowest literacy benchmark of the study: retrieving basic information from texts to answer simple questions. To put this into global perspective, only 4% of students internationally were unable to reach this benchmark, as opposed to South Africa's 78%!”*

*(PIRLS: The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study 2017)*

Please pray for us!