



"A Child is born for us today!"

Dear Friends

We at Holy Family Care Centre send warm greetings to you at this blessed time of Christmas. As we look back over the year we are aware of how much your kindness, goodness and generosity have helped us. The bottom line is that we could not continue to care for so many children, to bring hope and laughter and light into their lives without your help. We are truly indebted to you and ask God to bless you abundantly.

Briefly, we wish to share some of the highlights of this past year.... **2008**

Director of Holy Family

On April 25 Sr. Dain Inglis handed over the directorship of Holy Family Care Centre to Sr. Mary Stevens. In the 7 years that Sr. Dain was at the helm, Holy Family grew from 5 children to 90 children in residence. We take this opportunity to thank Sr. Dain for her faith vision and for all that she remarkably achieved over this time. We especially thank her for all the love and care that she lavished on the children. Sr. Dain will move to Senegal as Leader of the African Union of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

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There are now four Sisters living and working at Holy Family. Sr. Mary Stevens – Director, Sr. Elly Van Dijk – Educator and Finance Officer, Sr. Gabriella & Sr. Helene – Clinic, and South African, Charlotte Nyakala who is being formed as a Religious Sister. She is a great help with the children as she speaks their language and is a wonderful role model for them.

We are blessed to have in residence, Fr. Patrick McGlanaghy, msc who offers us untold support at all times.

Children

Holy Family is registered to take 70 children and we are at that number now. Working through & with the local Social Workers, several children were able to be returned to their family group through the year and more will go at the completion of the school term. Our aim is to reunite the children with their family and community if at all possible. This enables us to take in other sick and needy children who have no one to care for them, especially those who have HIV/Aids.



This year's miracle baby, Kgmosoto, now 17 months old, is growing and thriving. He arrived in April, a very sick infant, just skin and bone and not expected to live. It is truly amazing to watch the transformation when a child is given love, care, good nutrition, good medical intervention, and a safe and happy environment. Holy Family is indeed a place of miracles!

Eight children graduated from our crèche and will attend the local school next year.

Khanyisa who has cerebral palsy has been accepted into a residential school at Giyani for next January and while we will miss her greatly we are delighted that she will now have specialized care and attention.

Last July in Children's Week, one of our girls was chosen by the Limpopo Government to travel to Cape Town for a week, to meet the President and do some sight-seeing. All children, in age groups, were given an outing in Tzaneen and had a wonderful time. For some, it was the first time to be in a shopping centre and to use money.

The children celebrated Freedom Day with a dance competition and prizes and Heritage Day with a great party: dressed in national costume they danced, sang, recited poetry and then had a party meal.

During the holidays, groups of girls and boys visited Moholoholo Wildlife Reserve and were fascinated by all the birds and animals. These Christmas holidays we hope to take them to Kruger Park. Can't you imagine their excitement!

Staff.

Sadly, we will farewell Sonja and Wayne Gair at the end of the year. Sonja has been with us for nearly two years and has done a wonderful job as Administration/Finance Officer. Her husband, Wayne, accepted the position of Property Manager last August and has made a difference in a short time. They are returning to Natal to manage the family farm. This year, one of our male staff gained his driver's license, two women have been away on courses in HIV/Aids, the crèche assistant attended an in-service, our computer teacher also had updating and a female staff member has successfully completed computer studies. All staff will be on work contracts as from next year.



VOLUNTEERS: Several wonderful people from overseas have come and given of their time, short and lengthy, to help look after the children at Holy Family. We are truly indebted to them as we are to each one of you, far and near who 'support us from home.' We are delighted to report that recently, several of the local people also 'volunteered' their help. We see this as a very positive step and welcome their presence.

Changes and improvements at Holy Family.

Due to the increase of clients from neighboring villages the Holy Family ART Clinic was moved to larger premises, at DKIT, Ofcolaco. The clinic now has a 14 seater bus which has made the transporting of clients so much easier. The crèche playground area has been newly painted, new swings erected, shade cloth repaired etc. and the area enclosed with a security fence. The little ones now spend many happy hours safely playing there. A new septic system was installed after the original system caved in. The volunteer's cottage was tastily refurbished and a security fence erected. The main area of Holy Family is being completely re-fenced following the devastation by the recent fires. A new generator has been installed to help with the frequent power failures.

Work Pending:

- *A large concrete area to be roofed to give us a drying area during the wet weather.
- *Repairs, maintenance and refurbishing of a building that sleeps a large number of children.
- *A 'Jungle Jim' to be built for the use of the boys.
- *Repairing of a water tank stand.
- *A garden plot made to teach the boys how to grow vegetables and become self sufficient.

Dreams for 2009 and onwards...

- *Laundry: improve hot water system & provide a mechanized trolley to transport washing from laundry to line to dormitories. With 70 children there is a mountain of washing!
- *Kitchen: install a 'cool room' and hot water system
- *Boy's Block: renovations and extensions
- *Build a staff Room. Build a garage
- *More cement footpaths and external lighting
- *Vegetable garden completely remade & old mango plantation replanted with income-generating crops/trees.
- *Employ qualified staff: Social worker P/T, Educator P/T, mechanic/handyman etc.
- *Pave crèche playground and other areas.
- *Build a large 'activity room' for the children
- *Dining room: Repairs, refurbishment & tiling
- *Sink a new water bore

Dear friends, that's it in a nutshell! Once again, THANK YOU!

With Mary, let us celebrate with joy the Life she brings us this Christmas and may our journeying lead us to find God in the ordinary events of our day..... 'The Word was made flesh and lived among us!'

Sr. Mary Stevens, osh

On behalf of the Sisters, Staff and Children of Holy Family Care Centre.

