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Dihlabeng Christian School Newsletter

June 2018

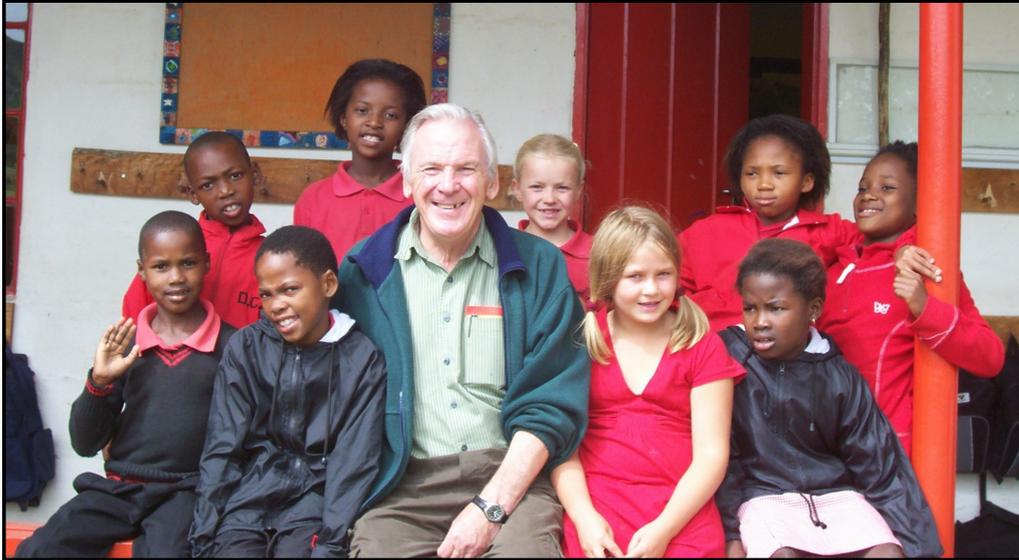
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John Summerton (left) and his wife Liz (below) pictured with some of the DCS pupils about 12 years ago.



Farewell to a Dear Friend

We would like to pay tribute to John Summerton a long term friend and supporter of Dihlabeng Christian School who sadly died on Friday 23rd March. John, together with his wife Liz, have been associated with the school since its beginnings in 2000. They spent extended periods of time living in Clarens and helping the school, Margaret and the children. They were instrumental in setting up the Sponsorship Scheme which now supports over 100 children at the school, and they began these regular newsletters which now go out to many sponsors and friends.

John loved nothing more than to be in amongst the children, he spent time in the classrooms and involved himself in the extra-curricular activities of the school. He was a man with a big generous heart and a tremendous enthusiasm and zest for life. He was always ready with a bag of sweets, a joke, a funny story or an encouraging word. In the last 10 years John and Liz have not been able to travel out to SA due to John's poor health. He will be deeply missed by Liz, his family and his many, many friends. We hope that the ex-pupils and friends of DCS who remember John will do so with fondness and thanks to God for a life well lived.

Appeal for Child Sponsors

The majority of the pupils at DCS are supported for their school fees by sponsors. The sponsorship scheme is managed mainly in the UK but we have sponsors in both the UK and SA, as well as other countries. Our sponsors, to whom we are extremely grateful, provide approximately one third of the school's income. They receive a copy of their child's report, greetings, samples of work and our newsletter twice a year, and a photo once a year. At the moment we have over 20 children who are in need of sponsorship to support all or part of their school fees. All money donated goes directly to the school; our minimal costs being printing and posting of newsletters and correspondence. If you are interested in sponsoring a child you can find out more by going to our website: www.dihlabengschool.com or contact New Life Church, Biggin Hill (as above).



Some of our 20 plus children who still need sponsors

Provision for Special Educational Needs

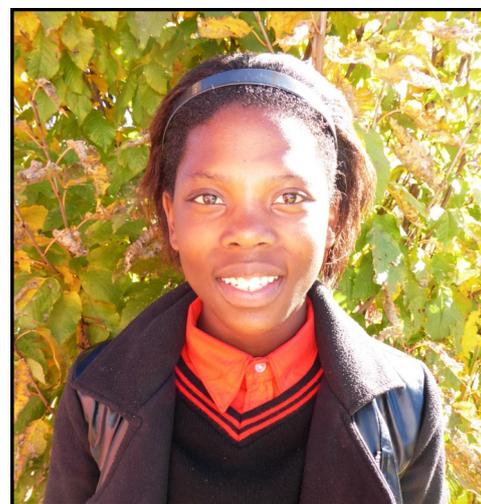
At the end of 2017 we made alterations to a large store room to provide a designated room for work with children who have a range of learning difficulties. This is to support and extend the work already being done by the teachers in class. Yolanda Van den Broek, one of our long term volunteer teachers from the UK leads this area of work at DCS, this is her report on the progress.



'This year, I have had the privilege of committing my time to working with children who need extra help with their learning. I have thoroughly enjoyed the freedom I've been given to develop this role and it really does feel like a work in progress! I run six guided reading groups with children from different grades. I also do a couple of spelling groups and some sessions of working with groups in class to do phonics activities and handwriting. I run two homework clubs for children in the Foundation Phase, aimed at those who may not receive support at home, and have set up two before-school reading clubs. The reading clubs have been a great success and we have been blessed with a growing number of community members who come in each week to read with the children. In February, I had the chance to go to Dubai to learn more about dyslexia, working alongside Rose Riordan, who has ten years experience in this area. She has a desire and vision to help the children at DCS by sharing her skills with me so that I, in turn, can help our DCS children. I have now started to do some one-to-one work with some of the children who I think will benefit from the input. The challenge is to find enough suitable slots for taking the children out of class but it's encouraging to see evidence of improvement!'

The Allan Gray Orbis Foundation

Early on in 2017 we were advised and encouraged by Bridget Walton, a friend and mentor of DCS, to apply for high school scholarships from the Allan Gray Orbis Foundation, in South Africa, for two of our pupils from Grade 6. The application involves an academic examination, an interview and a selection camp. Of the two applicants, Hadiyo Makhubu, now a Grade 7 pupil, has made it through the process and is now awaiting a final decision. Despite severe social/economic disadvantages Hadiyo has always proved herself to be academically bright, extremely well behaved and well mannered; she is a real credit to her family who are very proud of her. This is her account of her application thus far:



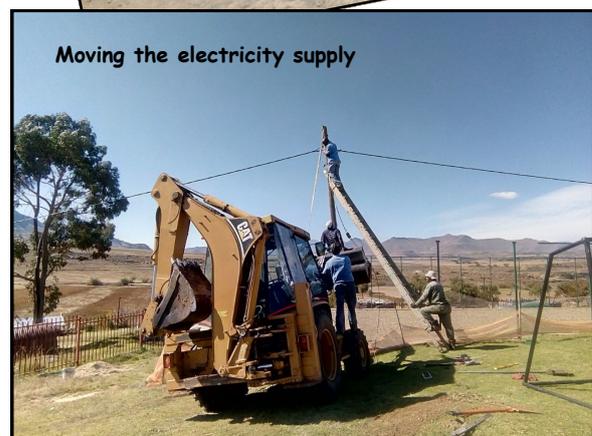
'When I first applied to the Allan Gray Orbis Foundation I filled in a lot of forms and they invited me to write their academic benchmarking test, this was an English and maths test. I passed the test and they invited me to go to Bloemfontein for an interview. I did a five minute presentation about an object that describes me; this was a book because I like reading a lot. Then we played some games and they asked me questions about them and they were: How many used? And, what's the same? I passed the interview and they invited me to Cape Town for a psychometric test. They even booked a plane ticket for us and a hotel to stay in called, Ikhaya Lodge. The following day we wrote the test and played mind games on the computer. Up until now I am still waiting for the results'

For Hadiyo this process has already been a huge adventure. If she is granted the scholarship, she will be awarded a place at one of the top high schools that operate within the Allan Gray scheme. She will be fully funded as a termly boarder for the duration of her high school education. We are so very proud of her and we wish her every success. She is a very determined young lady!

The New Sports Facility at DCS by Andy Woodage

(Andy is one of our volunteer teachers from the UK who has managed this project)

In late 2017, we began a project to transform our sports field in order to provide a multi-purpose court for physical education lessons and for sports training. This would give DCS usable outside space consisting of 3 tiers: the upper play area outside the classrooms, a small grassed soccer pitch and games area and the new court. It was hoped that the project might be completed before the beginning of this school year. However, due to many unforeseen factors it has taken much longer than anticipated. There have been a number of setbacks, including burst water pipes, African bureaucracy and the discovery of a natural spring! However, the biggest delays have occurred due to an unprecedented amount of rain over the last four months (which, considering the situation facing the Cape Town area, we have tried not to complain about too much). The good news is the project is finally nearing completion and we hope that the work will be signed off during the July school holiday.



In September 2017, after initial plans and quotes, the road to the school was relocated and we managed to procure a slightly larger area of land than we had expected. Therefore, we were pleased to find, when the platform was flattened, that it could accommodate a court of 32mX16m, which is close to the standard size (36mX18m). One of our challenges was trying to move some of the electrical infrastructure from the site, which proved extremely complicated and more expensive than we initially thought. This was completed in late April.

At the time of writing, the court surface is nearly finished.

The layers of grit, stone and tar have all been laid and now we await the final layer - the professional plastic coating. This will be added after the fencing has been completed. Then, after three weeks during which no one may enter, the court will be ready for us to use. Additionally, thanks to further generous donations, we have fully covered the cost of the sports field and should have enough left to resurface our soccer pitch and perhaps even to extend our perimeter fencing around the whole of the new area.

This has been a protracted venture but we're sure it will be worth it in the end!



Head Boy and Girl at DCS

This year the Senior Leadership Team decided to create two new positions of Head Boy and Head Girl. They appointed Hadiyo Makhubu as Head Girl, and Katleho Mokoena as Head Boy. Their duties and responsibilities include, leading the school council, providing feedback on school life to the Principal and Senior Leadership Team, giving a motivational speech at Prize Giving and managing the school's Prefect's duties. This is what the two students think about their roles:

Hadiyo - *'When Margaret chose me and Katleho as Head Girl and Head Boy I was so honoured and pleased and my mum and dad were so proud of me. I knew that from now on I would have great responsibility and a lot of duties to do, such as being head of the prefects. To show that we are Head Boy and Girl they decided that we should wear blazers in school to show the difference.'*

Katleho - *'I am proud to be Head Boy because anyone could have been chosen but I was chosen and I am very excited about that. I was surprised when teacher Margaret told us that we would be the heads. Being Head Boy is such an honour.'*



Hadiyo (left) and Katleho (right)
Head Girl and Head Boy
at DCS for 2018



From London to Clarens

Daisy Hilton came to DCS as a volunteer from Beacon Church, Brixton in London. She has been staying in Clarens and helping out at school for three months, April to June. She is hoping to study teaching next year and has thoroughly enjoyed her time with us. She spent most of her time at school assisting the Grade 2 class, but also helped elsewhere in the school working alongside different teachers. We are thankful for the time she has given and hope that Clarens will stay in her heart.

We wish her well in her future studies.

Blessings Through Troubles for Margaret

Many of you will be aware that in late March, at the end of term 1, Margaret, the Principal of DCS, was diagnosed with breast cancer. As you can imagine, this was a huge shock for her and those around her. It began many worrying weeks of surgery and tests. However, the cancer had been caught early and Margaret's surgery was straightforward and successful. She is now recovering from the surgery and only requires radiotherapy treatment instead of the usual combination of chemotherapy and radiotherapy. She has had to travel to Durban for this treatment so this has meant an upheaval from home until early August. Throughout all of this Margaret has been aware of tremendous support and blessings from the school team, and from friends both local and far away. Many of you have sent messages and kept in contact to be informed of her progress; she would like to thank you for your kindness and love which has meant so much at a time like this. The school has been wonderfully managed in her absence by Carolyn Revill, assisted by Adriani Basson and Andy Woodage, plus all the other teachers and assistants, who form such a fantastic team and to whom we are very grateful. It has been a tough term but we are so grateful to God for Margaret's good progress; she is doing well. We hope and pray that the rest of the treatment is successful and conclusive and that she will be able to return to Clarens and the school in the early part of next term.



'Thank You' to all our Sponsors and Friends

