March / April 2020

CLOUDS OF HOPE

Issue 2

Bi-Monthly Newsletter

LOCKDOWN NEWS

An update on how everyone is keeping safe, healthy, happy and occupied at Clouds of Hope ... p. 02

MR. JAMA

We catch up with former Clouds resident and newly qualified teacher - Tsepo Jama p.03

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Mom Trish celebrates her 70th birthday with the help of her young Clouds friends ... p.04

OUR RISING SINGING STAR

Philile Dlamani has enjoyed singing for some time now and the seventeen-year-old's beautiful voice is growing in demand in these parts

Philile is pictured here performing at a local wedding in St. Michael's Church, Himeville. By all accounts she was a great hit and there wasn't a dry eye in the house amongst guests.

She has also performed as part of the Berg Musician's Club - a monthly event showcasing new and established talent from the area. Everyone looks forward to seeing her name on the bill and surely there's a stellar career ahead for Philile!

CLOUDS ON LOCKDOWN ...

In line with the South African's government lockdown enforcement, everyone at Clouds have been confined to site since Friday March 27th. It's been a challenging time keeping our 69 children and teenagers safe, healthy, busy and entertained during this unprecedented period, however house mums and other key staff members have been working wonders to help everyone make this most of this time.

Says General Manager - Zesizwe Mncwabe:

"Our primary school learners are receiving schooling help from their house mums, with guidance from management between 10am - 12 noon daily. Unfortunately their school has been unable to provide homework activities, but we are doing our best for them through internet and text books assistance.

"Our high school students are working hard and being supported very well by Faithway College - with school work and activities being provided for each grade. We submit the work to their teachers for marking and the system is working well.

"We are so grateful of the good foundation our littlies receive from Noah's Ark pre-school. They really enjoy it there and are missing it hugely. Again, we are doing as much as we can to help them with school work.

"We are making sure the children are able to use up as much as energy as they can with afternoon games and other outdoor activities. Our sporting coach, France, is organising daily netball, volleyball and football games / skills sessions, with even some of the house mums joining in!

"We're so grateful for the support we receive. It is amazing to see how many people care about Clouds so deeply. At a time when our children are on site constantly, we are receiving more food donations - such as potatoes, cheese, milk and cabbages which are greatly appreciated. We had a wonderful Easter weekend. Thanks to Mom Trish for arranging their Easter eggs, and also for organizing a special cake made by Spar Underberg, to help us celebrate her recent 70th birthday from afar!

"Lastly, thank you to all of our board members - we appreciate the different roles you each play and every effort you put into our organisation. Without you, we cannot make it all happen. To all of our donors, supporters and friends, stay safe and well."

JUST CALL HIM SIR!

Former Clouds of Hope resident, Tsepo Jama, talks about newly qualifying as a teacher ...

CoH: "Congratulations Tsepo. Sadly I understand your Graduation Day's been postponed (due to lockdown), but you must be very relieved to have completed your studies?"
TJ: "Oh yes, I think every student felt the same! I studied at Varsity PMB (Pietermaritzburg) and am lucky enough to have gained a position at Merchiston Preparatory School here. I stated my first official teaching role in January 2020 and so far, so good. Lockdown had been a challenge, but we're busy setting students regular work assignments. Hope they didn't think this time was going to be a holiday!"

CoH: "You joined Clouds of Hope at a young age with your three siblings almost 20 years ago. Can you recall the moment you decided you wanted to become a teacher?"
TJ: "Yes, there were a couple of board members back then you helped with homework sessions and when I began to see the teaching patterns they adopted, I was really inspired. I wanted a profession and this was it. My passion was also triggered by some truly wonderful high school teachers at Faithway College."

CoH: "Have you any advice to pass onto our current Clouds of Hope students?"
TJ: "Absolutely. Staying positive is key. If you are mentally strong you can overcome any challenge you face. Appreciate every moment you are given. Remember everyone - your house mum, your teachers, those who support Clouds in so many ways ... everyone .... are doing this for you to have a brighter future."

CoH: "What do you hope to achieve in your educational career?"
TJ: "Well, I do have a plan and I think it's an important path for me. I would eventually like to return to the area, in order to give back to Clouds of Hope and the local Reichenau Mission Primary School. One day I'd love to take the wonderful schooling techniques and principles I am learning here at Merchiston and ultimately try to apply them to the rural school environment. Giving back and helping others to gain achievements is just really important to me."

With thanks to Tsepo Jama for speaking to board member, Claire Gray, for this issue of our newsletter. We wish him every success in his educational career and look forward to finally seeing him capped and gown at some stage soon!

The special birthday of Clouds of Hope co-founder - Patricia Crawley - was celebrated heartily in lockdown style...

Trish, who has been an integral part of our organistion and a driving force from the very beginning, was sent wonderful videos from the children singing happy birthday to her in English and Zulu.

To ensure the children could join in the celebration from afar, she arranged for a birthday cake to be made by Spar Underberg for all at Clouds to enjoy.

Trish asked all guests who were due to attend her birthday party to donate R70 each instead. She has raised R7000 and is still going!

Thank you Mom Trish, you are clearly much loved and appreciated by all.

SOCCER ... IT'S A SERIOUS BUSINESS!

While we are currently unable to use our football pitch during lockdown, our sports coach France has some wonderful photos of our children from previous tournaments that we wanted to share with you.

Unfortunately our scheduled training week at the end of March, sponsored by the *Grootbos Foundation*, has had to be postponed until later in the year. The children were so looking forward to this and we very much hope it will take place once lockdown has eased.

One item our children really do need are football boots. Not nearly enough to go around! Please see our donation wish list page if you would like to know how to help ...

SPORTS & SKILLS CENTRE UPDATE

Our Sports & Skills Centre - *Future Compass* - has been funded by German based charity *Be Your Own Hero*. BYOH has been generously donating to Clouds of Hope and the locally based Reichenau Mission since 2006, including arranging the supply of our wonderful transport buses from VW. This iniative is designed to assist those individuals from the area who will benefit from sports training and learning new practical skills such as woodwork and sewing. The centre also has the space to conduct counselling sessions and workshops covering life skills, finance management, basically any topic which will provide further tools for our local community to succeed.

The centre manager - Eirene Flamand - is building stronger communication platforms between ourselves and our local comminity through posters, a Whatsapp group and word-of-mouth to grow this wonderful facility into a thriving hub of hope for all.

CLOUDS OF HOPE

DONATION WISHLIST 2020

EXTERNAL MAINTENANCE

Several areas of our building urgently require re-painting and repairs / replacement to certain gutters and barge boards.

WOOD BURNING STOVES

Some of our cottages wood burning stoves are very old and need replacing.

WATER SUPPLY ISSUE

We struggle with our water supply - often only having access to hot water at certain points of the day. An upgrade to our system would help hugely.

BATHROOMS

New bathrooms are needed for House Mum Rosina's cottage, our main office and General Manager Ziseswe's onsite house.

PLAYROOM ROOF

Our playroom area has a very old roof which needs replacing.

LAPTOPS

Just five laptops would help us to run better sessions for our older children on internet research, presentation and finance skills.

FOOTBALL BOOTS

A range of sizes are required for our young soccer players. Currently needing 5 pairs each of size 4 / 5 / 6 & 7.

DESKS & CHAIRS

Needed to help us during our daily homework sessions. Stackable designs would be great for space-saving in main hall.

WINTER CLOTHES

It's getting colder and our children are always in need of warm jackets, coats and footwear. The older age groups are most in need as our littlies can re-use outgrown items.

WAYS TO DONATE ...

One-off or monthly cash donations can be made in several ways:

SA: FNB. Account No. 62034657413. Sort Code. 221025

UK: https://www.justgiving.com/cloudsofhope

International: SWIFT FIRNZAJJ221025

Please use your name or organization as a reference and where possible send a copy of deposit slip / proof of payment. An email to **clairegray.cloudsofhope@gmail.com** will also ensure we can record, spend in your chosen area and send a thank you letter.

Clouds of Hope

CHILDREN'S CHRISTIAN CARE CENTRE