



Lily of the Valley Children's Village Makaphutu Children's Village February E-news

Lily of the Valley

With the arrival of two new boys, one aged 10 months and the other aged 10 years, every space at Lily is full. Our Volunteer accommodation is also full with 6 girls and 3 guys all enthusiastically caring and loving our children. We are so blessed !! We are now having to refuse requests to accommodate new children, some of whom are in desperate need - Is it time to start Lily 2 ???

One of our older boys reached his 14th birthday this month and celebrated the occasion by going to the movies with a few of his friends, followed by a Steers meal which they all thoroughly enjoyed!!! Ten of our children were again spoilt by the Reach for a Dream foundation with a game of tenpin bowling and a delicious meal at Spur, which was greatly appreciated.

Our Lily Village boys joined with some local youngsters from Mophela to form an impromptu Soccer team to enter a local tournament. Although our team was knocked out in the second round, everyone had great fun participating !

Thanks to our very talented Volunteers many of our children are learning to play the piano. Bhekani is also learning the 'african' drums. After much practice he went for an audition and was delighted to be accepted to play in the church band. We are so proud to see him on stage on a Sunday evening.

Tamara Farris, a good friend from Oregon, U.S.A. has an incredible ministry, from which our LoV children have benefitted over the past few years. Together with a group of friends, Tamara makes the most beautiful Memory Books for each of our little ones who come to Lily with no past history and no information about parents or grandparents. The Memory Book starts with a photo of the child when they first arrive and whatever information we can provide. Over time we add to this book with photos of birthday parties, outings, school reports and any special event in the child's life. When they leave us they take the book with them and in this way keep memories alive. Thank you Tamara - it is a wonderful way to add value to a child's life. On a return visit this month Tamara and her group trained our housemothers in Child Grief Counselling. Speaking to the mothers afterwards it was very clear that the course was invaluable and provided the mothers with the skills needed to help our children who come from traumatic backgrounds.

Lily Community Projects

Khaya Mafunda from World Changers Academy presented a four week course at our Community Projects Hall for young unemployed people in the community. The course subjects ranged from self respect; respect for others; how to present yourself to people; how to be a positive influence to experiencing mock interviews and giving speeches. There were several very powerful guest speakers who came to teach. The end result was that this group of people who came here feeling as desperate and hopeless as so many others from the local communities left feeling empowered and capable of doing anything! This course instilled in them a sense of worth and a desire to go out and be recognized. Khaya will continue meeting these students once a week for the next 12 weeks. This course was such a success that we hope to bring Khaya back to run more such events within the next few months.

We are in the process of becoming a registered soccer club, with two teams already formed and a third still in the process. Our first coach is an enthusiastic man from Mophela and we hope he will have some assistant coaches to help him soon.

February ended on a very sad note. Our Supervisor, Mr Stembiso 'Knowledge' Khumalo, passed away suddenly on 29 February in his little cottage on the Community Projects. Knowledge had not been well for two weeks and had not improved following several visits to the Doctor. Knowledge first worked at the Children's Village and was moved to the Projects and promoted to Supervisor when we started this new project four years ago. Knowledge was a loyal workman and good friend and he will be sorely missed.

Makaphutu

February was a particularly exciting month for the children, especially the girls!! 12 of our girls plus 4 female staff members have started playing soccer for the Forest Hills Soccer Club this year. The girls have shown keen interest in the first few weeks of training and all look very smart in their soccer boots and kit. Two of our older girls, who have shown exceptional skills, were delighted to have been selected to play in the Ladies soccer tournament to be held in March.

One of our boys has decided that Rugby is his game and has shown impressive improvement on a weekly basis. He has never played Rugby before, but his coach has been extremely impressed by his attitude and ability. Rugby is not for the faint hearted and his first big test came when he was faced with tackling the biggest and most feared player in his age group. He passed with flying colours and earned the instant respect of all his team mates and coach alike. Inter-club matches start in March.

The children have been doing very well with their school work and have shown steady progress. One or two need some extra attention and coaching but with the help of members of the Makaphutu staff, we are confident of their progress.

This month has also seen a few of our staff applying for a Code 10 Drivers licences, which will enable them to drive heavier vehicles such as our Mini Bus. Once they have passed the test, we are looking forward to having more drivers capable of assisting with the many driving requirements at Makaphutu.

We hope to have two Volunteers joining our team in May and another one in June. It is wonderful to have new input into the lives of our children and we look forward to welcoming them to our team.

With much love from the Lily and Makaphutu Teams