



## Dear friends

The past month has been interesting and challenging as we grapple with the stories that make up our target community in nearby Sweetwaters. I recount several of the stories because they reveal the depth and prevalence of the social and family disintegration in the marginalised areas of our country, while showing the power of the Gospel to bring a hope and a future into broken lives.

## Welfare

- Mlandisi (about 55yrs) is confined to a wheelchair after having contracted polio as a youngster. He now lives alone most of the time, his mother having died a year back. He recently ended up in hospital with burns after spilling a kettle of boiling water over his legs and thighs. When he was discharged, having no means of getting home and the hospital did not help with arrangements, he wheeled himself up the 10 kms climb to Sweetwaters in a wheel chair! The sheer tenacity & determination of faith in Jesus to say, "I can do this!" without feeling sorry for himself is both humbling & inspiring!!
- One of our client households comprises two young women, one of whom has several young children and the other has a baby. The two adult women do not get on. Both women are orphaned and amidst a long family history of problems and abuse, the young children are not always cared for as they should. There have been suspected poisonings, injury through being kicked by a horse and other bizarre events. The child that was kicked by the horse received prayer in Jesus name and made a remarkable recovery. The suspected poisoning precipitated a visit to the Sangoma (witch doctor) who declared that the neighbours are attempting to poison the child! The great challenge in the midst of oppression and suffering is to keep people pointed towards Jesus and the freedom He offers as an alternative to the ineffective solutions and bondage that the Sangomas' offer clients. Pray with us and for them as we point the household to Jesus alone.
- Sbu is a 16yr old orphan who is still to complete his primary level schooling. Being 16 he has to apply for a South African identity document. HT carers assisted him to make the application. They discovered this week that he had dropped out of school. The apparent reason was that he had been "chased" away from school on account of not having an ID document. (Schools insist that 16 year olds apply for their ID documents.) Upon investigation at the school & interviewing the boy in the presence of the School Principal he explained that several of his friends, who also did not have ID documents, had scared each other into believing that they *would be* chased away from school. A simple intervention in faith by our Carers (in the absence of any parents to fulfil this role) led to a letter from Hope Trust, together with a copy of the application document from Home Affairs, confirming that an application for an ID had been made. Sbu was assured nobody was "chasing" him away from school. He is back studying and smiling again, although possibly using marijuana!!
- Amanda is a 17yr old girl from elsewhere in the Province. Her mother died when she was young & she was abandoned by her father. She lived with her grandparents. They were both alcoholics and recently her grandfather (Mkhulu) burned their house down while under the influence. Everything was lost. Amanda decided to leave and come to Sweetwaters to find a job and make a new life. HT carers met her through being in the right place at the right time. Their hearts were moved by the story of this girl who is now living in Sweetwaters, having found a job of caring for a baby, in return for somewhere to live. The carers visited the family where she was working. They mediated a fruitful discussion in which Amanda can drop the baby at a creche (on her way to school) and collect the baby on the way home in the afternoon. The next step was to seek a space in a high school for her to enter Grade 8. Then it was discovered that she had amended her 'transfer form' to read Grade 8 and not Grade 3! At 17 she was too old to be admitted to a primary school to start grade 4! HT carers accompanied her to a High School and were successful in having her accepted, starting on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2015. The application of faith and the love of Jesus resulted in a young woman being able to return to school with the optimism of a hope and a future. This is the practical gospel message at work.
- In early January a stationery drive in HCF yielded all the stationery requirements for the 23 children of client families where we know that there are no resources to finance the start-up of the school year. Pens, paper, maths sets, calculators and school backpacks & uniforms were some of the items supplied. It is always heart-warming when such provision is appreciated. Hope Trust has been personally thanked by the Principal of Nobanda Primary & by one of the Gogos, who cares for several of the recipient children.

## Development: Social & Economic Empowerment

- The 2014 statistics have recently become available:
  - 98 homes were visited to encourage the development of deep trench gardens. This was followed by training in cases where interest was expressed.

- 168 homes were visited to encourage existing or to stimulate new small and micro enterprises. The response is small.
- 375 homes were visited to promote the savings and credit groups to which there has been a good response.
- 30 groups ended 2014 having saved a total of R362 410 in the year.
- 160 homes hosted Bible studies during the year.
- There are 25 small businesses that our staff monitor. 14 of these are doing well.
- 6 new small businesses have started in the Bhubonono area.
- 300 members of savings and credit groups received additional training in home finance and financial literacy.

## Youth Development

- The soccer scene is quieter over the summer season. However, Bafana Bestyle (now calling themselves Ukulunkulu Unathi (God With Us) have joined the Umngeni LFA, one of the regional league groupings. They have also recently played a tournament in which they made the final, drawing 0-0.
- Netball is moving a little slower (heat having much to do with this) but the U/13 age group are keen to play a match if anyone knows of schools willing to play *ad hoc* games.

## Sweetwaters Christian Church (SCC)

(SCC is the financial responsibility of HCF. We report on it here because of the synergies of working with SCC)

- Manka and Mpume Malevu are in a new season with their church. They are meeting in their home. Numbers have been growing steadily (since they have been in a building rather than the tent they met in for about 4 years), so much so that they have taken down a passage wall in the house opening up a bigger space. Numbers are bulging regularly over 80. They are feeling that they should build a small home for themselves on their property and vacate their present dwelling to be renovated as a church venue, an office for SCC and one for Hope Trust. Please pray with us as we seek the Lord's way ahead on this venture.

## Finances & Management

- We are so grateful that the second payment from Lotto has come through! This takes the

pressure off for a couple of months giving us space to dream, hear God and prepare for the next season ahead.

- Last week Larensia Rabe ran a strategic planning session with all the staff resulting in fresh vision & a workable Operational Plan for the year.

## Ministry Opportunities

- Participate in a *home care visit* on a Thursday.
- Pray for the ministry daily.
- There is a need for someone to run career guidance & work preparation training for teens.
- Practical helps – eg sort clothing for distribution and jumble sales; fund raising.....
- Drive Daphney to the Kinderhuis in Greytown to visit Sanè, an orphan from Sweetwaters, for whom we care.
- Assistance with updating and maintaining the website, establishing and managing Facebook and Twitter accounts. (Our thanks to Clint Wright who is helping us re-engineer the website.)
- Thank you to all those who are partnering with us prayerfully, financially, through encouragement and practical support. You are essential cogs in the wheel!

Our special love and appreciation to you all.

## Dave, Jean & the Hope Trust staff.



*Some of the 23 children who received a stationery pack & a backpack for school in 2015.*

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