



June 2006

Dear Just One Child friends

Time is a funny thing; sometimes minutes can feel like hours and at other times, there are not enough hours in a day to accomplish all that needs to be done! Certainly Cheryl and I have found ourselves suffering from the latter, which I hope will explain the lack of newsletters over the past year. Many of you have asked me for updates and I am afraid that given the demand on our small team of volunteers as this initiative continues to grow beyond even our wildest dreams, I never seem to get there. But despite the lack of news, we continue to get wonderful support from you all. As you can imagine we are still only seeing the tip of the iceberg of this great need and we welcome all the help and support we can get.

Some amazing things have happened since last I wrote and we are a long way down the road. What follows is a summary of what has transpired over the past year:

1. [Thabang house](#)
2. [Clairvaux Infant Haven](#)
3. [Frida Hartly Shelter](#)
4. [Lourdes House](#)
5. [Gallo Manor Nursery School](#)
6. [Major news and events](#)
7. [Statistics](#)
8. [Special acknowledgement](#)

Thabang House

Many of you will recall that our housefather, Simon passed away in February 2005. I am delighted to tell you that while this was originally very difficult for Mavis, she has succeeded admirably on her own.

Her son, Benele, who is in his early twenties and studying, moved into the house to enable us to have more security for Mavis. A South African company called **Compuware** paid for an electric fence to be put up around the property and also tiled the floor of the children's room and paid for an extractor fan to be fitted in the bathroom.

Paving for growing kids...

The children at Thabang are growing bigger by the minute it seems and we were finding that there was not enough paving in the garden area to ride their tricycles and bicycles. **Hollard Insurance** came to the rescue and put paving down from the front gates running the full length of the grass to the house. So while there is still plenty of grass for the kids there is now also a fantastic spot for them to ride around, bounce balls etc.

Boitumelo...

Boitumelo, the little boy who is cerebral palsied and has severe heart defects, still lives with his mother, Margaret, and his cousin Esther (an AIDS orphan) in the flatlet at the back of the house. He has done very well and has recently been accepted to the Forrest Town School for cerebral palsy children at a minimum fee which Margaret his mother pays. Esther is now 10 years old and is in grade four at Wendywood Primary School. Although she struggled at first, she is now receiving certificates for good work and we are grateful that the school does not charge for her education.

Who lives at Thabang...

Staying at Thabang with housemother Mavis, we currently have six children: Joseph, Siyabonga, Petra, Thembi, Beauty and Ian.

Beauty is the eldest at 11 years old and is in grade six at Wendywood Primary, again free of charge. Joseph, Siyabonga, Petra and Thembi all attend the Gallo Manor Nursery School, which

now belongs to Clairvaux Infant Haven as you will read later. One of these children is HIV positive, but at this stage is coping well and the doctors have recommended that we keep the child off medication as long as she remains strong.

Ian's progress...

Ian is the other little boy who is cerebral palsied and though he arrived unable to crawl, we are pleased to report that he is doing very well and is even walking! This is thanks to the perseverance of Mavis and the doctors at the Johannesburg General Hospital. While this may sound strange, one of the secrets to his success was Botox injections, which were given in his ankles to relax the muscles. When the doctors originally suggested this treatment and asked for permission to test it on Ian, Cheryl, Mavis and I were not keen. However, we then read an article in a magazine about a child with a similar type of problem and after reading their excellent results, we agreed. The results have been astounding!

A trip to the sea...

In August, Mavis and the children are being taken on a holiday to Ballito Bay organised by the matron at St David's Marists Brothers school. It will be a fantastic opportunity for the children to see the sea!

[BACK TO TOP](#)

Clairvaux Infant Haven

Who lives at Clairvaux...

We currently have six babies/toddlers at Clairvaux. Three year old Mpho (the child with Treacher Collins Syndrome and no ears); two year old Siphon (blind baby with cerebral palsy); Valencia, now three years old; Janet who is now twenty six months old; and Thembinkozi, who is three months old.

And who stayed for a while...

During the past year four more babies have moved through Clairvaux. Another Mpho and Albert both arrived within a week of their births and were later adopted. A third child, Imbali was left with us for short period during which we helped to strengthen the child's

muscles and enable her to sit and then walk. Imbali was then taken by her mother (she was not placed with us through a court order) but several months later was dropped off at another home where the caregiver knew us and so sent the child to our Frida Hartly Home. I am sorry to say that somewhere in the interim Imbali has been severely injured, judging from a mark on her head, and she clearly now has some type of damage as her eyes droop. She is simply not the same child that left us.

The fourth child was brought to us by a doctor from the Johannesburg General Hospital. The doctor had delivered the baby and the mother, who was HIV positive, had then died. The baby was taken home by the grandparents, who later returned the baby to the doctor saying they were unable to care for her. The doctor heard about Clairvaux and brought the baby to our haven. This baby was clearly also HIV positive and after a few weeks became very ill. We had her admitted to the Johannesburg General Hospital in conjunction with the doctor who had brought the baby to us and we also contacted the grandparents - who met us there as the child was still officially in their custody. At the hospital the grandparents asked whether if the child recovered we would continue to look after her. We assured them we would. We advised them to call us the day the child was discharged so that we could meet them at the hospital and take the baby to Clairvaux. We were never called. The doctor later told us that the child had done well in hospital and had been discharged. The grandparents had come to fetch her and told the doctor they first wanted to take her home for a few days before bringing her to us. Three days later they returned to say the baby had died! Unfortunately, we suspect they may have taken the baby to a traditional healer, as we have heard of similar stories before. ***These stories do remind us of what we are able to achieve if we are able to keep the children at our Haven!***

Mpho's progress...

Some may remember that "big" Mpho also had a cleft palate, and for those who do not know, this was repaired in November last year at the Parklane Hospital, by Doctor Khadwa who did the operation free of charge. All hospital costs, anaesthetist's costs etc were covered by an organisation called the "smile train". Tragically, Dr Khadwa and his wife were murdered only two weeks after the

operation. We were stunned by his murder, even more so when his son was arrested for it. The court case has still to be held. Although Mpho`s ears are closed we are convinced he can hear as he turns around when you call him, says `hello` and can repeat his name.

Summary of children since inception .

In total , we have now helped 20 babies who have been resident at either Clairvaux or Thabang and have then been adopted , or reunited with their extended families. Sadly two babies have died from aids , as well as one of the mothers we were caring for at Frida Hartly.

[BACK TO TOP](#)

Frida Hartly Shelter

This home in Belvue (next to Yeoville) has gone from strength to strength. Cheryl and I have had some steep learning curves here, but I believe we are now running it more effectively.

What happens at the shelter...

As you may know, it is an eight bedroom home where we cater for abused, homeless, unemployed women - particularly those with babies. We have on average of eight to ten mothers, and up to fourteen children. We have a housekeeper, Nancy and a caregiver Thoko. Nancy's husband, Gideon does the garden.

The Frida concept...

The concept at Frida is to give the ladies a three-month window to find a job and accommodation while they have a roof over their heads and carers looking after their babies while they seek work. The original vision was not as specific and the ladies overextended their welcome, some making no attempt to get a job or move out.

The new rules we have introduced stipulate that the mothers must leave the premises at 9am and may only return at 4pm. The children stay at the shelter with Thoko while the mothers look for work. If the mother is HIV positive, then of course she need not go out during the day, nor does the three-month limit apply.

[BACK TO TOP](#)

Lourdes House

We took occupation of Lourdes House old age home on 1 September 2004 and have been running the home now for just over eighteen months. Once again we have been astounded as to how full it has been!

Glass half full...

When we registered the section 21 company, I calculated that unless the home was 100% occupied, we would not have sufficient funds to service the enormous bond. Well, apart from a six-week spell in about November last year, it has always been full. In fact I think the six-week low was a test from on high! What happened was that a number of residents died within a short space of time and we had six or seven empty rooms - which we seemed unable to fill. The monthly all-in cost is expensive at R7500 per room, per month, so six rooms empty leaves us R45,000 short. One day I got a frantic call from Kathy, to say that the sister in charge, Sue, had phoned to say she was sure I was going to fire her because she had just accepted a terminally ill patient at a fee of only R4500 a month; the family were in desperate straights and had nowhere else to go and simply could not afford the R8500 per month. I immediately agreed that her decision, under the circumstances, was correct and far from being angry I was delighted! The lady was admitted and the next day the phone never stopped ringing with people looking for accommodation at the standard rate. Six months later we are still over-subscribed - and the terminally ill patient is still with us!

A new nursery...

We are presently busy converting a double garage at the home into a nursery for six babies to expand our overall facilities. The floor, previously sand, has now been concreted, and the roof and walls plastered. A toilet, bathroom and kitchenette have been built within

the garage but we now have to do plumbing, electrics, painting, tiling, fittings etc.

[BACK TO TOP](#)

Gallo Manor Nursery School

The future of learning in the balance...

In 2004 our children from Thabang House started attending the Gallo Manor Nursery School. The school has for the past 30 years been run by Felicity Cohen, who actually started the school. In December 2004 she advised us that she was struggling to stay solvent and asked whether we would be interested in buying it. We advised that we were not as she had been told she would get a price well in excess of R1m, and I felt the school was simply too run down. The school caters exclusively for African children with the monthly fees being R500 in contrast with other nursery schools where fees are in the region of R1500 per month. To cut a long story short, in November 2005 she again approached us saying that she had finally received a written offer for the school though far less than the original R1m+ she had hoped for, and that the school would be closed at the end of 2005 as the buyer was converting it back into a house. She again offered the school to us at the price she had been offered, less the agent commission she had to pay, stating that she also needed to keep working.

We felt that we could simply not allow the Thabang kids and the 60 children from Alexandria to lose opportunity to learn and so we did the deal. Many of the children's parents sell goods on street corners and can only afford to pay R200 per month and a calculation showed that expenses would exceed monthly income by about R10,000 per month, but we felt we had to do it.

And a new opportunity to save the day...

Lo and behold, no sooner had we agreed the purchase of Gallo Manor Nursery School when another opportunity came our way; this time a genuine business opportunity to buy an upmarket nursery school that was generating a good profit and where our daughters

have taught over the last seven years. I was not given a price, but asked to make an offer. The school was owned by a large corporate in Johannesburg called Advetech - who also own run the Crawford colleges. I received the financials and took a chance by making an offer. The offer would ensure that this nursery school, called Honeybee, would not only be self supporting, but would generate sufficient income to pay some of the salaries of the staff at Gallo Manor Nursery School thus reducing the monthly shortfall at Gallo Manor to almost nil! I put in the offer and you can guess the result.

The next interesting thing that occurred was that the day the two schools opened their doors in January 2006, both principals advised us that never in the years they had run the schools (30 years Gallo Manor and twelve years Honeybee) had they ever had so many children on the first day! Both schools are full to capacity.

At Gallo Manor school we still had the problem that it was so run down and I had only catered for running costs coming from Honeybee. Once again the Lord has provided. Visiting students from Australia helped paint classrooms in December and a carpet company donated vinyl floor tiles - which I laid in the kitchen and two classrooms in December. Paving bricks donated by friends enabled us to pave the entire area in front of the school.

And then the miracle really began...

Compuware, the same company that put the electric fence up at Thabang, donated the following brand new items:

- 30 scooters
- A TV
- A stove
- A fridge
- A photostat machine
- Plates
- Balls
- 40 plastic chairs
- 10 plastic tables
- 3 tape players.

In addition they brought builders in to refurbish the children's toilets, the paving around the school building, the ceramic floor tiling of the entire house and the walkway roof. They installed a new front gate and built a roof over the sandpit.

We have come a long way, but still have a long way to go. We still need to terrace the grounds to stop soil erosion and enable us to put in topsoil and plant grass.

[BACK TO TOP](#)

Other news and events

Dinners...

In December two evenings of dinner and entertainment were arranged by Robyn Maraschin, Lisa Huet and their team. The events generated huge interest and resulted in substantial cash donations, some as large as R30 000 being made, which will enable us to concentrate on what we are doing as opposed to worrying about funds.

Activity in the UK...

St Mary's church in Newport, Wales are still a great source of funds for which we are eternally grateful for the commitment of people like Des and Debbie Robertson, Francis and Rose Holland, Oriel Davis, Jason Belia, Val Evans and so many others who have unstintingly given their time and energy for complete strangers on the other side of the world.

They hold annual fundraising events such as duck races, dances and an annual concert in October with the Forest of Dean Brass band who have agreed to play again this year free of charge.

The entire Brooke family managed to visit the Welsh supporters one evening and they were able to meet Bernard and Brendon whom they spoilt terribly.

The next mayor of Newport, Allan Morris will be adopting Just One Child as the Mayor's charity for the year he is in office.

Des Robertson from St Mary`s in Newport and Jen Smit who was previously active in South Africa and is now in London , met each other as a result of them each independently talking to a third person about Just One Child , and that person then introduced them to each other. A small world !They have joined forces , and this will lead to a broadening of support from the UK. This is another example of the “ little miracles “ that we have come to rely on for our success.

Des Robertson and Jen Smit, have just opened a bank account in the name of Just One Child to aid fundraising activity in the UK and encourage those pounds to come in!!

Students from Saint John`s College in Sydney , Australia...

In November last year , six students Ryan Pinto , Steven Zhang , Rae Mozjeko , Hannah O`Brien , Jennifer Coles and Michael Holmes spent two weeks in South Africa helping us with various aspects of our work . They helped with clearing out an old storeroom which is now being converted into a nursery , removing rubbish from Frida Hartly Shelter , painting the interior of the nursery school , moving bricks to Lourdes House for the building of the nursery , and of course playing with and entertaining the children . Thanks goes to all involved for making this trip possible.

Castle Rushen High School -- Isle of Man

In July we received a visit by 54 students and teachers from the Castle Rushen High School from the Isle of Man. Prior to coming to South Africa on a sports tour , they held a fundraising event , during which their physical education teacher , Neil , ran 10 miles , walked 10 miles , swam 10 miles , cycled 10 miles and roller bladed 10 miles all in one day , to celebrate his 50 Birthday and raise funds ! They donated three thousand three hundred and sixty five pounds to Just One Child ! Since then , they have raised a further six hundred pounds for us. We have been delighted with their interest and support. Thanks to everyone concerned.

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Website...

Our website www.justonechild.co.za was launched last year thanks to Rajesh Megan and is now about to be improved with great ideas coming from Jen Smit, now resident in the UK.

Bernard and Brendon...

Many of you know that this all started with just one child! And his name was Bernard. You may also know that we adopted him and two years later also adopted a companion, Brendon.

Bernard is now four years and four months old and Brendon is four years and one month old. Because they both had a difficult start to life and we were concerned about their learning, we sent them to a special nursery school called the Talk Shop. Here they are given speech and occupational therapy and are doing quite well. The school is VERY expensive but we feel if we can give them the best possible start then hopefully later in life they will not struggle. They are both talking quite well now, in fact Brendon asks so many questions that I keep asking Cheryl why we sent them to the Talk Shop!!!

[BACK TO TOP](#)

Statistics

Thabang , Clairvaux & Frida Hartly homes

Some interesting figures:

Fixed monthly cost: R11,700

Number of caregivers , housekeeper, housemother: 7

Bond repayments, rates, water and electricity for Thabang & Frida Hartly: R10,000

Total fixed monthly cost: R21,700

Number of children supported: 24 to 26

Number of adults supported: 8 to 10

Average fixed cost per child/adult (32 to 36): R602

These monthly fixed costs are funded exclusively from donations received. In addition to this we then have to fund the cost of food, formula, medicines , nappies , etc , etc. Fortunately many of these items are donated to us.

Gallo Manor Nursery School

Number of salaried employees: 5
Number of children: 65
Monthly fixed costs (including salaries, rates, bond costs: R30,000
(currently R10,000 paid by Honeybee nursery school.)

Cost per month per child: R462.
Monthly income from fees: Varies from R14,000 to R18,000.

Lourdes House:

Number of staff (including part time): 31
Number of residents: 30

Note: Lourdes House is self-supporting, but still has a huge mortgage bond commitment.

Special Acknowledgement

We would like to make special mention of two people who always make themselves available to help when called upon to do so. They are Enrico and Nicolette, the paediatricians who look after our children totally free of charge. They never know when they may be needed and many days they have worked long and hard and will then see our children at 7 pm in the evening to check on them if we believe they are ill. They are always there when needed. Thanks for your support.

And that's about it for now. As ever, thank you to all of you who offer your time, resources and funds to help **Just One Child**. We survive because of people like you! Remember to visit us at www.justonechild.co.za to read more about our organisation and to find contact details.

Until next time...

Cliff and Cheryl