



July 2007

Dear Just One Child friends

Well I keep promising to get more regular newsletters out but unfortunately time simply eludes me and before I know it, another year has passed. I do apologise. But let's not waste any more time in getting you up to date on all things, both good and sad, that have occurred since our newsletter of June 2006. For a quick link to news on each of the children in our care, you can click on the names below.

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### Thabang House

Let's start with the children at Thabang House. Boitumelo and his cousin Esther continue to live with Boitumelo's mother Margaret in the flatlet attached to Thabang House, previously the garage and domestic quarters:

1. **Boitumelo** is now ten years old and is doing remarkably well since his open heart surgery to correct a birth defect. He still has a hole in the heart and because he has a mild form of cerebral Palsy he now attends Forest Town School for Cerebral Palsied children in Johannesburg. He seems to be enjoying school there and is coping well. He is a most delightful little boy who always has a smile on his face and his disability simply does not get him down. [Back to top](#).

2. **Esther**, an orphan, is Boitumelo's cousin. She is twelve years old and attends the Wendywood Primary School where she is doing well. We are glad to say that she appears to be well adjusted to her situation.

Margaret - Boitumelo's mother and Esther's aunt - is doing a wonderful job of looking after these two children whilst still holding down a full time job in Sandton. Her job does not pay very well so we are hoping to employ Margaret at the nursery school in the future, creating the same income for her but without the current daily taxi costs she has to pay. We are waiting for Margaret to decide whether or not she would like to change her job. [Back to top.](#)

Moving on to Thabang House itself, which as you know is run by Mavis. Mavis was taken ill last year and spent two weeks in the Johannesburg Hospital in November. We are pleased to say she has made a total recovery and is now in good health again.

3. **Beauty**, who was with us this time last year, moved to Mother Theresa's on 18 July 2006 where she appears to have settled down quite well. As a growing thirteen-year old we unfortunately did not really have the facilities for her at Thabang as all the younger children sleep in one large room. If we had a house with more rooms to cater for older children, we would have been able to keep her, but unfortunately we do not have that luxury at present. We have seen her on a number of occasions at Mother Theresa's and she appears happy and contented. Just One Child is paying Beauty's school fees at the Yeoville Community School following Mother Theresa's request for assistance. [Back to top.](#)

4. **Petra** is now five years old and is growing into a beautiful little girl. We have identified that she has very low muscle tone and have now organised physiotherapy on a weekly basis for her. Fortunately the physio is providing her services free-of-charge, though the weekly transport costs to and from the practice in Edenvale are rather high. [Back to top.](#)

5. **Joseph** turned five in January - although his birth certificate reflects his surname incorrectly and his birth date as April! It is a real mission to try and correct these errors, with further complications arising because though we know his mother died at Mother Theresa's, the funeral parlor that collected her body never registered her death and so she is officially still alive! This is just one of the administrative challenges that proves so difficult to try and resolve. The good news is that Joseph, who is a very intelligent little boy, has been given a full bursary by St David's Marists Brothers for his entire schooling career, starting there next January in grade 0. [Back to top.](#)

6. **Siyabonga**, our "dustbin baby" is now four and a half years old and a great looking kid! This past year has been tough for him. I think I mentioned before that when he has a high temperature, he sometimes has a fit. On Saturday 20 January 2007, he had a fit at lunch time. He then had a second one at about 2pm followed by a third at 5.30pm. As a result, and following discussions with our paediatrician, we had him admitted to the Morningside Clinic where he was examined and kept overnight for observation. During the night he had another fit. Following this, he was given a brain scan and was placed on medication used to treat epilepsy. The brain scan revealed a certain amount of fluid on the

brain (Hydroceph) and he is now under treatment by a top Neurosurgeon, Prof. Rodder, at the Baragwaneth hospital. He has to take Epillum every day and seems to have stabilised. Yet again, I am pleased to say that all these costs at the Morningside Clinic - including the brain scan - were provided by all the suppliers concerned, totally free of charge. [Back to top.](#)

7. **Ian**, who is now four years old, is the little boy who is severely cerebral palsied. Mavis takes him for regular checkups at the Baragwaneth Hospital and the Botox injections he received last year – which you may recall from the last newsletter – have made a huge difference in helping him to walk. However, because his one leg was in a "permanently bent" position, it was still very difficult for him to walk. Earlier this year he was admitted for surgery on the leg during which they straightened his leg at the knee as well as at the ankle. The result has been nothing short of a miracle and little Ian virtually runs around the house now! [Back to top.](#)

But there have been other challenges with Ian. It was important to get him at a school and Forest Town - which handles only Cerebral Palsied Children - accepted him free of charge on 16 April 2007. However after he had attended for just over two weeks they phoned to say that because he was so severely mentally challenged, they actually could not teach him. Mavis subsequently managed to get him into another school, Sunshine, a school for Cerebral Palsied and mentally retarded children, and since starting on 1 June he has settled in very well. Unfortunately they would not take him free of charge and the monthly fees are R850.00. In addition, the school is quite a distance from Thabang and two trips a day are rather expensive. [Back to top.](#)

8. Since our last news newsletter, **Valencia**, now four years old, has moved from Clairvaux to Thabang, commencing 1 November 2006. This brave little girl has been on antiretrovirals for over three years now and seems to be doing well - although she lost a lot of weight when she moved from Clairvaux to Thabang, probably because she gets a lot more exercise playing with the other children at Thabang. [Back to top.](#)

9. Little **Janet**, who is three years old, also moved from Clairvaux to Thabang House on 1 November 2006. After three years on antiretrovirals she is doing very well. We remember when she was a baby and we were convinced she would not survive as she seemed so weak. Today she has a beautiful smile and is a cheerful child. [Back to top.](#)

## Clairvaux Infant Haven

10. **Mpho** is back at Clairvaux Infant Haven after a short stint at the Frida Hartly Shelter. We were running the shelter to try and stop mothers from abandoning their babies in the first instance. We also had a house mother who looked after the babies while the mothers went looking for work. This housemother also had

two children from Clairvaux Infant Haven transferred to her care, as they needed more garden area to play in. Mpho and Antoinette were moved there on 15 July 2006. In late September 2006, Mpho's hand was severely burnt on the gas stove at the shelter and we moved him back to our house to monitor the healing process. However, during this time we decided to withdraw from the shelter and hence Mpho is still at Clairvaux. You will remember that he is the one whose ears are deformed and there are no holes in his ears. The fantastic news is that he can undoubtedly hear as he has now started saying words like 'hello' and 'goodbye'. We have been told that he needs to be much older before they can consider operations to repair his ears. Despite his disability, he is a very cheerful little boy. He is now attending our nursery school and seems to be interacting quite well with other children. [Back to top.](#)

11. **Antoinette**, who like Mpho went to Frida Hartly for a while, returned to Clairvaux on 7 December 2006. Antoinette originally arrived at Frida Hartly with her mother, who then decided she did not want to look after her, abandoned Antoinette at the shelter. At the time Antoinette could not walk properly and we brought her to Clairvaux so that she could get physiotherapy. Today she walks beautifully. However she has been through a tough time. She also attends the nursery school and on 1 February this year she fell off a swing and broke her leg which necessitated four weeks in traction in hospital. She has made a full recovery and we are trying to find an adoptive home for her at present. [Back to top.](#)

12. In the last newsletter we spoke about our little blind baby, **Sipho**, who was also cerebral Palsied. Some of you may remember the subsequent e-mail I sent out advising that he had been transferred to an institution called Vita Nova , which we felt was in a better position to look after him. However he passed away only ten days after we left him in their care, and we subsequently held a funeral for him. [Back to top.](#)

13. And then we had **Tshianko**, a little baby born on 1 December 2006 and brought to our home when he was only two days old. He progressed well, apart from an infection on his ear lobe, only to pass away for no apparent reason on 1 February 2007 when he was exactly three months old. We were stunned and requested an autopsy which simply stated he had died of natural causes. We buried Tshianko in the grave next to Sipho. [Back to top.](#)

14. **Thami** was handed to us in May 2006 by his mother who was staying at Frida Hartly, as she wanted to go and visit her mother. He was very thin and looked ill - as can be seen from a picture on our internet site, [www.justonechild.co.za](http://www.justonechild.co.za). We soon discovered he was HIV positive and placed him on antiretrovirals. His mother never returned and we have had him for over a year now during which time his development has been quite remarkable. When he arrived he could barely even sit, let alone crawl. Today he is walking around the nursery, a happy little boy. [Back to top.](#)

15. Another new arrival was **Nazeer**, who arrived also at the age of only two days! He was healthy and responded well at our house and was fortunate to be adopted when he was three months old by a childless French couple who are in South Africa on a work contract. When they met him they were overjoyed and spent virtually eight hours a day at our haven for the three weeks that they had to wait for the papers to be processed by the courts. He left with his new parents on 16 May 2007. [Back to top.](#)

16. Cherryl and I collected our latest addition to the Clairvaux family from the Parklane Clinic on Saturday 16 June. She was born at the Johannesburg Hospital on 12 June and her mother breastfed her for just one day before abandoning her there. The hospital then transferred the infant to the Parklane Clinic because of the strike that was on at the time which had left the Johannesburg Hospital short of nursing staff. We have subsequently been advised by the hospital that the blood tests taken from the mother show that she is HIV positive. The fact that she breastfed her baby means the chances of the baby being HIV positive are extremely high. We have therefore had the baby placed on special medication to see if we can fight off this dreadful threat. Her name is **Rachel**, although the staff at the Parklane named her Precious. [Back to top.](#)

### Until the next time...

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](http://www.justonechild.co.za) to read more about our organisation. You can also email me at [clifford@justonechild.co.za](mailto:clifford@justonechild.co.za) or contact Jen Smit via [jen@justonechild.co.za](mailto:jen@justonechild.co.za) if you need to get in touch with us.

Until next time...

Cliff and Cherryl