



October 2009 Newsletter

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Dear Friends,

This is going to be a “stories” newsletter. I hope the stories make you think and sing and pray and kick rocks about in your gardens! That’s what they do to me! All the children’s names are changed to protect their privacy.

A story about Gender, culture and Education:

Luyanda started coming to iKhaya in the days when it was just me on my own in a shipping container, in 2007. She was my first and most enthusiastic attendant at reading classes and she learned quickly. We saw less of her last year as her mom had a new baby that she was helping to care for. Recently Luyanda visited me whilst I was teaching recorder to a small group of children. She had brought me a love letter. “Dear Katherine, Thank you for everything you have done for me. Thank you very much. I love you Katherine so much. Thank you for teaching me how to read. Bye bye, Luyanda.” I smiled and hugged her.



She looked at the recorders and said, “I think I could play one of those.” I told her that we were learning to play “Jingle Bells” for the parent concert at the end of the year. “I can play that on the violin,” she said. I was quite surprised and asked her how she had learned to play. She told me that she had gone for lessons at the local music school where they have a free outreach program for children from the township on a Monday afternoon. I was pleased to hear this and asked was she still going? “No”, she said. “I had to stop because on Monday I wash dishes.”



A story about Hope and Looking Up:

An 8 year old girl called Missi came to us last year. She was sad, silent and unco-ordinated. I worried that she had brain damage because her movements were so strange, her communication almost non-existent. She couldn’t do monkey bars. She couldn’t even step on stepping stones. She never spoke and her head always hung down.



The staff at iKhaya le themba turned into her personal cheer squad. We challenged her to improve her physical ability and also to improve her



learning. A year later her teacher said to us, “when Missi came to you I thought she was going to fail school. She never told us any answers and she had no friends. Now she is confident, she speaks up, she is learning well and passing. She is always looking up. She is smiley and we’ve discovered she loves to dance!”

A story about grief and loss:

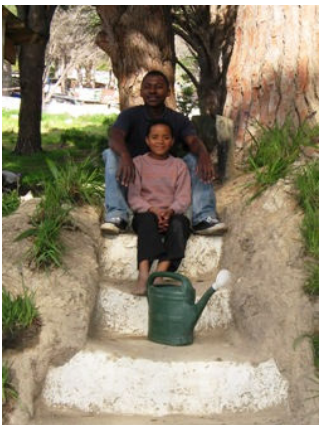
There is a 9 year old boy who comes to our program each week, his name is Sisa. He is sweet and cheeky and clever and funny. He is the sort of kid who all the staff love but have to do so secretly because his behaviour is just a little on the silly side. Earlier this year he went from smiley kid number one to being reclusive and “lost”. He told us his Dad had died. His Dad who he loved, who played with him, danced with him, teased him and made him laugh. He stopped playing with other children and sat on his own, staring into the distance.



He says: “this is what grief is like. When I go to sleep at night it feels like a hippo has eaten me. All night I am inside that hippo because my Dad has died”.

A story about doing things Step by Step:

iKhaya le themba is 5 years old. We started with big dreams and we have even bigger ones now. What we’ve learned though is we need to do things step by step. Just like you can’t send a toddler to college, an organisation can’t instantly fulfil the whole of it’s mission! We have come from having no land, no building, no staff and no children to having all of these things. Our annual budget is now more than R500 000. We have 5 part time staff and 70 children that we care for.



Our dreams are still big. We’d love to have community food gardens for the families caring for our children. We dream of a morning playgroup for carers and kiddies under 6 where we could encourage good parental bonds, educational play and address health issues. We would love to have more buildings so all our children could be with us every afternoon. We’d like to share these buildings with the community for employment projects in the morning.

And more immediately... we’d love toilets that flush, better fence security, our building to be finished, beautiful gardens, architectural plans for the next stage of our building.

Best of all, we know the way to reach all these things! Step by step, with you - our wonderful partners cheering us on!

Katherine.

If you would like to sponsor a child or make a donation please contact Katherine by e-mail at wilsmor@telkomsa.net or go to our website for your local banking details at www.ikhaya lethemba.com