

2010 Newsletter:Leratong Community Centre

(“place where love is”)

**Roma
Lesotho**

Dear Friends of Leratong,

The Leratong Community Centre continues to serve the needs of the community, particularly in its support of orphans & vulnerable children in the area.

The Centre is open every Saturday morning & every week day during school breaks. In June/July the Centre is open for 6 weeks during the coldest months of the year & again in December & January for about 7 weeks. The children attending the Centre range in age from 2 years to 20 years old. They are not all orphans but all the children are in need of extra care during the day. They are taught & looked after by a group of 6 volunteer grannies & a graduate student, Tibello Mothae. Tibello keeps an attendance register so that we can give meaningful help to those kids who attend regularly. There are about 50 children who attend regularly & another 150 who appear when we have visitors!

2010 was a busy year for us at the Centre. The highlight was having JP McGuire & his UMVIM- SC group visit us from the US & build 3 new rooms! One room is the library, one is designated to be used as a computer room & the bright, sunny room, the craft centre. Only the library is in use as we have beautiful books to read which the children really enjoy. The school teachers also use it to get reference books to use in their classes. The other rooms are not in use yet as we do not have electricity in them.

Other 2010 highlights are:

- Registered as a non-profit Community Centre # 2010/359
- Electricity supplied to the main building
- Security fence around the perimeter of the property donated by the Wittenberg University in Ohio
- The volunteer Tibello & the grannies are given a stipend by Katt Lissard, of New York, each month
- Books & school stationery given by JP's group & Betty Hiebert of Portland , Oregon
- Sewing machines, computers, cameras, TV set given by JP's group
- Craft materials, books & toys from Paula Wade, Betty, JP's group & others
- Library shelves & books displayed on them & actually being read. Carien v d Wal of Rotterdam University , Holland helped make this happen
- Furniture & carpets donated by the Lesotho Sun Hotel in Maseru
- Clothes donated by Una Holliday of Cape Town. Una fills her little red van to bursting with clothes, blankets, toys, books & many other useful items & brings them to us to use at Leratong & at the Ramabanta Care Centre

- Knitting, crocheting & basic weaving skills were taught to the children. They were very proud to knit blankets & beanies for themselves.
- Song & dance fun with JP's group & various tourists
- Scholarships were given to assist 10 children in high school & a 3 year old pre-schooler who is the child of one of the young teen girls' we help. The sponsors are Isabella Angermyr of Austria, tourists, friends & kind people from all over the world
- Food aid to 4 child headed households
- Wendy McKenzie & a group of student nurses from Thompson Rivers University in Kamloops, Canada for teaching the kids hygiene, songs & games. Wendy also gave our boys-only-household two pigs to start farming with them. The boys are very proud of them selves!
- A house was built for 2 girls orphaned with nowhere to live by Mr Gaspar Istvan of Hungary & fellow ham radio enthusiasts. The house has also been officially registered in the names of the girls as owners.
- Liz Ryder, who was with JP's group, stayed on to help & inspire us in so many ways. She also taught classes at the Liphakoeng School & tutored some of our older students
- Mike Morris & the off road motorbike fraternity donated blankets & wool through their Roof for a Roof project
- Enduroworld members & tour participants with Gary & Lynne Franks, donated stationery, clothes & more
- A feature on local TV showing the public what tourism can do for a community

Unfortunately, it is not all good news.

- Sadly this year Ithumeleng Sekoloto passed away from general organ failure with no specific diagnosis as to the cause. She was the first child we helped as she had been left totally alone in this world to fend for herself...the story of so many.
- The registration of Leratong took nearly a year to process
- Popa Maleng was appointed as the teacher/ manager in charge of the Centre but he did not meet our expectations & left us after only 3 months
- 5 of the scholarship kids failed dismally in their year end exams at school so we have had to stop assisting them
- We still owe money on the completion of the buildings so we are fundraising for that
- There is also no money available, at the moment, to link the supply of electricity into the new rooms

- Petty theft by the kids continues to be a problem but they are starting to understand why they must not take things home with them & also that they should look after the toys, furniture & grounds
- The battle the kids have with their studies continues to be a challenge & this year we would like to see the older kids being assisted at the Centre in the afternoons after normal school.

This year we want to get busy with the institutional arrangements for the Centre, raise awareness locally & continue doing what we are doing well.

We are also looking forward to the visits of two student groups from the Wittenberg University in Springfield, Ohio under Dr Scott Rosenberg who is the founder, inspiration & principal fundraiser for the development of this project.

Wendy McKenzie is also bringing out another group of student nurses from Kamloops, Canada & finally, Dr Dick Weisfelder, a sponsor, is arriving in March with a group of friends to visit Lesotho.

On behalf of the Leratong Community Centre Committee, children & volunteers, I would like to thank each & everyone for their help, interest & support for this very needy but inspiring project. You all make a huge difference in our lives!

May you all have a great 2011

Kind regards

Jennifer Thorn

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