

Newsletter No. 17 – December 2023

Let the children play!



The first consignment of play materials for children visiting the Manzini One-Stop Abuse Reporting Centre has been delivered.

The centre is a one-stop integrated service hub for survivors of gender-based violence, providing legal, psychological, clinical and social support.

It was set up in 2020 under the auspices of the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs to facilitate the close cooperation between the police, the Ministry of Justice and social services that is needed for the proper support of people reporting abuse. It is housed in the grounds of Manzini's Raleigh Fitkin Hospital.

Children commonly accompany adults visiting the centre but until now, there weren't any facilities for them. Toys were provided for children, from toddlers upwards.

The centre was established in partnership between the Swaziland Action Group Against Abuse (SWAGAA), UNICEF, and the Government of Eswatini and it follows the enactment of meaningful anti-abuse legislation. The SCT has long been a supporter of SWAGAA which replenishes the materials as necessary.

The One-Stop centre is supported from the proceeds of trustee Chloë Gilbert's 2022 fundraising event.

Offering support where it's most needed



Looking over the roofs of the NCP at the area it serves and the winding road to Mbabane.

A Neighbourhood Care Point (NCP) has been built at Etiyeni, in the high veldt, deep within the Mdzimba Mountains. The development was organised by the All Out Africa Foundation through its volunteer service programme. The plot was fenced, classrooms and toilets built, and an old dilapidated building upgraded and converted into a kitchen and storeroom.

In poor rural communities, the poorest children often go without meals and the absence of preschool facilities puts them at a disadvantage when they start school at 7 years old. NCPs provide a focus for care where meals can be provided and lessons taught. Without outside support, the centres do not always last long.

The centre at Etiyeni was originally funded by UNICEF in the 1990s at the height of the AIDS crisis. Built by the community without supervision, the original building soon became unsanitary and unsafe.

With the support and guidance of the All Out Africa Foundation, the NCP will offer sustained support to a much neglected community. The area is only 15km from the developed Manzini-Mbabane corridor, but the roads are so bad that it seems much, much further away and they are also impassable in very wet weather.

This project is supported from a special donation made by Miguel McKelvey at the 2022 fundraising event organised by trustee, Chloë Gilbert.



As soon as the basic structure was up, lessons start for Etiyeni preschool students.

Help us increase support, visit our website at www.swazilandcharitabletrust.org/how-to-help/ to make a donation.

School Projects

Antioch Primary School kitchen



The SCT supports the construction of school kitchens, because school meals are often the only secure meal for students from poor families. Antioch Primary School is in a poor area and many students arrive at school with an empty stomach, unable to concentrate. The construction of a larger kitchen was supported as enrolment has increased and the old kitchen was too small. Food provisions are normally supplied by the government, but sadly the last delivery was in February 2023.

Mhlaba Nazarene Primary School poultry house



School Principal, Mrs Ncongwane stands proudly next to the completed poultry house.

With SCT support, Mhlaba Primary School can now teach agriculture. They have built a poultry house and a storeroom for chicken feed and agricultural tools. Following construction, the Ministry of Education donated gardening tools. Principal Mrs Ncongwane is delighted “This has truly been a blessing to the school and community. The children can now use the tools that they had only ever seen in text books.”

Mswati High School consumer science class



Mswati High School is located in the Highveld of Eswatini. Its 300 students had their consumer science lessons in the agriculture lab until the new classroom was completed with SCT help. Deputy Principal Mr Matsebula explained how difficult it was to conduct lessons “The school was in crisis mode. The agriculture lab is outside the main school grounds and juggling lessons was a nightmare. It definitely affected the students’ learning, compromising their end of year results.” The new classroom is

spacious and agriculture lessons are no longer constantly interrupted.

Noxolo Mkhonta graduates



Noxolo completed her diploma in Emergency Medical Care and Rescue this year. Reflecting on the 14-years of support from the SCT, she said “You came into my life and made a huge difference. My future was fading, hope was gone and my life was at stake. You rescued me and made my future brighter. I thank God for bringing you into my life at the time He did because, without you, I wouldn’t be where I am today”.

Competition is fierce and opportunities few, but she aims to secure a position with the National Fire Department.

Education in Eswatini

As education is not compulsory in Eswatini, the SCT helps children, mainly orphans, who would otherwise not be able to go to school. Over 130 are currently supported. At primary level (Grades 1-7, starting at age 7) sponsored students have their uniforms, books, school trips, and subject materials paid for. At high school (Forms 1-5) the annual fees are also covered. At each level, end-of-year exams must be passed before progression to the next class.

There is an increasing demand for preschool provision. The SCT has built and equipped some 5 NCPs (neighbourhood care points) over the last few years. These are particularly appreciated by hard-pressed grandparents with energetic toddlers!

Only the best students can be supported after high school.

Khuzulwandle – gearing up for college life



Khuzulwandle in class with his laptop. St Joseph's High School accepts children with disabilities but all children take the same lessons.

Last year, Khuzulwandle, a visually-impaired sponsored Form 4 student at St Joseph's High School, received a laptop with a special software installed in it known as the 'Text-to-Speech' software, courtesy of a bequest to the SCT made by the late Angela Everson who wanted her estate to benefit other people with disabilities, particularly people from Africa, where her sister-in-law has strong links.

The laptop is a great addition to the school's limited braille facilities; it has helped him keep up with classwork and his dream of going to university. Sharing his excitement, Khuzulwandle said he now clearly sees himself pursuing a degree in Information and Communication Technologies at Limkokwing University of Technology. He said, "with this laptop, I've managed to register for subjects that I couldn't register for before because it would have been impossible for me to follow the lesson". Khuzulwandle has registered for Business Studies and Economics which will assist in qualifying for university to pursue his career.

Following the death of his father, Khuzulwandle joined the SCT support scheme in 2019 when he was in his last year of primary school.

Help us support students in tertiary education, visit our website at www.swazilandcharitabletrust.org/how-to-help/ to make a donation.

Nondumiso fulfils her childhood dream...



Nondumiso during one of her practice classes at Our Lady of Sorrows Primary School.

Ndumi, as Nondumiso Groening is affectionately known, is about to embark on the career of her dreams. She is in her final year at the Workers' College in Manzini, studying to be a primary school teacher.

The SCT has supported her since she started in Grade 1 at St Benedict's Primary School at the age of 7. Located near Hluthi in the Shiselweni region area, the school is very remote and poorly resourced.

The Trust's manager, Phindile Ndabandaba, has guided her through her education "I've known Nondumiso for 12 years now. She has always been so

cooperative and respectful that it was impossible not to have a soft spot for her. At times she has struggled at school, but her quiet determination has seen her through. It has been a delight seeing her grow into a confident, compassionate and capable adult."

Ndumi was raised by her grandmother who unfortunately passed away when she was in Form 4 at Our Lady of Sorrows High School. The Mantellate Sisters who run the school then became guardians while SCT continued to take care of her academic needs.

Explaining how she views herself as one the luckiest children in Eswatini, Ndumi says, "Regardless of being a double-orphan, I've never felt any void in my life because my grandmother always took care of me and the Charitable Trust has been a blessing, one

which I will forever be grateful for. From Grade 1 to the present day, they have taken care of my school needs and I have always looked and done my best both at school and at home."

She recently returned to her home area for teaching practice at Our Lady of Sorrows Primary School. "Having listened to how everybody described the teaching profession, it sounded so challenging and frustrating, but finding myself in the classroom, it felt so welcoming and gave me the best experience ever!"

"My course has prepared me well and I've mastered the art of pre-planning using a range of resources but looking the part was a bit of a shock. I'm not used to dressing formally like a professional. The clothes I was required to wear weren't warm and it was cold most of the days while there."

We wish Nondumiso well as she embarks on her chosen career. There are many challenges ahead, not least the Government freeze on employing new teachers, even though many schools are desperately short of them.

She was supported by the late Catherine Wills throughout her education.



Nondumiso in Shishelweni, 2016.

Siphesihle enrolls in Wits University



After passing her AS levels with flying colours last year, Siphesihle Shongwe was granted a government scholarship to study actuarial science at University of Witwatersrand in South Africa. "I didn't have to worry about my lack of school fees, hence I managed to keep focused and obtain good results, such that the government of Eswatini did not hesitate to award me

with a scholarship to further my studies."

Siphesihle is the first of the six high-performing students chosen by Forum for African Women Educationalist – Swaziland Chapter (FAWESWA) for support in honour of retiring trustee Nicholas Baring. A grant from the Baring Fund has enabled us to offer further support and Siphesihle was given a laptop which she desperately needed to help her studies.



FAWESWA students

Takazulu Gumbi completed her International General Certificate of Secondary



Education (IGCSE) in 2022 at Gundwini High School attaining seven credits with an A+ in ICT. With England being her ideal country to pursue her studies in Medicine, Takazulu wishes to be a qualified surgeon specializing in Cardiovascular Surgery. She has since been accepted at the University of Eswatini (UNESWA) as a Bachelor of Science student. She is studying biology and chemistry as a first step towards her medical career.

Manager Phindile Ndabandaba with Takazulu.

Noncedo Lukhele completed her IGCSE in 2022 from Emthonjeni High School with six credits and two passes. As she wishes to pursue a career in medicine, Noncedo plans to enrol for AS-Levels. Passing these will make her eligible for an international scholarship from the Taiwan embassy with which Eswatini has close ties.

Nompilo Zwane (Form 5) and **Nosizolwethu Gama** (Form 2) are both at Nkiliji High School.

Musa Ndzimandze is in Form 5 at Gilgal High School.



Noncedo Lukhele at Emthonjeni High School in the central middleveldt, Manzini Region.

Trust News

Eswatini Board Member: Mvuselelo Fakudze



Mvuselelo Fakudze joined the Eswatini Management Board in 2016 bringing with him a wide range of business skills, broad knowledge of the Southern African economy, and a deep understanding of Eswatini's culture and economy. A chartered accountant by profession, he is currently serving as Chief Executive of Standard Bank Eswatini. Before this he was with PricewaterhouseCoopers for 14 years, six as a partner, and then on the executive of the Amalgamated Bank of South Africa (now Barclays Africa), for four years. He has recently been appointed President of Business Eswatini which seeks to promote a business-friendly environment in Eswatini.

Eswatini Board Member: Nonhlanhla Dlamini



Nonhlanhla Dlamini is a trailblazer in the protection of women and children against abuse. She joined Swaziland Action Group Against Abuse (SWAGAA) as the Programme Manager for Education in 1998, becoming Executive Director in 2003. Elected Member of Parliament for Ludzeludze in 2008, she pioneered legislation to give legal redress for the survivors of gender-based violence, before returning to SWAGAA. During her tenure, she has developed training manuals on gender-based violence and basic counselling. She has also overseen the training of police, prosecutors, nurses, and teachers, the establishment of the children's court and the Domestic Violence and Child Protection Unit within the police service.

How to donate

Help us develop a healthy and well-educated community in Eswatini by making a donation. All donations go towards supporting children in schools, improved school buildings and community support and projects. Please send a cheque or pay online by visiting the SCT website: <http://www.swazilandcharitabletrust.org/how-to-help/>

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