

## Contents

Editorial	1
Kindergarten	3
Primary School	3
Middle School	4
High School	5
Vision School	6
Sponsors	7
Donations	7
Visits	8
Details	8

Issue 3, November 2008

Dear Friends,



We wish you a Blessed Christmas.

***May this time be filled with blessings for you and your family. May you pass the grace that falls on you on to all.***

Blessed Christmas **Geseënde Kersfees** (Afrikaans) | **Ikrimesi Emunyoli** (Xhosa) | **Matswalo a Morena a Mabotse** (Sotho) | **S inifisela Ukhisimusi Omhuhle** (Zulu).



## Christmas

In my heart a shepherd  
In my head a king  
Before the Child together  
They offer what they bring.

The heart will fire the head  
The head will light the heart  
The Spirit-Child within  
Will know Love's healing art.

In the Heavens a secret  
On the earth made known  
The Child from Heaven appearing  
Love's grace is streaming down.

On the earth is darkness  
In the dark shines light  
The star proclaims His coming  
Illumining the night.

In my heart at midnight  
In my head at dark  
The angel's song resounding  
Kindles afresh Love's spark.

In the world is Christmas,  
Christmas lives in me,  
Again the Holy Child is born  
Love's messenger to be.

In South Africa Christmas-time is summer-time. We celebrate the birth of Jesus in many ways: a reflection of our cultural diversity.

Africa is rooted in spiritual tradition and indigenous beliefs co-exist peacefully with Islam (brought to South Africa mainly by the Malays), Dutch Calvinism and French Catholicism.

Many colored people and white Afrikaners share a language and a strong church-going heritage and most black Christians take pride in their weekly church attendance.

Christmas is, for these people, the pinnacle, the climax of the year and top of the list of Christmas gifts is a new set of clothes to wear to church, where nativity scenes are enacted, carols are sung and sometimes the congregation dances.

After Church, Christmas lunch is eaten with friends and family. In South Africa, as in most countries, Christmas is a public holiday and families gather together for braais (barbeques) on the beach in the hot sun. Many families sit down to feasts of roast turkey, mince pies, flaming Christmas pudding, Christmas hats and crackers – a vestige of the British colonial legacy.

We (in McGregor, Zolani and Nqkubela) are still part of the rural traditions. In the main, we have not been influenced by the globalization and commercialization of Christmas seen in the bigger cities of Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg.

Simplicity and poverty keep us close to the true meaning of Christ's birth. When gifts are exchanged they are usually practical: school books, soap, candles and, of course, the new church clothes.



### ***How do our children celebrate Christmas?***

**Shallwane** (class 3 – McGregor) – “we don't do anything but I do get some new clothes.”

**Ziyanda** (class 3 – Nkqubela) – “We go to church and in Sunday school we sing songs about God and about Christmas. Then we stay at home with family. I got a dolly as a present last Christmas.”

**Ismael** (class 4 – McGregor) – “Family from Breda comes to visit. We go to KFC (Kentucky Fried Chicken). We get shoes and pants and sometimes cars and toy guns. We do not go to church. It's a nice day because it is a rest day.”

**Skye** (class 5 – McGregor) – “We usually have a quiet Christmas. We don't go to church but we hang up our stockings next to the fire place or the bed. It's full of small presents like nuts, sweets and small toys. We spend time together with family and I get one big present or several smaller ones.”

**Babalwa** (class 5 – Nkqubela Township) – “There are only my mom, my sisters and brother, because our family is in the Transkei. We go to church where we sing Christmas songs.

I enjoy it because we do lots of things like going to church, playing and we each get a new set of clothes and receive some juice and sweets.”

**Iqraa** (class 4 – McGregor) – “I know about Christmas but we do not celebrate it because we celebrate Eid, the Muslim three day holiday that marks the end of Ramadan, the Holy month of fasting.”

**Sipho** (class 5 – Baphumelele home in Cape Town) – “We have a church service in our yard. Then the volunteers come with new clothes and presents. There are big tables at which we eat food. Then our names are called one by one to receive our present. It is a wonderful day to remember Jesus' birth, to share, to make friends and to remember not to fight.

**Etwin** (class 6 – Farm) – “My cousin comes to fetch me to spend the day with my Auntie in Bonnievale where we celebrate Christmas with family. We make a braai. We don't go to church and I do not get presents. I don't know what my mother, father and sisters do that day since I am the only one going to Bonnievale. It is a nice day because I see everyone.”

**Gerald** (Class 9 – Zolani) – “I used to celebrate Christmas when I lived with my grandmother in Lesotho. We would dress up and go around in groups to have fun. Since living in Zolani I do not celebrate Christmas. My parents don't do anything. They don't go to church and there are no presents.”

**Samora** (Class 9 – Nkqubela township) – “We spend the whole day with family. Everybody brings food and we go to church in the evening. We decorate a Christmas tree with lights and give small presents (cards or some money) to each other.”

**Tshidi** (class 10 – Zolani Township) – “On Christmas day we go to Church and for lunch we invite family and friends. My mother takes us to the beach. Yes, I do get a present.”

**Philile** (class 10 – Johannesburg) – “On Christmas day we visit my dad's family in the place that he grew up. The family cooks food for everyone. The traditional food is rice and tekki (baked chicken). We give presents and I receive one too.”



Elmarie Matika – class 3

## Kindergarten

Visit to the Donkey Sanctuary  
[www.donkeysanctuary.co.za](http://www.donkeysanctuary.co.za)

On Tuesday 4 November the kindergarten children went to visit the local Donkey Sanctuary. The vision of the Donkey Sanctuary is to provide abused, neglected and elderly donkeys with the opportunity to live out their lives with respect and dignity, surrounded by their own kind in a protective and natural environment. This need is not currently met by animal welfare agencies operative in the region.



The children talked for weeks about this outing, asking, 'how many sleeps still?'

In class they prepared themselves through stories and songs. Each child created a little felt donkey. Finally the day arrived! Being on the bus was already exciting and we all sang "The wheels on the bus" with gusto. After explaining to the little ones how to approach the donkeys gently and quietly, Patricia Hall, volunteer at the Sanctuary and many times teacher at our school, took the children into their enclosure. The tension could be felt. Some could not wait to get closer while others hung back somewhat anxiously. But with gentle encouragement, each child went up to stroke and brush "Ounooi" (old woman) who clearly enjoyed the attention.

The morning ended with a donkey story and a lovely picnic on the lawn. Full of their courage and bravery the children's voices resounded in the bus on the way back to school. This was an outing not to be forgotten!

## Class 1 – 2009

10 preschoolers are looking forward to joining the Primary school as the members of the new class 1.

## Primary School

### Class 3



Afrikaans Lesson



### Class 6

Class 6 keeps the grounds neat and clean



Kameroeneesa and Zintle present their project on Volcanoes as part of the Geology Main Lesson

## Class 4 and 5

### Assessments Federation of Waldorf schools

The children are tested annually for English reading and dictation and for maths tables and maths. It was encouraging to see that although this is a combined class of 21 children, the results ranged from satisfactory to very good. These assessments help to detect the weaker students and to plan how to help them best. It is also interesting to note that the children, who have been at the school since kindergarten, are performing tops!

#### *As I stroke the Panda Bear*

*I feel top  
As I peel a great deal  
Of a pear  
And stroke the Panda Bear*

*My huge hands  
Look like tanned sand  
On the fair land  
Oh, my rare tanned sand  
Workers  
You are gay  
As sweet-smelling hay*

*Ismael, Class 4*

#### Your Hands

Your hands can work can catch and create  
They can fix can feel and find in the dark  
But sometimes they just loose control  
They punch and scratch  
They pinch and snatch  
But that type of thing  
They should not do  
Cause they were made  
To help YOU!

Georg, Class 5

#### My Poem

Hands, hands, touch and smarten  
These are the great things  
Hands can do

Hands, hands, pinch and smack  
These are the worse things  
Hands can do

With our hands  
We create and protect  
The wonders of the world

Marocelle, Class 4

## Middle School

### You Made Me Shine

When I grew up  
Life was so easy, 'cause I was young  
Sometimes I used to amuse people,  
But they were not entertained  
My jokes useless to them  
Life began to be hard for me  
I lost my beauty  
I lost love and respect  
Lost my heritage  
I was just "on hold"  
Sometimes when I'm alone I tell myself  
That I don't belong in this world  
I stayed alone, with no friends  
No one to light a candle of my heart  
Only loneliness around me  
Like battles fought with pride,  
But lost, honour lost  
And my freedom was thrown into the wind  
Like feathers  
I wanted to annihilate, extinguish, destroy everything  
A voice told me Begone!  
Why?  
Suddenly someone covered me with decorations  
And my beauty was back, my love and respect  
Were back, my heritage was back  
You made me shine, you made me a crystal  
The clearest transparent mineral of all  
That's who I am now

Olwethu Ngaza – class 8

### Extra Murals: Sports



The Middle School co-ordinator, Rein Buyze, organises soccer training and soccer matches. One match was against the Constantia Waldorf School who came for the weekend.

### Eco School Application

The grade 7's and 8's work every Friday in their permaculture garden. The new portfolio was submitted for evaluation recently and they hope to be a step closer to earning the green Eco-School flag.

Planting trees on Arbor Day



## High School

### Matric 2008



**Bandile** – My plans are to be studying Sports Management next year in Cape Town.

**Vuyolethu**- this is my last year at school and next year I will be at home and will try to find work.

**Adelaide** –You taught me to dream big and today I am in Matric and looking forward to going to University next year.

**Yolanda** – I want to become an actress one day. The most important thing right now is that I want to pass my Matric and to attend a College or University that offers the necessary subjects for my choice of career.

**Doron** – I haven't made a choice as to what I will be doing after school but my Guardian suggests that I work in England for a year or two and then come back and follow my musical options.

**Siyamthanda** – I am so happy with my prelim results and I know I will pass my final exams. I will make my parents proud and guarantee myself a bright future in the process.

**Tania** – Finally exams are approaching and I feel fine about that. I am afraid of what might come to pass but I am determined to do the best in all I do.

**Sarah Elizabeth** –I can't believe my journey at the school has come to an end. It seemed like I would never leave but now that I stand on the threshold of adulthood, I know I will miss the school terribly.

**Thuto** – After school I am planning to go to Germany for a year to work and to see what I'm interested in studying. I want to study something that I will enjoy doing, knowing that I may do it for the rest of my life.

**Nokolunga** – This will open doors to a brighter future and with a dream of studying Business Science next year, I know that the skills I have acquired at the school will take me far in life.

**Thembisa** – After I have completed Matric, I'm going to University to study further. The reason for this is, I also want to contribute something to my country one day. Even if it is to create jobs for the unemployed or give money to charity.

**Mikhail** – I am planning to study further. My interests are in Information Technology, Business and Engineering. I haven't decided exactly what I want to study yet.

**THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEER SCRIBES** who scribed exams for two grade 12 students with learning difficulties – Marian, Athol and Lisa.

**THANK YOU TO OUR EXPERIENCED INVIGILATORS** Roger and Taya.

**THANK YOU TO KEN** for overseeing the whole process.

### English

**SACEE** (South African Council for English Education) sets an annual national multiple choice language exam. All students from class 7 to class 11 participated. **Ruskin Janowski**, received 84% for this paper which landed him the 4<sup>th</sup> highest place in South Africa for Grade 10. Congratulations!

**The English Olympiad** is a national English Competition that draws between 5000 and 6000 entries each year. Six of our High School Students participated in this competition which had "Court in the Act" as a theme – a study of the Language of Law through an anthology of Plays. A visit to the Supreme Court in Cape Town where they witnessed first hand the drama of a murder case prepared four of the students for the three hour examination. **Sarah-Elizabeth Holloway** and **Nokolunga Mdluli** received a bronze evaluation which is quite a significant result.

### Extra Mural Activities

"There is now **soccer, netball, cricket and karate** available after school and in summer hockey and cricket are offered." (Ruskin Janowski, class 10)

"On the 13<sup>th</sup> of September the **Heritage Society Youth Group** had its first training session which introduced us to the history and heritage of McGregor. In time we (Nomsa, Florence, Dudu, Philda) hope to guide tourists and to participate in meaningful heritage projects. I love doing



community work and bringing a positive change to the village." (Nomsa Sithole – class 11)

## ***The story of the McGregor Waldorf School continues...***

**Smart Looking** (to foster appreciation of and respect for beauty)

- The Boy's hostel has been repainted and recarpeted and smaller bedrooms have been created to give the students some private space thanks to a donation from Provincie West-Vlaanderen, Belgium.
- Philippa, our permaculture parent, has been asked to create beauty in the garden, making an ecologically sound and sustainable environment.
- The front building facing the main street has been repainted thanks to a donation from Briar Pastoll.
- Two architects will help us design a space in which Kindergarten, Primary School, High School and hostel will be able to function comfortably and optimally.

*"There has been a lot of progress in the hostel. In the last holidays I did not go home to Johannesburg. I stayed in McGregor to help repaint the hostel. Now the hostel looks beautiful and I am proud of myself."* (Collen Radebe – class 11)

**Efficiently run** (to foster proper communication)

### **Board of Trustees**

- We have invited some of the many skilled people in our village onto our new Board of Directors to foster constructive interest in the school's development.
- The proposal to register the school as a **section 21 Company** has been agreed on.
- A new constitution has been drawn up with the help of Price Waterhouse Coopers (our attorneys) and Mr. Rosenthal (our lawyer).
- The school will be registered as a non-profit organization (NPO) and Public Benefit Organization (PBO).

### **College of Teachers**

A balance has been found between sharing, study and business.

### **Administration**

Ken van Rooyen, our bursar, will have the help of an administrator who will be tasked with

- Updating policies.
- Communication with government educational departments.
- Communication and reports from our various structural bodies.
- Streamlining our admissions process.

**A smart-looking, efficiently-run and pedagogically-excellent small educational centre with a Waldorf Kindergarten & Primary School and a High School specializing in Art and Drama**

**Pedagogically excellent** (to create a willingness to work)

Our admission policies will ensure that the students we accept have a good work ethic, no severe learning difficulties, wish to be at our school and have parents who are prepared to be actively involved.

### **Standards Primary school**

- The Federation of Waldorf Schools visits the Primary School annually.
- Catherine van Alphen (former trainer at the Centre for Creative Education) assists the teachers with lesson preparation.
- Regular child-study and research into detecting learning challenges early.

### **Standards High school**

- Both class 9 and class 12 follow government requirements – the CASS process, G.E.T. and F.E.T. work is moderated regularly by government subject advisors and through attendance of cluster meetings.
- High school offers English, Afrikaans, Computer Studies, Maths Literacy, Life Orientation, Visual Arts, Dramatic Arts and Tourism.

**Small** – Why small?

- We tried without success to expand. We are in an isolated, small village that lends itself to smaller, more intimate classes. Most of our students attend our school because of the individual attention they receive.
- For financial sustainability we combined classes 1&2, 4&5, 7&8 and 10&11 in 2008.

**Our students** (Encouraging excellence)

Throughout South Africa we are facing a lack of the willingness to work, brought about by the entitlement that the previously disenfranchised are experiencing. The result is substandard work and an acceptance of mediocrity. We hope to attract and create a student body that shows its respect and appreciation of the beautiful environment through application and eagerness to learn.

*"I just want to tell you that I am doing great at school although the work is getting harder and more but I still love the McGregor Waldorf School with its teachers who love us as their own children and who put a lot of effort in running our school."* (Kelly De Jongh - class 9)

## Sponsors

Sponsors are individuals, families, classes and/or schools who contribute to the school fees of one particular child. In this way they enable children from poor families to receive Waldorf Education. More than 90% of our families can only contribute a small amount towards the cost of educating their children.

**Sponsors are highly valued. Their contribution helps to keep our school running. There can be no school when the overheads cannot be paid. We have 83 sponsors who support one or more of our 170 children.**

*"As a young South African who was born in Johannesburg and who grew up in Cape Town I can honestly say that without your financial support I'd probably be on the streets telling myself that crime is my life and that there is a future doing that. So thanks for believing in me and making my education possible. I am where I am today because of you!" (Thuto Thipa – class 12)*

E-mail Katleen, our sponsorships co-ordinator, at [katleen@breede.co.za](mailto:katleen@breede.co.za) . She will forward:

- the list with children who need sponsors
- the most cost-effective way of contributing

We work with various organisations overseas (**Freunde der Erziehungskunst** – Germany; **Internationaal Hulpfonds** – The Netherlands; **ACACIA** – Switzerland, **Solidariteit om Leven** – Belgium; **Centre for the Art of Living** – USA) which enable our sponsors to use their contribution for tax deductions.

**Welcome to our newest sponsors!**

The **Stichting Projecten Zuid Africa (The Netherlands)** has committed to a donation towards bursaries and bus-fund for 3 years.

### **South Africa**

Marta Burnay from Cape Town

### **England**

Lady Ashcome from Gloss

Camilla Lowther from London

Melanie Metcalfe from Oxon

Adam Bolton from London

### **Germany**

Freie Waldorf Schule Wendelstein

Heidi Gómez Zapata from Pfungstadt

Gabriele Kiefer from Stuttgart

Anna Mett from Berlin

Dieter Dürich from Braunschweig

### **Canada**

Ben Kizemchuk from Toronto

### **The Netherlands**

Familie Van Starrenburg-Gaarenstroom

### **Belgium**

Wouter Wuyts from Boutersem

Karel&Yolande Bellinkx from Destelbergen

Hilde en Maud Callens from Wevelgem

### **United States of America**

Kevin Kollenda from New York

### **Switzerland**

Dominik Saner from Laufen

Marija Reinhard from Thun

## *Freunde der Erziehungskunst, Germany*

37 of our sponsors are facilitated via the Freunde and for many years now we have enjoyed a good working relationship. The '**Friends of Waldorf Education**' was founded in 1971 to support the worldwide Waldorf Movement. Besides facilitating sponsorships, they arrange advisory visits and manage a volunteer programme. **100% of donations are passed on!** **Holger Niederhausen** manages the various aspects that come with donations to more than 200 Waldorf schools worldwide and sponsorships for 30 schools in 17 countries. He also edits the Freunde newsletter and appeals for funds. Katleen connects with Holger on a regular basis and really enjoys his professionalism and personal touch.

**Thank you for your ongoing support!**

## Donations

Teachers from de **Gemeentelijke Basis school Kweekstraat, Wevelgem, Belgium** donated scissors; crayons; colored paper; stoep chalk and paint aprons. Leen Verschoore, sister of Katleen, brought all this during a July holiday visit.

**Jennifer and Robert Stephens from Scotland** were so inspired by what they read in the July Newsletter that they promptly made a considerable general donation.

In August **Elie and Esmee Declercq** who are excellent amateur documentary makers from **Kuurne** (Belgium) came for two weeks to film the environments our children grow up in, the issues they need to deal with and the work the school does. A small flat adjacent to the High School was prepared for them with help from **Arjan Bogaers, Janette Hodgen, Eve Bryant, Harriet Lekay and Hanneke Eling Schuurman**.



Donations were received from **Dianne Robinson** and **George Gabriel** (South Africa and Norway), **Ruud Kapteyn** (The Netherlands), **Gladys & Michel Venturelli** (Switzerland), **10 Cycling Tourists from the Netherlands** after a visit organised by **African Memories, Acacia** (Switzerland) and **Briar Pastoll** (South Africa). Food to be used in the hostel was donated by **Rosie Mashale** from Baphumelele Home Cape Town (South Africa).

The **Stichting Projecten Zuid Afrika** from **The Netherlands** donated money towards the acquisition of musical instruments.

On **WOW (Waldorf One World)** day (Friday 10 October) 400 students of the **Novalis College in Eindhoven** (the Netherlands) went out for the whole day and fundraised towards the expansion and re-furbishing of the hostel. **They gathered an incredible €4730!**



**Danny and Lydia Pauwels** from **Belgium** visited and handed over a donation which they gathered through a Braai, the selling of support cards and a donation from **the ABVV Central office** (Algemeen Belgische Vakvereniging). Via their network the **ABVV Kempen** also sent us a donation towards the hostel.

A donation of clothes was received from **Danny and Lydia Pauwels** (Belgium) and **Inge and Patrick Weyn** (Cape Town). Thanks to **Frans Jacobs** from McGregor who is always willing to bring anything through from Cape Town.

The **Spykman Foundation** (the Netherlands) gave the school a major donation towards relocating the High School to our premises along the Main Street.

**Lief De Pelseneer** (Belgium) has been making the typical Waldorf Dolls for the Kindergarten. She also made postcards of High School artwork, felted pens and rope bags to sell at Christmas Markets.

## Visitors



17 year old Lio Venturelli from the Italian-speaking part of Switzerland was a student at the High School in the third term. Her main goal was to learn English and to get to know a different culture. This is her feedback:

*“It was very difficult for me in the beginning because of the people, the different subjects at school, the*

*food and the language. I was far away from home, my family and friends. But now I love it here and I am really sorry that I am going back to Switzerland. I am sure that one day I will come back to South Africa. Thank you very much for everything!”*

We were also delighted with the visits of **Paul MacKay; Briar, Michael and Eva; Jef and Kathleen Verschoore; Leen Verschoore and Charlotte Caytan.**

### BANK DETAILS

Standard Bank of South Africa  
Branch: Robertson  
Branch code: 05041346  
Account nr. 082347514  
Account name: McGregor Waldorf School  
Swift Code: SBZAJJ  
IBAN: 05041346082347514

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