



forget me not THE PRINCES' FUND FOR LESOTHO

Newsletter

ISSUE 2 AUGUST 2008

Dear Friends of Sentebale

Our Lesotho office is busier than ever as we continue to take on new projects and work with new organisations. We have also welcomed some new members of staff to the Sentebale team. Bahlakoana Manyanye has joined us as Sentebale's Director of Planning and Administration, Paolo Magnetti has started as Director of Operations, and Katrine Musgrave has joined us from Skillshare as the Letsema Development Manager. In the UK we are sad to say goodbye to our part time Finance Director, Nick Leatham, who is leaving us, but we would like to welcome Jenny Sheils who has replaced him.

Camp 'Mamohato

In January Sentebale joined forces with Hole in the Wall Camps, the Baylor College of Medicine and Bophelong Clinic to organise Camp 'Mamohato, a week long camp for children who are HIV positive and receiving treatment. The aim of the camp was to provide the children with communication and life skills and to help them deal and live with their HIV status. 32 children aged 12 to 18 attended the camp which ran for one week and involved a mixture of sport, games and life skills. It was deemed a great success; Sentebale is now committed to continuing the success of the camp with the Camp 'Mamohato network. This will involve two to three camps each year, monthly Teen Clubs and annual Camp reunions.



Thabo's Story*

A doctor from the Baylor Clinic tells us about the impact Camp 'Mamohato had on one of her patient's lives:

"I first met Thabo over a year ago when he had defaulted on his antiretrovirals (ARV's) because of lack of transport money to get to the Clinic. I learned that he was a double orphan who was living with his older brother. He did not attend school and tried to sell a few trinkets and candy to make some money. We transferred his care so that we could help provide him with transport funds, and restarted his ARV's. At one point Thabo was hospitalized due to an infection. During treatment, we learned that his older brother, who supposedly took care of him, had been chastising him for his HIV status and was physically abusing him. Understandably, Thabo fell further into a defeatist mode and defaulted again on his ARV's. His CD4 was falling again, and he didn't seem to care. Despite counselling, many visits by our outreach nurse and social worker, and a trial on anti-depressants, nothing got him motivated - until camp. Two weeks ago, I saw the biggest smile on his face I have ever seen. Since Camp we have reinitiated his ARV's and, so far so good, he is feeling well and is 100% adherent with his medication".

*The child's name has been changed to protect his identity.



LCCU

In our last newsletter we reported the forthcoming move for Lydia and the LCCU children into a new safe house. Led by Architects for Aid volunteer architect Pedro Clark the building was nearing completion; then disaster struck and a fire destroyed a wing of the new building when thatching caught alight, devastating a newly built block. Fortunately no one was hurt but the building work suffered a major setback and the move in had to be delayed. Thanks to Pedro and his team's hard work, the new building is now complete and the children will be moving in shortly. The new refuge has been furnished with new supplies and equipment and a 'Playpump' has been installed to provide water and fun for the children. A new Board has been established with all key organisations involved in dealing with child abuse in Lesotho, and they are in the process of agreeing a National Referral form and system for dealing with abused children. This will be linked to the new Children's Help Line launched in Lesotho in May 2008. Sadly 'M'e Matheboho who was one of the co-founders of the LCCU with Lydia died of cancer. One of the new girls' wings will be named after her and a tree planted on site in her memory.



Special needs

Sentebale is now working with four special needs organisations: St Bernadette's Resource Centre for the Blind, St Angela's Home for the Disabled, Kananelo Centre for the Deaf and Thuso E Tla Tsoa Kae Centre for children with multiple disabilities. Working closely alongside both government and non-government organisations that specialise in special needs across Lesotho, we are establishing a clearer idea of how to really help and support these organisations and the children in their care. Major building work is being done at the Thuso Centre where security and living conditions will be dramatically improved. We have also been funding nine volunteer staff working here as well as all of the children's food. We have also funded the Lesotho College of Education (LCE) to develop a facilities plan for a new structure, intended to house their New Advanced Diploma Course for teachers training in Special Needs Education. The first course of 50 teachers will start their one year Advanced Diploma in July 2008.



Patrons' visit

In November Sentebale's Patrons Prince Harry and Prince Seeiso went on a working visit to Lesotho. They revisited projects including the LCCU, Mants'ase Children's Home and Kananelo School for the Deaf, while also being introduced to new local and international organisations working with orphans and vulnerable children. The Princes attended a Kick 4 Life testing event where 500 children gathered for a day of football and games while also being tested for HIV/AIDS.

Methodist Children's Centre

Sentebale assisted with the purchase of two diesel generators for the Children's Centre in May, on behalf of Mike Evans from the USA. The generators will ensure that the Centre will have a guaranteed supply of energy during the frequent power outages currently taking place across Lesotho. This is particularly important over the following winter months when the cold really sets in. We have also secured 12 school bursaries for some of the children and paid fees for the other children. The Centre now has 70 live-in orphans and is helping a further 31 in the community; it also provides a Shepherd's Night School for 42 herd boys, 3 nights a week.



Mants'ase Children's Home

Sentebale is an active member of the Board of Management for the Children's Home and recently committed funding for the position of a General Manager. The Manager is due to be in place shortly and will greatly improve the overall management and running of the Home. Sentebale supported 50% of the running costs of Mants'ase in 2007/08 and we have continued this in 2008/09 and have included the costs of a manager and other support for the house. There will be a new dormitory and toilet block built in 2008 with funds from a UK based charity now called Amzizi which has donated £28,000 towards this new development.

Fethi Tabet

Sentebale, UNICEF and Alliance Francaise hosted Fethi Tabet, a group of French speaking musicians from Algeria, Brazil and France. The group travelled around Lesotho performing concerts for different Sentebale and UNICEF projects. Sentebale used this opportunity to gather more data on Lesotho's street children. A final concert was held in Maseru to raise awareness and money for the children and £1600 was raised. Sentebale is now working with Social Welfare and UNICEF to set up a project with Street Children.

Letsema has launched a pioneering new map of Lesotho using Google Maps. The website now hosts an interactive map of Lesotho showing the locations of organisations, projects, hospitals, clinics, airfields and secondary schools. The map shows who is doing what work and where, while also mapping important services and facilities. With a focus on OVC care, stakeholders' locations are mapped and their project details are listed. The launch of the map comes at an exciting time as an agreement for funding has just been signed with Unicef. Thanks to the hard work of the Letsema team in Lesotho, the information on the database gets more and more comprehensive every day and each month more and more organisations are joining the network. Letsema meetings are held

for those working with OVC in Lesotho in the last week of each month at UN House.

In another exciting development all Global Fund Country Coordinating information will shortly be made available through the Letsema website - further evidence of the collective drive to improve information sharing and coordination of activity amongst the Lesotho NGO community.



The Thuso Centre



Sentebale is working with the Ministry of Education to transform the Thuso Centre into a National Referral Assessment and Teaching Centre of Excellence for the North of Lesotho. Thuso has been in a poor state of repair but the first phase of developing and improving the Centre is well underway. This 12 week phase will focus on refurbishing existing buildings and upgrading the infrastructure. This work has been helped considerably by a generous donation of money from the Burnaby Blue Foundation, and of manpower through the Household Cavalry. 24 soldiers, including Sentebale's Patron Prince Harry, have spent three weeks as building labourers at the Thuso site; this has been part of their adventure training with the latest Burnaby Blue expedition to southern Africa.



There is now a security fence in place, paths and ramps have been installed around the Centre, a playground has been built and refurbishment of buildings and site preparation for the next phase has been started. This progress has been marked with by a visit from King Letsie III and Sentebale's Patron Prince Seeiso. The next phase of work at the Centre will involve the building of an assessment and training centre with accommodation for staff and volunteers, as well as for parents. Plans for this phase have recently been boosted as this project has been selected to be a charitable cause that will be supported by this year's ICAP Charity Day in December. We could not be more grateful for the generosity and support of the Burnaby Blue Foundation, the Household Cavalry and ICAP.



Thank you

We would like to thank everyone who has supported us through donations and fundraising, we truly appreciate your generosity and efforts. In particular we would like to thank all of those involved with Enduro Africa, the George Heriot's School, Heathfield St Mary's School, Iverna Gardens Montessori and Barton Peveril College, Village College in Cambridgeshire and Oliver Newnham for all of their fundraising efforts and support.

For more information on our work and partners please visit our websites www.sentebale.org and www.letsema.org If you would like to attend the monthly Letsema meetings or receive the quarterly newsletters, please email info@sentebale.org.



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