

No. 20

Dihlabeng Christian School Newsletter

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Gill Friend

We are sorry to be saying goodbye at the end of this year to Gill Friend. Gill is originally from Brighton in the UK and has worked at DCS as a volunteer since 2011. She has taught our Pre-Primary Grade RR, Caterpillars class since our Pre-school opened in January 2012. Gill is not exactly leaving Clarens but is moving on to head up the training of local people to become crèche and pre-school workers. She will be based at the premises of The Nnete Foundation, which is a relatively new project of Dihlabeng Church, supporting High School pupils with homework and further studies. Gill's training programme will be subsidised by the NGO 'Love Trust' and part funded by Nnete. Gill has already started one course running this year and will begin a second course in 2017.

We are extremely grateful to her for all the work she has put into the Pre-school. She will be greatly missed.



Gill pictured with her last class of 'Caterpillars'



Rabson Chatikobo with his Grade 4 class

Our New Teacher Rabson Chatikobo

We are pleased to welcome to the staff at DCS our new teacher, Rabson Chatikobo. He joined us in Term 3 this year, teaching Grade 4. Rabson and his wife Gladys, pictured below, were born and bred in Masvingo, Zimbabwe where Rabson trained at Morgenster Teacher's College. They met in 2003, fell in love and were girlfriend and boyfriend until 2007 when they married. The year they married Rabson had to leave teaching in Zimbabwe because of economic reasons, and came to work in SA. He responded to our advert for a teacher earlier this year. Here is his part of the story:

'The Lord had blessed us with three lovely children, Vanessa (9), Annie (7) and Junior (3). Our children are currently staying in Zimbabwe, we miss them so much.'

We are blessed to be part of a team that has been tasked by God to help the community in Clarens at Dihlabeng Christian School, where I am teaching Grade 4. We are currently staying in the local township area of Kgubetswana. Gladys is still looking for something to do. She has done dressmaking and designing of different materials, including upholstery. We are praying for her to obtain her own machine to start her own business. We thank God for His will upon all His people. May God bless you in all aspects of life and may He fulfil all His promises to you.'



Achievements and Events in Term 3 and 4

AMESA and Conquesta Maths Competitions - Each year at DCS a number of our Grade 3 - 7 pupils take part in two maths competitions, Conquesta, which is a national competition and AMESA, which is a regional competition, taking in school pupils in the Free State and Northern Cape. This year 18 pupils gained certificates of varying levels in Conquesta. Of those who took part in the AMESA competition, 3 of our students came in the top 50 of our region. One of our pupils, Matthew Woodage came top in the whole region, scoring 100%. We are all very proud of Matthew for this fantastic achievement, as are his parents Andy and Becky Woodage, who are both part of the staff at DCS. Matthew will receive a cash prize as well as a certificate.



Eisteddfod Competitors



In mid-August five DCS pupils took part in the Bethlehem Eisteddfod which is a festival of music, dance, poetry, prose and art, just as it is in the UK. The children, from left to right, Alia Meggison-Hill, Manthati Mokoena, Nnyalleng Mokoena, Thembekile Vilakazi and Matthew Woodage, were coached for the event by Constance Nyefolo one of our young assistants who has been working at DCS this year. During her school years Constance had taken part in the festival many times but this was the first time that DCS pupils had participated. The children recited poems and gained very creditable scores of three Cs and two Bs.

We were very pleased with their performances and achievements, especially as it was the school's first time taking part, and well done too to Constance for preparing and coaching them.

2016 Prize Giving

Prize Giving for Grade 1 - 7 was held on the evening of November the 3rd with Pre-Primary Grades RR and R holding a separate event on the 16th November during the school morning. Each child in the school received a certificate celebrating their achievements, both academic and personal, along with trophies for special achievements and Book Prizes for the top girl and boy in each Grade. Sports Trophies were awarded to Vuyani Lokkers Gd 5, Manthati Mokoena Gd 4, Teboho Mokoena Gd 3. The Top Achiever Award in Foundation Phase was presented to Keryn Woodage Gd 3.



Book Prizes awarded in each Grade went to:

Boys

Grade 1 - Thomas Roos
Grade 2 - Katleho Mokoena
Grade 3 - Tshiu Mokoena
Grade 4 - Jane Makhubu
Grade 5 - Matthew Woodage
Grade 6 - Ndaba Mashenene
Grade 7 - Nkono Lethoba

Girls

Grade 1 - Makeresemese Dlamini
Grade 2 - Mya Meggison-Hill
Grade 3 - Keryn Woodage
Grade 4 - Puleng Motlokoa
Grade 5 - Hadiyo Makhubu
Grade 6 - Matshediso Mokoena
Grade 7 - Thandekile Nhlapo

The Grade 7 trophy winners, pictured above were:

Nkono Lethoba - Kindness Award
Lindiwe Tshabalala - Sesotho Award and Exemplary Behaviour Award
Thandekile Nhlapo - Afrikaans Award and Top Achiever
Precious Twala - Principal's Prize
Jabulile Radebe - Mount Horeb Perseverance Award.

Grade 6 Trip to Durban - Earlier this term Grade 6 had the privilege of going on a five day trip to the coast of Durban. As in previous years, they stayed at the Natalia Centre in Amanzimtoti, which is just behind the beach. They visited Ushaka Marine World and the Wet and Wild water park, a crocodile and snake sanctuary, Mini-Town, a model village, and Howick Falls on the return journey. A wonderful time was had by all.

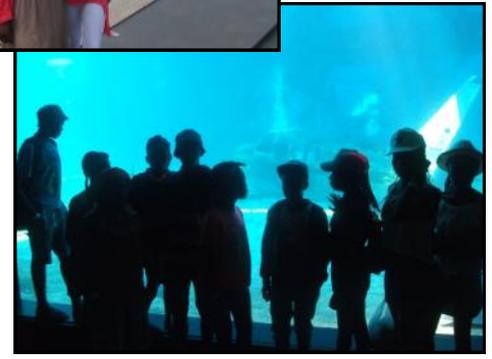


On the beach, a visit to Mini-Town and Ushaka Marine World



Andy Woodage with Grade 6 at Howick Falls and fun on the trampolines at Natalia.

Other staff who accompanied the trip were: Adam Meggison-Hill, Alan Goodson and Pauline Mlangeni. Our thanks to them for their time and commitment.



Spring Day, September 1st

September 1st is celebrated in SA as Spring Day. This coincided with our Saturday school day. The children all worked to make decorated hats to celebrate the arrival of spring. It didn't feel so bad to come to school on a Saturday!



Nativity - 'It's A Baby' Produced by Jane Meggison-Hill

Performed by Grades RR, R and 1 with narration, singing and music accompaniment by Grades 2 and 3. For more photos and video clips please see our 'Facebook' page.



Sports Field Update

Since writing the last Newsletter there have been some exciting developments for both Dihlabeng Church and the School community. It has long been the desire and dream of DCS and Dihlabeng Church to have a good quality high school in Clarens for Grade 8 - 12. This would enable the DCS Grade 7 pupils to go on to high school from our present school, which runs up to Grade 7, without the need to travel away from Clarens. This is especially important for those poorer children who cannot afford the transport costs. At present there is one very over subscribed school catering for Grades 8 and 9 and one small high school in Clarens which caters for Grades 10 - 12. Both these schools are struggling with growing numbers of children, compounded by the governments closure of many outlying farm schools. We have been made even more aware of the need for good quality education at high school level through the work being carried out this year in the church's new project, The Nnete Foundation which seeks to help and support high school students with their studies and raise their prospects of Higher Education and University.

Apart from all the logistics of building and funding a high school, what we have needed first is land. Several attempts have been made over the years to secure a piece of land for the purpose of building a high school but these have not been successful. However, our recently elected Mayor of the Dihlabeng Municipality, has caught the vision and she has been working alongside Gareth Oosthyuzen, our church pastor, to secure the land next door to the present church/school site. This area, shown in the photo below, outlined in blue, is approximately 3 hectares, compared with the present church and school site combined, which is about 0.7 hectares. At the time of writing the proposed land has now got to the stage of needing to be re-zoned by the various municipality offices, which could be a lengthy process. A written proposal has been drawn up by Gareth and will come before a Council meeting on December 15th. We are hopeful and prayerful that this will meet with the favour of the officials and the land, in time will be re-designated as ours!

Of course, these developments have had a huge impact on our plans to redevelop the present DCS sports field. If we get the other piece of land, then we have a whole different prospect of developing facilities of a much better standard and size. We have therefore, decided to be prudent and await the outcome of the decision on the land, which may yet take awhile. We will re-evaluate the situation early next year. Please rest assured that all the funds donated so far for the redevelopment of the DCS sports field will be held back for the purpose for which they were intended; whether that is on the present school site or the exciting prospect of the land next door, remains to be seen! We will keep you informed.



The land (marked in blue) next door to the church and school site (marked in yellow) which we are hoping and praying will soon be ours on which to plan and build a new high school.

We also hope to site the new sports field for DCS here, thereby combining the facilities for both schools. The existing sports field area for DCS is the earth patch just in front of the buildings in the yellow zoned area.



'Thank You' to all our Sponsors and Friends



DCS Our Hero!

John Mokoena is our assistant teacher in charge of Sesotho. After time spent in discussion with the Grade 5 Sesotho language group, John wrote this very imaginative poem, printed below. It was performed by the children at our cultural evening in September. Each child learnt a section of the poem by heart and performed it in Sesotho, dressed in traditional costume. The translated words were shown on a screen nearby. One audience member remarked afterwards that he had rarely heard Sesotho spoken so eloquently and with such passion. Well done John and the children who performed his poem. We would like to share it with you all.



DCS Our Hero!

Be still and be attentive to me
Listen when I talk about this hero
The one which many seek for.
Not only seek, but trust him.

Be still and be attentive to me
Be attentive to my song of praise
When I praise this hero
Not only the hero but the beloved.

DCS, you are the hero!

I once took a journey
Passing by a beautiful Kgubetswana
Saron a place amongst all
Your blessing is untold
To carry this hero
Saron, we thank you.

In this place I found this hero
From the dust and ash heap
There rose an army. Armed,
Fully equipped by you, the giant
With eyes fiercely red to fight
To fight this fierce battle of life.

DCS, you are the hero!

From the place you sprouted
You sprouted like a mushroom in the damp of storm on the field
You rose and became an umbrella
The umbrella to hide away from storms of life – life disasters.

You hovered like Noah's ark over the rough waves of life
You waved - calling by spiritual hands
The tender-hearted came wobbling towards you
You snatched them from the flood of poverty and lack
And have put on them the hero's garment – hope and love.

DCS, you are the hero of heroes!

Those trained by you praise you
They praise your wonderful works.
How sharp is a chisel to hone
You honed minds of men and women while in darkness.

Hearts you tear them open and lay them uncovered
You undo even toughest strongholds
You took out the hard spirit from within
And gave me a spirit of Godliness
Now I know how to lift my hands
And to open my mouth to call on that powerful name
Temptations and the devil left me.

DCS, you are the hero!

Look at me today for I am a hero
Equipped with warrior's weapons
Weapons to combat disaster's fierceness
Armed with a strong staff
The strong staff of faith, education and knowledge to be brave.
Brave to face the nowadays monster of life.

It opened its mouth licking with its tongue
It licked once; the faint-hearted trembling ran away
It showed up its ugliest paws of hunger and nakedness
And I saw its ugliest molar, champion of teeth
Ugliest molar; the champion of diseases
I stood firm and ready pulling out my sword
With one strike, it fell crashing on the ground
Then I found my way as the warrior.

DCS, you are the hero!

A song of praise was heard
A song of hero's victory
It reached into the four corners of the world
It reached England the famous Island
It swept through like a disastrous tsunami
Hearts were pierced and one left without intention

It came back swinging nations
And nations were brought into palms, DCS
You walked them on red carpets of peace, love and kindness
You clothed them with a hero's robe – prayer
You put on their feet the hero sandals of Gospel
The Gospel hope for the nations
The nations, they couldn't hold hearts
They cried, "DCS, call out your army we want to see them!"

DCS, you are the hero!

They came marching as the gorgeous army
The gorgeous army of Margaret
They came with their chests held high without fear
They said their piece, the red carpet of DCS,
Eloquently they spoke and nations were perplexed
They spoke like the DCS army.

Then I saw the curious ordinary approaching,
Approaching with heart burning
Burning with a healing spark of education
But the difficulty of tongue to speak
It became a barrier between him and the nations
I heard him whispering saying' "bolata du (for good afternoon),
kgoho ya more (for goeiemôre) ho nkgang ntate (for hoe gaan dit?),

I took him aside helped him to speak
Say good afternoon, goeiemôre, hoe gaan dit?
I learned that timidity and lack of knowledge one doesn't intend to invite

DCS you are the hero!

Margaret and your wonderful team we thank you
Thank you for ushering to us this hero
Thank you for welcoming and embracing us
You embraced us while the predator has his eyes wide open
Eyes wide open and horrible claws out
Claws ready to leave deep spots and scars on faces of men and women
Keep up the good work and don't grow weary
For great is your reward in paradise.

Then I called my fellow army and we came with heads high
Stood like bullets on the belt of a machine gun
We give thanks and our gratitude
We salute with a heroes' salute
Attention!
What do we say?

Bravo DCS, Bravo!!



**Mapula Mlangeni performing her section
of John's poem at Cultural Evening**