



Tshepo Ya Bana Hope for Children

Dear Friends and Family,

*“So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand”
(Isaiah 41:10)*

Now we have reached February 2021 we can look back with amazement at a year which was unlike any other that any of us have experienced. I couldn't help noticing how I received fewer annual newsletters than usual.....and those we did get were significantly shorter!

In spite of the long silence from me, I can assure you that all is well with Tshepo Ya Bana. We have all remained in good health, with just one manageable case of Covid19 on the property, and in fact all the mask wearing seems to have kept us from many of our usual colds and other bugs which normally circulate, especially during the winter months.

It definitely was a year with a difference! January to March, of course, meant we carried on as usual with staff and volunteers – then suddenly, just as our last two volunteers (great nieces Za and Flo) were due to fly here from Cape Town after a short holiday, all flights were cancelled and our first lockdown commenced. Fortunately our other volunteers (my niece Emma and her husband Jo) had also taken a trip to the Cape, and all four were able to drive a rental car back – arriving just in the nick of time.

Those first three weeks turned out to be very special. Two of our staff, (Mama Sarah and Mama Joye) stayed here for the whole time, while all the other staff were told to stay at home. We had our four volunteers to help with the children; the only driving was the occasional shopping trip for essentials; and neither Kagiso nor Tom were able to work.....so it almost felt like a holiday!

When the staff were able to return we actually drove all of them to and from their homes for several weeks, as we were worried about them travelling in

crowded taxis. It took up a lot of our time, and we used a lot of extra petrol....but the safety of our staff was important. Eventually we went back to the old scheme, picking everyone up in Hammanskraal. We are all now really used to mask wearing, sanitising and social distancing, so we just continue to pray for good health and safety for everyone.

Our staff have been as faithful as ever. Although Mama Elsa left at the beginning of March, we had enough help from our volunteers to tide us over until we eventually found Mama Khensani, who lives in the local township and has the right kind of experience. She is fitting in very well, and is very good with the children – just perfect for the job of housemother. Our volunteers ended up leaving a little earlier than planned, at the beginning of June so it was a tremendous relief when God provided an extra helper in the form of Mama Joye's sister Prisca, who was without work because of lockdown, and we also employed Mama Rebecca for extra days. It did, of course, increase our wage bill.....but God always provides.

We managed to cope without volunteers until the end of the year but were relieved when Amy arrived early in January. Anouk has also joined us, and both of them have been forced to extend their visits due to all the flight cancellations. Fortunately they are both able to continue their studies online

We have on several occasions been amazed by gifts we have received. Just before Christmas we had a visit from a Nigerian pastor, who said he was simply led to our farm, not having known of its existence. He came with a car full of groceries for us. A few days later we had a call from Mr. Hammanskraal (who we didn't even know existed!) He wanted to know if he and Miss Hammanskraal could visit and bring us some food! Then on Christmas Day two separate couples arrived with gifts for each of our little ones, which was great as funds were a little low at the end of the year and the gifts we did have for them were just token gifts.

Our lockdown rules have changed several times, and this has had a serious impact on our economy. Many people have been retrenched, and many businesses have closed. I know that the same has happened in many other countries, but our main problem is that our economy was in a poor state before this pandemic and so we now have far too many poor, often hungry

people. Those with no income or grants of any kind have been getting a monthly amount of R350, which doesn't go very far.



The little ones are as cute as ever! We had several new ones arrive in the middle of last year, but after a couple of busy months two left for adoptive homes, and one was moved to a long term foster home. Another little boy left towards the end of the year, so our numbers are fewer.. until the next phone call from a desperate social worker! Our 2 two year olds are so lovable! Whenever I approach they run towards me exclaiming "Hello Mama Cis" with great enthusiasm. They are just adorable!

Our eldest boy is now attending a local school. His social worker hopes to find a more permanent home for him, but unfortunately most of our government departments are working rather inefficiently, to say the least, so it is difficult to get paperwork processed for new carers or for permanent placements. All listed carers, such as Mama Joye and myself, are supposed to renew our "Form 30's" every year. This just isn't happening so the courts are being forced to accept the old ones or an affidavit, stating that we are fit for the job.

Our thanks to all of you, for continuing to support us, either financially, by praying for us or just by showing an interest. We hope it won't be too long before some of you will be able to visit us.

May the Lord bless you all!

Chris

