

2ND NEWSLETTER

Touching Lives

Greetings to everyone. We would like to express our gratitude to everyone who makes the Phakamisa organization a success in respect to all the various contributions everyone makes. Your support means a lot to us all. We thank you for helping our communities throughout this winter season, the warm clothes, blankets and food donated for our needy community really made a huge difference.

Physical Training/Gym

When the care givers arrive at Phakamisa in the morning, they partake in physical training exercises. When we were closed for Easter holidays it was very interesting to find that one of our groups from Molweni area decided to form a football team to keep their bodies fit. Mrs Ngcobo commented saying

"wasisiza uPhakamisa ngokusijimisa ngoba sabona njengoba kuvaliwe kungcono siqale iklabhu yethu yebhola ukuze shtlale siphilile - thanks to Phakamisa for introducing us to physical training as we're on holiday we decided to form our football team to keep our bodies fit and well"

Many group members were encouraged by this group in such a way that they also formed their own teams. Now we are looking at having some tournaments whereby all the groups will be playing against each other - **(watch this space)**

Morning Devotions

Devotions seemed to be one of the important aspect for our care givers. In

our devotions, an open safe space is created for our care givers to share their prayer requests. One of the care givers looking forward to devotions". Most of the care givers use devotions for their own healing. They laugh and cry together. They also have a sense of belonging. Many painful stories are being shared during this session, death within their families being all too common. A strong belief of witchcraft in their communities is often indicated in their stories.

However the belief in the power of the prayer is also strong - one lady came to my office and shared the following: "you won't believe what has just happened! My daughter called me just now and she told me that she was mugged on her way to town. She entered a taxi, thinking that it was a taxi heading to town, only to find that they took her to the sugarcane field where they debated about raping her or not. Fortunately they ended up taking up all her belongings and they left her there unharmed" she then said to me the Morning Prayer was so powerful God protected her daughter. She was so grateful to God.

Early Childhood Development

Training in Early Childhood Development Courses are continuing, and there is high demand of crèche teachers who want to be enrolled in our classes. Twenty supervisors were trained and graduated in our supervisor course this term. One of the

supervisors shared with us that she was very excited as her crèche was nominated as the best crèche in her area by the Department of Social Development, further mentioning that they received fifty sleeping mats for the children. She then thanked Phakamisa for the training that all her teachers received, also mentioning that the ECD Monitors play a big role when visiting their crèches.

Orphans and Vulnerable Children

During this term we have managed to dress more than hundred children with warm clothes received from individuals, Women's Auxiliary of Pinetown Methodist Church, and also from Pinetown Senior Primary School. These donations were in the form of jerseys, warm pyjamas, shoes and blankets. The clothes were shared amongst the orphans who attend our wandering schools and by the orphans who are looked after by their care givers.

Staff Development

Thanks to Diakonia Council of Churches for facilitating the workshop with our teams in strategic planning of their work. This was a fruitful workshop. After this workshop the staff were so motivated and looking forward to implementing the new ideas received from the workshop

Field Visits

Part of the plan for this year was to do some visits in the 42 areas that Phakamisa operates within. When doing these visits, it was very interesting to meet a 90 year old lady who was a member of Phakamisa. It was so good to meet her, I gained a lot of information from her. She shared her experience with Phakamisa- when she

joined Phakamisa 15 years ago she was so stressed out as she had lost five children within the space of two years and was left with orphans. She was later introduced to Phakamisa by her neighbour where she joined the group of care givers. "After I joined the group, we never slept on an empty stomach with my grandchildren again. I was warmly welcomed by staff and by the group members. I learnt so many different skills as you can see even now am still able to do plastic mats, gardening and poultry, I sell to my community and I am earning some income. One of my grandchildren is now studying doing diploma in education." When asked why she no longer comes to Phakamisa she said her eye sight is no longer good (she once got lost in town and her grandchildren asked her not to go anymore). She was grateful that I came and visited her, and also thankful that the care giver monitor was always checking on her.

Economic Empowerment

During this term, the sewing and beadwork group focused on sewing traditional outfits due to the care givers request. They learnt how to do traditional skirts and how to trim the skirts with the beadwork. Different styles of traditional ladies top and trousers were also learnt. This was also topped by teaching them (care givers) how to do the traditional décor.

The cooking classes also focused on learning how to prepare traditional meals, which could possibly assist them in the future, in potentially being hired by catering companies or open their own catering and Décor Company

In regards to the gardens, South Africa has been experiencing a drought, which has affected all parts of the country as land is no longer arable. Unfortunately, the Phakamisa gardens have also been negatively affected and many families have been struggling as they rely solely on the produce of the gardens (vegetables).

The poultry project which is driven by the male group has now started to sell the chickens and the members are extremely excited about the progress, so far so good!!!

THOLUTHANDO

Our HIV/AIDS support group has increased this term. We have 15 new members who joined the group and that gives us a total number of 85. Group members are so supportive to each other and they treat each other as brothers and sisters. It was very interesting to hear one of the group members during the devotion time thanking one member stating that when she was sick and very weak, that member came into her house and said to her she mustn't worry about waking up so early in the morning for clinic appointment to join the long queue as she was going to do that for her. That was very touching. She further thanked Phakamisa for Tholuthando support group mentioning that if Phakamisa didn't exist she could have been dead by now.

This group is unique, they love and support each other so much.

Conclusion

Phakamisa does its best to empower the communities that it serves. We believe in making a difference.

There are some challenges as well in doing this work. These challenges are usually picked up during the devotions, but some of the members prefer one on one sessions.

PRAYER REQUESTS:

- Most of our members are not too well, this is noticed from the devotions where members get a chance to share their joys and pains.
- During this term we have a number of group members who passed away due to sickness and sudden death - prayers are requested for their families as most of them were breadwinners in their homes.
- Since the beginning of this year, our staff members have experienced some death of their close family members every month.
- The gardens are not doing well due to drought, there is shortage of water. We believe that in prayer God can intervene in this situation.

With blessings from South Africa,
Thokozani