



Newsletter - December 2013

Dear Friends and supporters of Utho Ngathi Disability Projects

Many greetings from Soweto, South Africa. We feel it is time to give all our supporters and friends the latest information about all the activities of Utho Ngathi Disability Projects.

Before we write about our activities Andreas would like to write a few words about Nelson Mandela and his very own "little Mandela Story" as we are all sad that he has passed away.

Andreas: "Mandela is gone and it feels like something is missing. I came to South Africa in 1990 the same year Mandela was released from prison. I was in one of the first public rallies in Soweto those days, Mandela couldn't attend but I listened to a very good speech by Walter Sisulu in an old stadium in Soweto. I sometimes think I can still feel the excitement and "togetherness" of those days, the old steel structure of the Jabulani stadium was literally moving. I felt the changes in the country; I felt excitement but also saw the struggle and violence on the streets in Soweto from 1990 to the year 1994. Then on Election Day in April 1994 I had to work in Baragwanth Hospital and felt sad that I couldn't see the long queues of people waiting to vote in their first democratic elections. The story continues, in 1996 I met Nelson Mandela personally in a Hospital in Mthatha where I was the physiotherapist in charge of the department. We were all greeted with a handshake by Nelson Mandela and I couldn't believe that I was part of this special occasion. I can still remember that I was staring at him throughout the ceremony we attended. Its sad that those days we didn't have digital cameras so we couldn't take any photos. The little story continues with a personal letter I received from Nelson Mandela. After I invited him to the official opening of our day care center in Mpeko in 1999, he wrote that he is very sorry that he can't attend the important occasion but his busy schedule didn't allow him to travel to our village at that time. Another story which still makes me smile today, is of an incident that took place after I drove from East London to Mthatha one day in 1999. I ran out of petrol exactly in front of Nelson Mandela's house in the village of Qunu. This area of the Eastern Cape is very rural and it lies 35 km from Mthatha. After realising what the problem was, I went up to the gate and the security guards were kind enough to let me use the house phone to call for help. It was just sad that Nelson Mandela was not at home but I got picked up and towed safely to Mthatha. I had to share these short stories with you and we as Utho Ngathi Disability Projects wish the Mandela Family all the strength they need to get through this difficult time and we wish that the People of South Africa will always remember the spirit, beliefs and wisdom of Nelson Mandela."

We recently went on a fundraising trip to Germany and in the 6 weeks we spent there we had 51 different appointments from meetings and presentations in schools and in Churches to meeting s with friends and family of Andreas Worster. It is always very encouraging and touching to see and experience how much support we have in some areas of Germany and how much interest people, especially children, have in the work we do in Africa and the life we live in Southern Africa.

Something else we always appreciate and enjoy when we are in Germany, the very different quality of life in that country. We are fortunate and feel blessed that we get the opportunity to travel, to countries like Germany and are able to experience many life changing situations. It is difficult to describe these experiences, but you can imagine how it feels deep down in our hearts when

we travel from some of the poorest villages in Africa to the big fast cities like Johannesburg, Soweto or Lusaka and then travel to some of the small cities of Germanys Western area, with big trees, huge endless looking forests and old well preserved towns and villages. Our life and work in Utho Ngathi Disability Projects is a journey and we are working hard to try and change the lives of persons with disabilities in Southern Africa. It is a very important part of our journey to make more people aware of the needs, challenges and also opportunities and capabilities of persons with disabilities and we will continue to talk about our program "A Road to Changes".

Here are a few photos of our fundraising activities and meetings in schools and churches and even in a workshop for persons with disabilities.





Volunteer work

We again had a volunteer from Germany visiting us. Jana Gamp is a student at a German highschool and she came over just before completeing her Matric. Her school has been supporting our project for many years and Jana became an active member of Utho Ngathi Germany in 2011. She was one of the young people who saw one of our presentations and was touched by the work which can be done to change the live of people if we work together with lots of enthusiasm and love. Jana spent 3 weeks with us and we gave her the chance to write a short report about her experience during her visit.



Project volunteers



Jana at the base in Zambia



Happy, a child who will be in school in 2014



Project leader Honest with Andreas and Anna

"I am Jana Gamp and I am in my last year at highschool and after Matric in October 2014 i would like to volunteer in Utho Ngathi Disability Projects. To prepare for this time my family and I decided I should spend a few weeks in Africa to learn a little bit more about the work of Utho Ngathi Disability Projects and the life of the people. The time was short but I learnt and experienced a lot of the work, the lives of Andreas and Masauso with his family and also a little bit about the lives of the people of South Africa and Zambia.

The first few days I spent in Johannesburg and stayed with Andreas, we travelled every day into Soweto to start our day with lots of office work and usually there were meetings set up for the afternoons. Driving in Johannesburg and the time we spendt to get from one place to another was a challenge for me and i can imagine how tiring it is for Masauso and Andreas doing all this work and the driving every day. It was a very new experience for me to see so many people on the streets and most of the people I saw were very young. It was a good and new experience to work and travel through Soweto and the huge city of Johannesburg.

After a week Andreas had to travel to Zambia to deal with some problems at the project site in Simunzele in the Southern Province. To continue with the construction of the boarding facility at Simunzele Basic School, Andreas had to have a very long discussion with the Headteacher of the school and I had the oportunity to travel with him. First we spent two nights at the home of Masauso Phiri in Livingstone, where I was made to feel completely at home from the time we arrived. We were received with a very warm and pleasant welcoming and the time in the Phiri family was a special experience for me. After a 3 hour drive through rural Zambia we reached the village area of Simunzele where Utho Ngathi Disability Projects is building a boarding facility for 12 children with disabilities to be included into main stream education at Simunzele Basic School. This is a very exciting and unique project and it is funded by a Rotary Club and a business man from my Home Town. From the time we arrived in the village I was again part of the people and was welcomed with open arms and lots of smiles. The welcoming attitude towards foreigners was very touching and i feel it should be the attitude also in Germany and other parts of the world.

The days in the villages of Zambia were a very new and different experience for me and I feel this experience has changed my life in a way. I heard a lot about poverty of the people in the villages and the high number of persons with disabilities especially through the presentations given by Andreas and Masauso when they spent time at my highschool. Being in Zambia made me feel more a part of the proeject because suddenly I was in the middle of the life and I could feel the struggle that the people go through to survive day after day in deep poverty. To see children in such poverty is heartbreaking but it was touching to see how people deal with such difficult life circumstances and I still received smiles and hugs wherever we went.

Andreas faced some serious challenges at the school but through the visit, the long talks and prayers with the headmaster of the school, problems and misunderstandings could be sorted out

and the construction of the building could resume. From January 2014 the boarding facility will become a home to 12 children with disabilities from villages far from the school. We visited 6 of the 12 children in their homes and fortunately I had some clothes to give to the families which was highly appreciated. It was touching for me to see how happy children became when they received a pair of shoes or even a tshirt.

My time in South Africa and Zambia went by too fast and just after 3 weeks I had to say good bye to all the people I met during my visit. All the people are now in my thoughts and in my heart and I will cherish the time I spent with Andreas and Masauso at Utho Ngathi Disability Projects.

I am looking forward to coming back and spending more time in Africa." *Jana Gamp*

Projects

The following paragraphs give you a short description of the activities in the different regions in South Africa and Zambia where Utho Ngathi Disability Projects is active.

Eastern Cape Province: Our project activities continue in 3 village regions. In our "main village" Mpeko there are a lot of activities. Our day care center for persons with disabilities and the green house tunnels are visited by persons with disabilities on a daily basis. Through the leadership of the staffmembers of the Mpeko Special Care Center, persons with disabilities are trained in life skills and the exciting project of vegetable planting and harvesting and the usage and maintanace of the tunnel structures and the irrigation system. The staff members of the center have been working with us for the past 17 years and we are very proud of the partnership and working relationship we have developed over the years. Through this close working relationship and the intense training from Utho Ngathi Disability Projects to the staff members of the center, they are now able to take responsibility for the agricultural project and the planting, harvesting and selling of the fresh vegetables within the villages of Mpeko. Athinkosi, a young man from the village, is now employed part time by Utho Ngathi Disability Projects and he is helping the Center Staff and persons with disabilities in their daily activities in the green house tunnels and he handles any repairs and maintance and he makes a lot of effort in his work. We really appreciate the help and input of Athinkosi and we are proud that we are able to assist him to develop his life. Two weeks ago we travelled to the Eastern Cape Province to visit all our project sites in the different village areas,

and it was nice to see that Athinkosi helped the mothers to clean the center so we could have a good night rest at the center in the village and he even worked on walk and driveways between the different buildings and the green house tunnels so everybody even persons on wheelchairs can reach each bulding easier.

Utho Ngathi Disability Projects is still implementing some of its project activities in another 2 village areas, in Mdumazulu and in Alice. Through project leaders, who are part time employed by Utho Ngathi Disability Projects, persons with disabilities are visited in their homes on a regular basis and through that the disability is better managed by family members and any challenges are reported back to us. Through this home based care program and the presence of Utho Ngathi Disability Projects in these village areas, the awareness about the challenges and opportunities for persons with disabilities increases within the communities and a more inclusive mindset is created. We also get a better understanding of the magnitude of disability in the villages through more accurate data capturing. This data and our reports can also be used to address the government to make them aware of the challenges person with disabilities are facing in rural South Africa and we can assist with developing new inclusive programs to address such challenges.



The greenhouse tunnels at Mpeko



Wheelchair ramps at Mpeko



The Special Care Center at Mpeko

Gauteng Province: Our office in Soweto is a very good base for us as an organisation and we are spending many hours in the office and most of our days in Soweto. We are working in one office together with Thabo who has been wheelchair bound for the last 8 years. It is a great opportunity for him as a young man with a disability to work with us in Utho Ngathi Disability Projects, and we can also benefit from his input in our activities as we can now develop our projects for persons with disabilities as Thabo can advise us from his personal point of view. Thabo has a wife and 2 children and his disability has a lot of challenges for him but in the 6 months he has been working for us he has been able to manage his disability easier and his independence is improving on a weekly basis.

There is still a long road of changes ahead of us but since Utho Ngathi Disability projects moved the office to Johannesburg and into Soweto we have built a very good relationship with the Department of Social Development in the Gauteng Province and the National Office in Pretoria. Our many years of experience and input within the disability sector can now be used to develop more inclusive and innovative programmes to help more persons with disabilities to develop and reach their full potential.

Zambia: The report of Jana Gamp gave you a little background of our activities in Zambia. Our boarding facility for the inclusion of 12 children with disabilities is almost complete. The walls are plastered the roof is complete and the ramps for wheelchairs have been installed. Now we are left with the painting of the building, the carpentry of the beds and other furniture items and then the official opening in January or early February. We are also busy planning a garden project for the production of vegetables for consumption at the school and for community members who are in need. This project will add to the great development at Simunzele Basic School and we are very grateful to the community and the school for the good partnership and working relationship we developed during the implementation of this programme.

Another bit of exciting news: Our Patron, the First President of Zambia, Dr. Kenneth Kaunda renewed his Patronship with Utho Ngathi Disability Projects. We are very proud and honoured and we are looking forward to the continuous benefit through his wisdom and guidance.

I hope you all have gained a better understanding of the work we are doing in Southern Africa. The short report and the photos should give you a better understanding of our activities mainly in South Africa and Zambia, but also make you aware of the continuous support we need from you. Please don't slow down or give up, we need your help to continue changing the lives of many. We can't change the world but we can change the world of people and that is what drives Utho Ngathi Disability projects.

This building project will be completed very soon and then we will have to work hard on the inclusion of children with disabilities into main stream education. We are looking forward to this challenge as we can assist children with disabilities to develop their lives through inclusion and education.



Boarding facility in Simunzele, Zambia



Construction of the borehole at the boarding facility



The almost completed borehole

Have a blessed Christmas
and a great
Festive Season!

