

God's Golden acre "Khayelihle"



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Dear Friends of GGA,

It's time to give you a little news from God's Golden Acre and share what has been happening in the last several months. Christmas and New Year flew by fast and so have the last few months. It's so hard to believe that it is already May!

When school resumed in January, six of our young children were placed in a primary school in Pietermaritzburg. This school gives them the opportunity to improve their maths and English, and helps with coordinating transport. Because of the type of subjects being offered at the new school, two of the older primary girls were not able to transfer. The students have settled well and are enjoying their new school. Their first term reports are as expected and show that they are working hard to improve their skills.

This year we have six students who are in their final year of secondary schooling. This is a bittersweet time of both joy at their accomplishment and sadness at realizing that they will soon fly and become independent. Of course this is what parenting is all about!

As the school year has started and been progressing, Evelyn Marx has been an amazing pillar of strength. She has returned from Germany for two years as the school education project manager and volunteer coordinator. With the help of Magda she was able to place all the children in appropriate schools, obtain uniforms and purchase school stationery. A heartfelt thanks to all the sponsors who also helped to make this possible!

Our young adults are continuing to advance in their chosen areas of study. Kwanela Zulu has settled at Rhodes University at Grahamstown, studying business and economics. Nono has started studying law through UNISA thanks to David Beresford's sponsorship. After a break Nompilo has resumed her social work studies through UNISA. Buso didn't quite make her final exam mark and is redoing certain subjects at Cedar College. Menzi has gone into a second year of studying psychology at KZN University. Lucky has gone into his final year of studying film directing. Ntombi is in her second year of nurse training, and Zindhle will start her training in July.

Tutu Jila has completed her physiotherapy degree and is doing a year's internship at a medical centre in Hammarsdale. She has also had the opportunity to work with the burn surgeons at Albert Luthuli Hospital.

Two new staff members have joined the God's Golden Acre family. Brandt Pieterse is our new maintenance manager, and Andre van Rensburg is our youth education and development program coordinator, and house manager and mentor for the boys in phase five. Both are proving to be great assets and are fitting in quite well. We appreciate their added support.

A new group of Windesheim students arrived at the end of February. They are continuing to develop our youth education and lifeskills program in Mophela. In addition we are expanding this program into another rural region, and are starting to help teach English as a second language at a school in KwaXimba. Together we are developing a drug intervention and substance abuse program. With all our programs we are trying to instil morals, values, and healthy lifestyle choices along with basic knowledge.

Our fruit tree and gardening project is getting a new lease on life after finding a partner to help provide the various soils and seedling mixes. Expect more news on this venture in the upcoming months.

Our child sponsorship program is continuing strong. We are very grateful to all the generous sponsors especially our Dutch and other sponsors. Sadly Nompilo who has been heading up this program will be leaving us in June. Brendan will be heading up the communications and data capturing, and Sbo Zungu may be taking over the other responsibilities.

We were sad to say goodbye to volunteer Catherine Ruff who has returned to Germany after 9 months. It was really great having her with us. Meanwhile, we have welcomed two lovely Swedish volunteers Elin and Marlene.

Janni and Johan Bakkenes blessed us with two months of service recently. Johan has been chairman of Friends of God's Golden Acre Netherlands for the past several years, and he and his board have worked tirelessly to support the ongoing work of GGA.

The children have had some lovely activities this year including an Easter Egg Hunt and braais, thanks to various friends and past volunteers. Sarah Spicer, a local high school student, is fulfilling a community service requirement by organizing maths workshops for the students. A particularly fun and engaging activity she organized for all the students was a Maths Treasure Hunt with all the children racing around the property as they solved maths problems and looked for their treasure. Another memorable day was had by all when our children were invited to attend a Life Skills training program at Midmar Dam this past weekend.

A recent highlight was attending Tutu's graduation. We were all extremely proud of her Bachelor of Physiotherapy degree.

We are all excited that Asanda's adoption by Julie and Trey Reynolds is being finalized. They will be coming to fetch their little girl and take her back to Texas USA soon. We will miss Asanda so much, but we are so happy for this life-changing opportunity for her.

While we have much positive news to report we also have our struggles. Katie has become very ill and was in Marianhill Hospital, and has now been transferred to R. K. Khan Hospital in Chatsworth. We ask for everyone to hold her up in prayer.

The months of May, June, and July are always the toughest financially at God's Golden Acre. We appeal to all our friends and supporters who are in a position to give a little extra in support to do so. It would be so greatly appreciated.

In closing we would like to thank all of our friends for their love and support. Without each and every one of you our work could not go forward.

God Bless and Much Love,

Heather and the God's Golden Acre Family