



# Manzini Youth Care

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## January to March 2008 Review

**Dear Friends of Manzini Youth Care,**

The beginning of the year is always a busy time and this year has been no exception. Here's an update on the latest from us here in Manzini...

### News from the Boys' Homes

As part of our initiative to improve the range of activities available to the boys, the start of the year saw us investing in a range of Board Games for volunteers to take with them when they visit the boys' homes in the evenings. Eventually we would like to see an activities room in each of the boys' Homes, so we wanted to find out how the boys would respond to these types of activity. Two of our volunteers took the games out to the boys who really enjoyed playing them. Jenga was a big hit with the younger boys, while Scrabble presented a rewarding challenge for the older boys. On the basis of this experiment, we will be looking to invest in more board games as we develop the activity rooms in the coming months.



### 2008 Bursary Programme

The beginning of the year is always a busy time at Manzini Youth Care when the office is flooded with bursary recipients re-enrolling for the new school year.



Thanks to the generous support of the Solon Foundation, and our friends in Listowel, Ireland, we are able to support 644 children this year, the majority of whom are primary school students. We are always looking for ways to improve our bursary programme, and this year we have introduced contracts to be signed by the parents or guardians of our bursary recipients, which set out our expectations of them, namely that their children may only repeat once, and that grades must be brought to us at the end of each term. We hope that this will encourage parents to be more engaged in their children's academic progress, and will make it easier

for us to monitor the students' progress throughout the year, intervening to offer assistance and support if need arises.

### Community Gardens

We have been successful in obtaining funding over a three year period for our proposed community gardens project. Food security continues to be a problem across Swaziland with thousands of people relying on emergency food aid to survive. We are providing over 600 children with a daily meal through

the Neighbourhood Care Points (NCPs) that we support, which represents a huge drain on our financial resources. In order to encourage greater self-sufficiency in the communities that we work in and also to improve the nutritional content of the food available at the NCPs, we have received funding from Breadline Africa to help the communities that we work in to establish large scale community gardens. We will work with city council, local chiefs and local churches to identify large pieces of un-used land around Manzini and to secure commitments for these to be used for community gardens. Communities will have to establish a community gardens committee, and we will provide them with the necessary inputs to start their gardens, as well as training in agriculture and community garden management. Produce from the gardens will be used in the soup kitchens, and to feed the sick and elderly in the communities. A proportion of the produce from each garden will be sold to generate income for purchase of seedlings ensuring the sustainability of the gardens.

### **Bridging School**

Demand for the Bridging School continues to rise and this year we have enrolled just over 300 students.



The Grade 7 class has been particularly oversubscribed with high numbers of repeaters. This has focussed our attention on weaknesses in the school's programme, and English language has been identified as a key area in need of attention.

Amongst new students to the school the level of English comprehension is generally low to non-existent. This year we have brought in a new teacher to assist with teaching the Grade 7 class, and also focussing on improving English with this group. We are seeking funding to make more extensive improvements at the Bridging School, and the Sandrini Centre, including introducing new teaching materials, making informal teacher training available to our teachers and expanding the

English improvement classes to the rest of the school.

### **Caring for the sick**

The start of the year also saw us welcome a Zimbabwean nurse onto the staff. Mr T, as he has become known, holds a daily clinic at the Bosco Study Centre which is open to residents of Manzini Youth Care, students of the Skills Centres and staff. The clinic is also open to residents of the peri-urban communities in which we work. So far he has treated 150-200 people each month for minor conditions and ailments such as skin disease and asthma, and for HIV related conditions. Mr T has also been making visits to the peri-urban communities, visiting and advising sick people whilst also providing basic training in hygiene and sanitation.

Special thanks this quarter go to Joyce Gallie and Sandra Lenagan for their continuing fundraising efforts in the UK, the Hendrikson family for their ongoing commitment to helping children in Swaziland, all our friends in Ireland, particularly those working on charitable status for MYC in Ireland, and Kathy Keary for her efforts on behalf of MYC and Menzi. Special thanks also to Blue Sky Marketing Ltd, Sister Judith Dean, Impilo Yami, Khawuleza Investments and the Dougal Family.

**Thank you for your continual support, interest and prayer. We always look forward to hearing your news, advice and well wishes. God Bless.**

**Fr Larry**