



COLLINS CONNECTION

August-September 2009

Hello the Salesian Family

Since last we communicated with you we have been in a state of highly skilled acrobatics. We have been thinking of joining a circus! However, in the end we decided to stick with the Don Bosco Educational Projects and get on with the...yes, please believe us! **BUILDING!** You are having doubts? We will let the photographs speak to you! Be patient!

First we experienced the great joy of signing the contract with the building contractor, Aura Projects. This took place on 14 July 2009... a day to remember! A few days later we met at the site and handed it over to Aura Construction and Glen Brydges who is the Architect. Of course some of us were present as well and the Euphoria was tangible. We actually felt a tad weepy. It seemed to us that after such a long and cumbersome journey we had reached the summit of success. We now know what those who climb high mountains experience when they view the world from the top! **The Big signing Day!** Glen Brydges; Ralph Fyfe; Martin Van Heerden; Sr Margaret Sweeney; Bernie Mullen (Fr Robert Gore took the photos thanks!)



The grand handover! With some of the team present: Br Peter, Sr Margaret, Chester Browne Anthony Reeves; Fr Jeffrey and Fr Robert Gore and of course, the site building plans!



A few days later, we took a trip to the site

because

and had to do the proverbial 'pinch ourselves' in case we were dreaming there for all to see was the gate to paradise already installed! We kid you not. Take a peek? We did take a good few minutes to stand and stare, to admire and to say thank you to our trusty team 'Up There'. We long for the day that the gate is widely opened to welcome the first students to the centres. We are told that this will happen after July 2010 as the building will be completed by then...if there are no major problems ahead! Time to light candles and clasp hands!

Then came the day when noise was the most welcome phenomenon imaginable! We arrived at Erf 4623 of great fame and there we encountered a very good looking creature creating a dust storm with no compunction whatsoever! We had to get out of the car and take photos in spite of our smart and recently cleaned takkie-selves getting a new hue of red sprinkled over them. Bernie took absolutely no notice of our pleas to remain seated. She was wildly excited and clicked away. Here is one of the shots she took. Enjoy the dust! It will not be in vain. Bricks will be rising with it soon! We promise! So what was next? Well we witnessed bags of cement being opened and then some of that being poured in lines all over the place until we saw the foundations taking proof...this is going to where children will sport, doing cultural dancing and listening interesting stories. We opening! **The first been dug!**



On our next visit we friend from Hydraform instructing Alf Fyfe on construction with these type of bricks. You know that we are trying very hard to be an environmentally conscious and friendly project so hydraform bricks are not given to pollution. They are not baked and are made more



outlines of the shape. Here is the be the hall of fame have great fun playing activities , singing, to all sorts of will invite you to the **foundations have**

met Gerry de Beer, our Bricks. He was the intricacies of

from soil than anything else. They are highly compressed and interlock so there is no need for mortar between each layer. There are some restraints about to what height one can build without mortar but we are not worried about that. We will just admire the rise of the hall and classrooms. So then what happened?



Left: Gerry and the team: See our bricks!

Right: Walls rising!



We struck gold! A very generous donation from the UK will come our way. Bernie had been to Cape Town to present our life history to the Salesian community and their friends at the recent AGM and pronounced us the **'Million a Month Team'**. We know how valuable we have always been but we were soon toppled from our vanity platform! She meant that we need a million a month for the next year to achieve the completion of this project! She said we need faith and courage. We have the determination as you know; our soles have been repaired a few times to date. Bernie received a call from Fr Eddie O'Neill that very same night who informed her that a donor in the UK was making a contribution! We have also had good news from Germany and Holland. Donors there are interested in helping us. We are working extremely hard to get our proposals in on time. We now await the results. Please tell our great friends in heaven. We would like to once again express our grateful thanks to The Collins Trust who have been our faithful companions for the last five years of roller coasting but who have remained optimistic with us and have each year raised funds in Ireland for us. Red Deporte from Madrid spent some time here with us and helped us to get their donation spent on bricks, sport equipment and on a very nice new van for the project. Thank you! We

have enjoyed the ride. Mísean Cara from Ireland have also been very generous and after a long patient wait for the building permission decided to send us their donation in spite of the fact that we could not meet the requirements before their financial year closed. Sr Moiré O'Sullivan worked very hard for us. We are very grateful to her and to Mísean Cara. Please do pray that we get enough funding and that we do not have to send the builder off site until the next money shower.

No, we haven't forgotten our other happenings. The partnership with Ekukhanyeni continues to flourish and there have been three ten day training courses done at the Lawley training gardens. We now have four of the first batch of trainees lecturing and conducting these courses under the management of Ryan Dickey. We have once again applied for a small extension of land for the garden and are awaiting a decision from the Lawley Parish Committee. We hope this will happen before the first spring rains. Extensions to the greenhouse have been done. This to accommodate a drying area for the herbs from the garden. The best news of all is that Ekukhanyeni have produced a very well written training manual and this has been printed and will be used for the training sessions. Each student will receive one and so have it as a guide for the future. We congratulate Ryan Dickey who wrote the manual on urban permaculture. This is the first of its kind in South Africa and will stand us in good stead when we seek accreditation for the permaculture courses. Liza Rossi has worked very hard on the layout and on the printing process. Thank you Liza, we look forward to receiving a copy! We managed to find the funding for the printing from a very generous donor who does not want to be named.

Here is what the craft group have been producing. The group are now learning to sew. They have had training in beading, crochet work with plastic and cotton and will next be learning how to cook with a haybox. Finding a good outlet for the products remains a problem but we have one member dedicated to doing this.



We are hoping that in the near future the trained members of the craft group will be able to take on six new students each and to train them in all the skills. It is hoped that the trained members will move to the new campus next year and become our trainers there. Bernie is also hoping to have some assistance with this group. They need to learn budgeting skills and small business management skills. Please light up those candles again so that some kind person appears from nowhere to help!

The computer courses are still going well although at this time of year the numbers diminish. The recession has also had an impact on the numbers who drop out. They simply cannot keep up the fees even though these are very minimal. We are thinking up a strategy to see how we can overcome this problem. Fr Peter continues to help the students with their English language skills. Thank you!

Overheard from my window: There are many blessings raining down on us but for now, we would rather have **...MONEY...Pounds, and not Pennies form heaven!**

Keep the leather burning and the bricks rising!

♥♥

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