



COLLINS CONNECTION

June-July 2007

Hello, The Salesian Family

The Collins Takkies have taken time out to laze a little on deck chairs in the winter sun. This is in celebration of the successful eviction application. Business Partners are now dealing with a defiant pastor whom, it seems, is still on the premises in spite of the notice given for vacation of the site. The Sheriff of the court is now dealing with this situation. However, we have submitted the transfer papers and should have the title deeds within the next month. We can then get started on the zoning permission procedure. We hope to be able to start building early next year.

The permaculture garden at St Francis of Sales in Lawley is looking very good and further workshops regarding seed propagation, medicinal herbs and nutrition have taken place. We have been watching seeds sprout in the seed trays and look forward to the day we can transplant them into the garden. We have in place a weekly workshop programme. Victor, our project leader is very proud. We are too! We have about thirty people signed up with the project and more are interested in the haybox cookery training. The Finetown garden is, according to Ryan Dickey their trainer, a wonderful example of permaculture technology. He is very happy with Lucky who looks after it. There will be a bumper crop very soon. Well done Lucky! By the time we move to our new site we will have two very competent men to implement the programme there. Permaculture will be a permanent subject on our curriculum. We thank and commend Ekukhanyeni for their very hard work with us. We are in the process of formalising our working relationship with them.

Ekukhanyeni have officially employed Ryan Dickey to implement the weekly training programme and he has developed a very good working relationship with the local community. Later this month we will focus on water systems, the use of grey and black water and how the swales can assist runoff. Have you ever heard of contour, horse, key, spiral, and mandala bed designs? Tell not a soul, but neither have we... We hope to rectify this situation soon! In August we are studying soil types with a view to improving these with conservation technologies. We are hoping to keep our Takkies clean! St Jude, please... help! Well, there is no harm in hoping!?

We are very pleased to announce that there are now 28 new students enrolled at the Don Bosco Computer centre. Some attend during the week while others do the Saturday course. Among the group are five young. This is a very pleasing development. Val Drift, our computer trainer, has worked wonders with those who have started from scratch to those who are now doing the advanced training. We Takkies love to visit the busy centre. We can join in with the tap or shall we say, line dancing that ripples along the keyboards. Thank you for conducting the music Val!

We were treated to an air flight to Cape Town to attend a two day workshop on how skills development works in South Africa. We were on our best behaviour and Bernie was proud of our response to being flung around the heavens. The winds were ferocious but we stood our ground! Those little brown bags remained tucked in the backs of the seats. The workshops were well run and very informative. Bernie and Val Drift are working on developing a manual called a 'Portfolio of Evidence! Sounds criminal but this has to be submitted to the Labour Department to prove how our project functions and how it is professionally maintained. We were very pleased to meet the Cape Town staff members who were very friendly and helpful. Thank you! They are sharing their computer programme manual with us so that we are assured of accreditation, or professional certification with the relevant Government Department. This means that students who have successfully completed our computer course can be officially certified and properly qualified for the workplace.

We have been put in the takkie rack as opposed to 'in our place' following those rather cynical remarks concerning bricks that do not need mortar to bind them. Bernie has found out more about them and has produced concrete, no, just concrete evidence, of their existence and how they work. The technology is so simple; one simply stacks them in a certain way and they form a very strongly bonded wall. One can build as much as eight stories high with this method. The science is beyond our comprehension. We are not sure what decisions will be made regarding the use of these new comers. Perhaps we will just use them to teach others how to build strong and simple houses. Where are your thinking caps?

We had the joy of hearing from Barbara Mullan, Fr Declan's sister. She and her trusty parish members have been hard at work organising a fundraising walk for our project. In spite of the awful weather and some very bad potholes (we have regular experience of these) this event was a great success and the tidy sum of €9 000.00 was raised. It is very good to know that there are other pairs of Takkies, of the brightest Irish green, no doubt, jogging along. We thank Barbara and all those who took on the horrid winter weather to help us. May all you are and do be blessed!

Rumour has it, and where there is smoke there is fire... that Michael Sheil and his Past Students Union of Clongowes College where Fr Declan was educated, are also trotting along the road to success for us. We will tell you more in our next edition...Who says we cannot surpass Harry Potter fame and fortune? Please keep your doubts to yourself!

We attended a very interesting meeting with Liza Rossi of Ekukhanyeni and representatives from Manna Relief (those helpful people in Texas) who supply the children at the Laura Vicuña Centre with food supplements. Manna Relief, in partnership with two other organisations, have produced a nutritious drink that can be distributed on a daily basis to the all the Ekukhanyeni and Don Bosco project children. The drinks are free and make an almost immediate impact on the health of those who drink it. We are busy working out a proper strategy for distribution. The drinks have been approved by the South African Medical Association and by international medical bodies so we are sure they are safe. We once again thank our partners and donors from toes to heels!

We have been introduced to more wonderful friends. Veronica Bergström (Bernie's niece) has been rallying up her friends and local community members. The result has

been two big loads of food, material, clothing, books and some items of furniture for the Laura Vicuña Centre in Finetown. Veronica's step sister, Merrewyn Feucht, who has a Wimpy restaurant in Durban, has also promised us a monthly donation for food supplies. We thank these kind folk from the bottom of soles!

The Bavarians have landed! Do you remember our telling you that they had come to Finetown to visit us and to Lawley to visit the Ekukhanyeni crèches? Well, they have notified Liza that the promised funds for permaculture development will be deposited next week! We can now look forward to substantial and sustainable development that we hope will culminate on Erf 4623 and 4624 where we will build our centre next year. God is very good and so are the Bavarians! Thank you!

If anyone would like to contact us about the journey we so deftly trip and walk along, please feel free. Your in-put and support are always welcome. Please remember that you can see us on the website!

We had the pleasure of being introduced to the Bosco Buzz a new news letter for the Salesian Planning and Development Office. We enjoyed the encounter very much and are kept informed of our cousins' ventures all over the Province. Thank you! We love it when a family plan comes together!

Overheard from our window: "The deeper the potholes the more room is there for good compost and manure: One can grow healthy plants and fruitful trees that way because the holes are already dug!" You, of course, know who is spreading such unadulterated 'good news'!

Yours solely and sincerely

♥

Bernie Mullen
Development Facilitator

and

Her Takkies

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