



## **COLLINS CONNECTION**

**February – March 2009**

Hello the Salesian Family

In our last edition I think we mentioned not being able to run on full throttle due to the holiday feeling in some departments. Well, all good things do come to an end and we are back in full sprint, or at our age, full gentle-jog! Things have been moving along very well.

We have had success in two new areas. Gavin Clunnie of Klunene completed the sewer report and submitted it to the city Council within a week. We have dreams of it arriving at the right and final desk in the City Council maze and getting dealt with very efficiently and very soon...Gavin will let us know within the next day or two how far along the red tape line the application is. We are very willing to hire ourselves out for an hour of brisk jogging! We know the City Council buildings very well. No harm in a dream or two. No, we are not cynical; just drawing on our vast experience of these processes. Louis du Toit has also submitted the Road Traffic Impact Study and also managed to curtail the extent of that and therefore the cost. He will have some sort of news for us by the end of this week. He has a meeting scheduled for tomorrow. Hold thumbs, breath and clasp hands in prayer mode please!

Sr Margaret, Fr Robert Bernie and Chester went to visit Martin van Heerden, a quantity surveyor, yesterday. We discussed all the procedures that still have to be achieved before we can actually move onto the site and begin building. It was very exciting and we poured over the plans and clarified much that was mystery to us. Martin then came to see the site and so we have another milestone under our laces! Martin and Bernie will visit Gerry de Beer at Hydraform Bricks to ensure that the Bill of Quantities can be drawn up with the correct specifications to give us realistic price for the project. Please keep hands folded in prayer mode as we are hoping that our estimate is higher than the actual price will be.



**Sr Margaret, Martin, Chester and Bernie pouring over plans!**

Once the Bill of Quantities is ready we will start the tendering process. We have some builders lined up for this purpose. We are hoping that we can include some local contractors and of course local labour.

The Permaculture project is flourishing. Wits University have secured some funding for training and have asked Ekukhanyeni to be the service provider which means the newly qualified trainers will be busy and will be employed for some time. We once again thank Liza and Ryan for all their efforts and congratulate them on their achievements. We have delayed printing the Training Manual because there is a move to get ourselves along with all the other skills training centres in the Catholic network accredited under the auspices of the CIE: Catholic Institute of Education. In fact we attended a two day workshop hosted by the CIE. This was very generously funded by a donor who likes to remain anonymous. The purpose of the workshop was to establish closer network ties with other skill centres so that resources can be more effectively shared and information more readily disseminated. The CIE has been given a mandate to establish itself as the umbrella body for all the centres in terms of seeking accreditation for their programmes. This includes us and will simplify matters considerably when our courses at the new centre are established. We are in the throws of getting the computer course accredited through the CIE.

We have moved! Our computer centre is now lodged at the SDB novitiate house. We are very happy with this new venue. It has more room, is light and airy and is still convenient to get to for the students. Val Drift has also got an assistant that she is training so skills are being passed on. Two sessions of twenty students a day are being run and there is a waiting list as well. A group of five will do their course tests this week. They have not had to stay for the three months allocated for the course as they have advanced very quickly and are ready for employment. So far this year we have had 35 females and 13 males attending. A few have dropped out mainly because we cannot subsidise all those who cannot pay fees. We regret this very much but need to



### **Our new computer centre!**

sustain the project and so need to keep a balance between those we subsidise and those who are able to pay: Any bursaries out there? All donations would be very welcome and would see a young person employed! We will be moving again when the new training centre is built. The FMA will use their house in 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue to establish a place of safety for young children who find themselves homeless or who have been abused. We are looking for a good house mother who will take care of the children. Any volunteers? Let Bernie know.

We recently enjoyed a visit by our very generous but nameless donors. They were pleased with our achievements and impressed by the overall plan for the Don Bosco Educational Projects. We gave them some mementos and thanked them for all they do for us. We hope to see them again in the not so distant future.

Overheard from my window: One Takkie to the Other: What's a BOQ and a QS and what does costing to specs mean? BOQ and QS are letters of the alphabet grouped in threes and twos. Costing to specs must have something to do with Bernie's new pair of glasses. But then Bernie and friends have turned into technocrats of late so who knows? They have begun to speak a foreign language! I think it's called building...

Until next time keep the leather burning!



Bernie Mullen