

COLLINS CONNECTION

January-March 2010

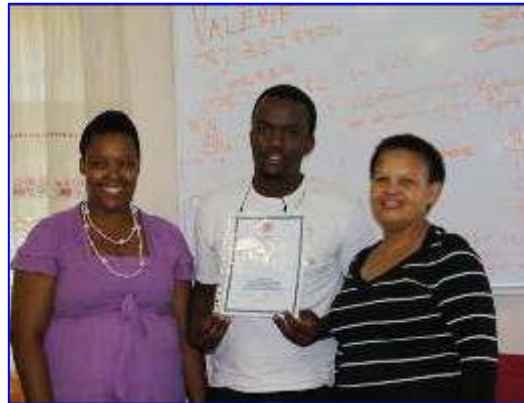
Hello the Salesian Family

Yes, we are still in a state of highly skilled acrobatics. However, our thoughts of joining a circus have died with the realisation that we are a circus! We have not been clowning around but have learned the art of juggling every aspect of our project! It has taken some doing but we are getting the required results. We would appreciate a free spit and polish: Thanks!

Juggle ball one constitutes: Personnel management and personal management. Bernie Mullen has had to deal with major personal changes. Her husband works in the Northern Cape and she hardly sees him so has had to tailor her working life to suit her personal needs. She resigned from the project but has continued working on a consulting basis from her home and has continued with the fund raising aspect of her work. She is learning to juggle her time and location. Valerie Drift who is an Ennerdale parish member and who has worked as a bank manager has undertaken the administration of the project. Valerie was our computer trainer. During her tenure as such she trained Colleen Max, an outstanding student who now runs the training. We congratulate Colleen and Valerie on their new positions. The computer programme runs two sessions a day. Four students graduated this month.

You can contact Bernie direct at her home address: peterbern@mweb.co.za

From left to right: Colleen Max, a new graduate, Valerie Drift Congratulations!



We had a very big ball...and the Deputy President came dressed in his best!! We juggled (and jived) with joy!

Can you believe it? Our network partners and friends Ekukhanyeni have grown from strength to strength in their efforts to establish urban permaculture throughout our municipal region. Their sponsors, Mercedes Benz of South Africa, launched a partnership with them. Deputy President attended the launch event in February. He was very interested in using Ekukhanyeni as a model for the region. Well done Liza, Ryan and Team! Liza and one of the newly trained permaculture trainers (Gladys) were also on TV last Sunday explaining the training programme and its goals to the public. We were very proud of them!



Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe addressing the people at Lawley

The permaculture teaching garden is a site to behold as well. It has developed into a very well established and productive source of food for the children in Finetown. Lucky, who is in charge of the

Finetown permaculture garden, has been a very faithful and proud trainee and has maintained the garden very well. The only problem is that he hates harvesting as it spoils the beauty of his pride and joy! Victor continues to train trainers and is enjoying the experience.

Bernie, Ryan and Victor did a tour of the new site, the famous Erf 4623 and surveyed it with a view to the establishment of future permaculture gardens. With the buildings in place it was easy to see where the most likely place is to grow crops successfully. We feel confident that we will have enough space to cultivate enough food for the children in the future. Roll on 2011! The herbal garden at Lawley also has a new feature; a drying shelter has been built to ensure that the herbs that harvested herbs are properly dried out for herbal teas that are good for health.

The Deputy Resident with the training group and Ekukhanyeni sponsors.



At the moment there is another ten day training course been conducted from the teaching garden at St Francis church in Lawley. The site was visited by a group of donors from Holland. They recently donated a substantial sum for the completion of the Laura Vicuna Centre. They have also undertaken to sponsor Ekukhanyeni. We were thrilled to show them around the building site. They were most impressed with progress and with the environmentally friendly building practices we have implemented. The children at the Laura Vicuna Centre in Finetown sang to them and thanked them for their generous support. These kind donors wish to remain anonymous so we cannot give you any more detail about them. Thank you so much for all your help!

Our friends from Holland helped us **to keep all the balls in the air as they** also held a conference for all their beneficiaries during March. Bernie attended and was amazed by the wonderful spirit among the participants and was very happy to meet the donors in person. Through them the Catholic Institute of Education has been able to inaugurate a support umbrella body called The Thabiso Skills Institute.



Our generous donors from Holland admiring our hydraform brick walls! Excuse our backs!

The new Institute will assist all the skills training centres in the Catholic network as well as other NGOs who are affiliated, to become accredited, to ensure that proposals can be submitted to Government, to facilitate communication, networking and resource sharing. They will also assist in skills development and further training for affiliated managers and staff. Another aspect of their portfolio is to assist in career guidance and job creation opportunities. They will assist us in sharing of resources so that and costs kept down and so that no **juggling balls**, sorry, wheels are reinvented! We thank the Sponsors and the CIE Team for an excellent conference and outcomes. We raise our battered hats that have experienced the whole world falling on them, to you! We will now wear new hats!

While we are talking about funding we also received a very generous donation from The Collins Trust late last year. This came at a time when we were really worried about proposals that had been submitted but that had not been awarded. **We were thinking that there were punctures in our well inflated ball!** We would once again like to thank all the people who so

faithfully hold funding events for us and who have never failed us through the years. Your efforts are most appreciated. Please keep the **funding ball rolling!**

Is this really us? Yes it is....at last! We are well on the road to realising our dream



Our old friends, Red Deporte sent us a



consignment of 260Kg of sporting equipment including **many new balls** and nine bicycles. We thank them from the bottom of our worn soles! Imagine! We can now commute on a bicycle! No more burning our own leather! Thank you very much Re Deporte! We are still awaiting news from Germany regarding a proposal that was submitted for the Declan Collins workshops. We hope to hear from them soon. Keep the candles

burning and the takkies and bicycle in full leather burning mode please! Some generous donors from the UK have given us enough to complete the first five work rooms of the Declan Collins Centre. We thank them most sincerely.

More good news is that Mísean Cara from Ireland also donated a substantial amount towards the building. We have sent them a final report on the use of their generous donation. It has not taken long to spend it all! We are very blessed to have donors who keep us in mind. Thank you once again Mísean Cara. We thank Sr Moiré O'Sullivan who acts as our contact with Mísean Cara. What would we do without you?

A view of the clinic and library

Gugu producing some cushion



covers... a newly acquired skill!

The craft group are happy to have a new and regular trainer and supervisor. Sr Giovanna took over from Bernie in January and has been teaching them to sew and produce goods that will sell and give them an income. Some now members have joined the group and some have left to practice their new skills from home. Thank you Sr Giovanna.

We do hope that you have a very happy Easter and that you remember us in your prayer. We will certainly keep you all in ours! Thanks you once again for all you do for us!

Keeping you in the big picture!



One Takkie to another... 'No, we're not a sight for sore eyes...we're a site for sole eyes!!!'
Good for the soul don't you think?



Bernie Mullen