



# Children of Fire

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www.firechildren.org

## Newsletter

### Put on your (pink) dancing shoes

In late November 2006 Zenette van Wyk (8), having been seen by plastic surgeons several times to no avail, and then by orthopaedics, by Prof. Peter Beale, by Prof Einhard Erken and a whole mélange of medics, finally ended up with Prof Wally Stuart at the Chris Hani Baragwanath Hand Clinic and had her left foot worked on... some nine months after we had hoped her surgery would take place. It is vital to maintain momentum for burned children who will need maybe ten or more major operations during their childhood.

Zenette came back to us just in time for the 2<sup>nd</sup> December party organised by Carol Taoushanis and pharmacists in the same group, assisted by drug representatives from different companies—Adcock Ingram *et al.*

The children enjoyed touching a ferret, a rabbit, a snake and big fat bugs in Zoo-to-you (from Johannesburg Zoo) as well as the jumping castle, playing in the paddling pool at school and lots of healthy food. Some of their younger guests from Joe Slovo squatter camp did not know what to make of the delicious Debonairs pizza nor even the fancy-filled sandwiches. They wanted the soft white porridge that they were more used to... but when the cake arrived, they found plenty of space for that!

Zenette was lent crutches by Children of Fire (the queue at the workshops at Baragwanath was just *impossible*... and *then* they closed for lunch!). Soon she decided she was just as happy to hop and the bandages became unbelievably grubby as she reverted to her normal very-playful self.

She stayed over with her sister Precious in Auckland Park, enjoying the buzz with all the other children and especially liked trying to waltz with Sicelo (8), Anele (6) and three-year-old Zanele when they walked (hopped) up to Melville's Mugg & Bean for a milkshake and a small live band was playing. That time Sizwe and Feleng stayed home because of bad behaviour.... (they were only aged 5 and 4 respectively but seek to emulate troublesome teenagers ...)

On December 4<sup>th</sup> Zenette's sister Lynette who is not burned but also an orphan, came from the rural areas to visit. She joined the burns survivors including Irene Peta (16) and Mfundo Ntamehlo (20) on December 8<sup>th</sup> for a group visit of 35 of our children and different adult helpers, to the Constitutional Court for a special educational tour and for lunch. Thanks to Solly Setlhako of Constitution Hill for arranging that.

Late summer 2007

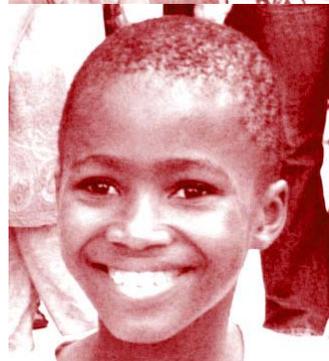


### Children of Fire—Africa's first burns charity

*Top left: The trip to Kilimanjaro is coming closer...set off 23 June 2007.*

### Correction

*In the previous newsletter we should have stated that Dr Dalu Ndiweni is head of virology at Johannesburg General Hospital and that Dr Sheba Varughese is a specialist there. The best telephone number to use for paediatric virology is 011 488 3274.*



## Stove crushing

Some children play ball in the afternoons. Or swing. Or dig in the sandpit. And some get involved in real live science projects where they use a hand-pump designed by the Power Team from Hytec to pump and pump and pump until they applied a three ton pressure and crush the dangerous old Panda paraffin stoves into ugly metal pancakes. After demonstrations by engineer **Harald Schultz**, burns survivor **Jeffers Zitha** (15) applied himself with especial vigour to the process—revenge for the cruel way in which an exploding stove has maimed him and bereaved him all those years ago.



Feleng (5) crushes a stove with everyone's help

## "My Sizwe, My Noeleen"

On December 12<sup>th</sup> SABC3's 3 Talk filmed brief interviews with different beneficiaries of the Dis-Chem Foundation, the programme being aired on December 27<sup>th</sup>. After the filming everyone was invited to a meal at Trumps in Nelson Mandela Square (formerly Sandton Square) and it was interesting to learn that the company is largely a family-run business with several family members trained in pharmacy and at least three generations helping in their different

ways with everything from sourcing goods to accounting and cosmetics. The recipients of help included a policeman getting a horse, another getting two dogs; a rape survivor getting a job; a shack orphan getting good schooling and a hospital getting its burns ward painted in the future. When Sizwe watched the programme he was astonished to see Noeleen describe him to her thousands of viewers as "My Sizwe". It made his year.

## Wandering Shar Pei

Ok—we are not an animal charity though every now and then when we bring children home from fires they ask for their pets to come too; but in late December a poor young Shar Pei cross with a broad snout, blueish tongue, colouring similar to a German Shepherd but the size of a terrier, stood cowering from the storm, in Auckland Avenue. So he too came to stay the night and then onward to Richmond vets with assistance from animal rescue char-

ity *Free Me's* Jackie Wrighton. Of course the children wanted to keep him ...but after recent resident canine bickering had led to vets bills of R1000, we decided that three dogs are enough. Following the Shar Pei story, Free Me was given more lettuce than it could cope with from a food store so passed the surplus on to our children... trying to get squatter camp kids to enjoy lettuce was no easy task...

## Zanele Power Girl

**Zanele Power Girl Jeza** used to cry when she arrived to stay with us; now she cries when she leaves to visit her Soweto family. She is much loved by everyone at Children of Fire and, unlike older girls of six or sometimes even eight years old, she no longer wets the bed at all. Little miss mature!

A bright three year old, her colourful scribbles show promise of writing at an early age. And she loves rubbing in all the different lotions and potions available to the children, from Jomelop E to Elizabeth Arden eight hour cream. Work on Zanele's nose was rescheduled to March 27<sup>th</sup> 2007 at Johannesburg General Hospital.

## Fat emails squash system

If you want to send us greetings, a few heartfelt words will do. We don't have the most modern computer in the world and when we get sent Christmas cards that are a meg or two in size, they just block the phone line and make it hard to work. We'd actually love the old-fashioned card in the post, if you want to send us a pretty picture—it is a real treat for children to get a real envelope with a stamp on, to open for themselves. As to the volunteers who send us two megabyte pictures of themselves sitting amid a glorious sunset—hey guys... shrink the jpeg please—you are at least young enough to know how to!

## Japanese volunteer explores Pedi homesteads

In addition to the exciting Drakensberg journey when he first arrived, Koichi enjoyed travelling to Maesela, the home village of Pedi UMashesha volunteer Norman Ntswane, deep in Sekhukuneland. He said it was SO hot. And then at night the sand and rain storm was so rough, he thought that the roof would be ripped off!

Koichi followed that journey with one to Giyani, in the company of another Pedi, James Phosa—but this time it was to an area that is largely Venda and Shangaan. Koichi had such novelty value in the community, we joked that James could have charged an admission fee for people coming to meet him. But the average South African does not know the differ-

ence between Japanese and Chinese—something that Koichi would like to rectify. A colleague of his, Tomoko Harada came to assist Children of Fire in February 2007. She is Japanese so no more Jackie Chan jokes please—as Koichi was at pains to point out, that actor is American anyway.



Koichi and burns survivor Thabiso Phosa in Tzaneen, Limpopo.

## Happy Healthy Christmas Packs

Four days before Christmas our long term volunteer Lisa Wright organised for Smart Com to provide T-shirts, party packs and replica cell phones for some 100 children at Slovo. We wish Lisa still had time to teach the children yoga on an outdoor carpet between the shacks at our Sunday Library scheme, but appreciate her continuing to remember all our avid readers and would-be readers at the end of the year.

**Christmas Day** was another 25<sup>th</sup> December just as it should be—enjoying giving to others. School trustee Peter Harris donned the red suit and white beard, ably assisted by tall elves Anita and Tristan to disperse presents to every single child in Joe Slovo squatter camp, Coronationville. The bags had toys added to them from children in Wivenhoe, Essex, in the United Kingdom (yes, kids, we still had some) as well as gifts from local lawyers **Danie and Charma Botha from Wilsenach Van Wyk** in Hyde Park, Johannesburg, and maize meal from Premier Foods. Thanks for extra help from Dimple Patel and Sanjay Ranchhoojee, trustee Lisa Hutchinson, Louis Rutsein and Des Blow.

From there it was on to see Kelvin at Brixton Fire Station and officers at Brixton Police Station with chocolate cakes and greetings for other people who, like Children of Fire, provide a service 365 days a year.



School trustees Peter Harris and Lisa Hutchinson hand out gifts to the children of Joe Slovo.

## South African Police Service

Children of Fire has a long-standing relationship with the South African Police Service. We have trained police officers in fire fighting and in First Aid. We co-operate on squatter camp safety initiatives. There are certain gems in the SAPS who have particularly helped with getting disabled children to and from places that they need to be. And every

now and then, there are some indolent cops who don't do their job properly. When we come across those and have time to pursue the matter, it is usually with the provincial offices. If you ever need assistance in Gauteng, two useful people are: Senior Superintendent Jan Witbooi on 082 822 6533 or Superintendent Andries Ndlovu 083 417 8151.

## Road Accident Fund skelems at large

Many people come to Children of Fire for legal advice that seems peripheral to our work—but often the information is useful to the general public. So if you (or your staff) happen to seek legal help from a firm claiming to specialise in Road Accident Fund claims and you want to proceed on a contingency

basis, beware! They automatically take **25 per cent of the money awarded**, whether little or large sums. That might end up being a lot more than you would have paid in conventional legal fees, if you have a strong case to argue.

## Inventor's warning

Over the years many designers and inventors of hot bags (foil-filled bags that keep food cooking without additional heat), solar cookers, candle holders, sugar-cane gel stoves, ethanol and methanol stoves, safer paraffin stoves, medical dressings, lotions and potions and more, have come to Children of Fire for advice, support or validation of their products.

And so we have become aware of the high cost of patents to protect a design in South Africa and the huge cost of protecting designs across the globe.

Generally we will back a good idea by helping to publicise it, but we find this easier to do if the inventors have *ethics* and *compassion*. Sometimes they tie up with business partners who prove unscrupulous and then it is harder to assist them.

So—if you have a good idea: **protect it**. If you need money to manufacture it: **look local**. There *have* to be people in the Industrial Development Corporation, the Development Bank of Southern Africa, and

similar entities, who can help. And know the law. It is **not legal to take Intellectual Property overseas without South African Reserve Bank permission**. So if for example you vest your patent in a South African company in which you are given shares, and then this company is absorbed by a foreign company and your invention is essentially taken offshore, you **will** be in breach of South African law and sooner or later the Receiver of Revenue will come after you. Sometimes a patent is sold directly to a foreign company and the inventor is caught unawares when South African Revenue Services arrives with a hefty claim a year or two down the line. *Ignorance is no excuse in the face of the law*—though they might forgive you a little for being naive. And pursuing unscrupulous people legally is hard—especially if they have deeper pockets than you—but sometimes battles can be won in other ways.... *on a good day, the media is a great ally*. The background to this story will be revealed in future newsletters or on the website.

## Changing Faces helps car fire survivor

Children of Fire works with Changing Faces, a UK-based charity set up after founder James Partridge was burned in a car fire in 1970. James sent us a copy of his book *Changing Faces* especially signed for 17-year-old South African car fire burns survivor Shivani Beharilal. It was hand-delivered to her

home in January 2007—Shivani was delighted! The book describes James coming to terms with facial disfigurement including his physical and psychological recovery. For people interested in purchasing the book, it is ISBN 1-900928-12-4 and can be obtained via [info@changingfaces.org.uk](mailto:info@changingfaces.org.uk)

## Payroll giving makes for sustainability

The most effective way to help any charity beyond volunteering your skills, is through payroll giving.

There is just one South African who does this for us—Lulu Khumalo. Thank you Lulu. Beyond that, the staff of one branch of Albany Bakery have been assisting us with a regular donation. It is that kind of help that really makes a charity sustainable and

whether you set your giving at a mere R20 a month or more, the Charities Aid Foundation in Melville, greater Johannesburg (also a registered organisation in the United Kingdom) can administer it for you.

Contact them on [mewilliams@cafssouthernafrica.org](mailto:mewilliams@cafssouthernafrica.org) or 011 726 1148.

## Mathematics coach needed

**Irene Peta** failed her mathematics in Grade 10 with a mark below 29% and has to re-take the whole year in 2007. She also had three subjects (Geography, History and Life Science) that were only level two (29% to 39%).

Despite these low marks, we consider Irene to be a youngster with great potential. She is personable and friendly.



She schools in Parktown, Johannesburg so if there is anyone who wants to give her one-to-one maths coaching "mahala" please let us know. Ideal times

## Weight for survival

**Sicelo Maduna's** weight went down to 20.6 kgs at end November 2006 so we put him on a dietary supplement "Philani" to try to boost his strength for his early December operation. On December 11<sup>th</sup> his weight was back up to 21.7 kg so we are travelling hopefully and on December 19<sup>th</sup> it was 21.75 kg.

When he went to visit relatives around Christmas time, his weight plummeted but we worked hard to boost him on his return. His weight came back to 21.8 kg and the mid-December CD 4 count (results only came in January) showed a **wonderful rise to 510 and a non-detectable viral load.**

The one-kilo packs of **Philani** can be provided by hospital dieticians; alternatively they are available for R14.80 a pack from Diva Nutritional Products in the Western Cape—email address: [info@diva.co.za](mailto:info@diva.co.za) or tel. 021 783 4111 (the price depends on buying in bulk). There are a lot of different health drinks, immune booster medicines, dietary supplement porridges and it is hard for the layman to interpret which ones really provide what is needed.

**Philani** per 100 grams (the average bowl of it is 50g) has 1765 kilojoules of energy providing 17.7 per cent of the recommended daily energy intake for an 8-year-old boy. Sicelo has the supplement as "extra meals" at 10am and at 3pm, totalling 100g.

The recommended daily allowances (RDA) are taken from the *Foodstuff, Cosmetic and Disinfectant Act 54 of 1972*. It is not known if there is more recent South African legislation in this field: if not, one suspects that the Act is due for revision. There is no RDA for carbohydrate, fat, beta-carotene, N-Acetyl

would be afternoons or evenings Monday to Thursday on the school premises between 14h20 and 17h30 or after supper; alternatively for anyone resident in Alexandra Township, she could be helped at her grandma's home on Saturday or Sunday. Irene is wheelchair-bound so you would need to travel to her. While Irene is literally legless, she jokes that she is considering a career in podiatry.

She "leapt" at the chance to sing in front of American documentary producer Junius Hughes and asked him to take the short tape to television star Oprah Winfrey ...who knows...? Another burns survivor Mittah Lebaka also sang on tape hoping for the ear of Oprah.

L-Cystein or for sulphur, but all these ingredients are also in the food.

The additional components in **Philani** with percentage RDA in brackets for his age are per daily 100g:

**Protein 14g (41.2%); Carbohydrate 61.2g; Fat 14.6g; Vitamin A 600µg RE (85.7%), Beta Carotene 0.6mg; Vitamin D 15µg (150%); Vitamin E 6µg TE (85.7%); Vitamin C 150mg (333.3%); Biotin 50µg (41.7%); Folic Acid 200µg (66.7%); Pantothenic Acid 4mg (80%); Nicotinamide 11mg (68.8%); Vitamin B2 1.1mg (78.6%); Vitamin B1 1.2mg (100%); Vitamin B6 1.6mg (100%); Vitamin B12 2.5µg (83.3%); Vitamin K (60%).**

**Calcium 825mg (103.1%); Phosphorus 660mg (82.5%); Iodine 90µg (75%); Iron 10mg (100%); Magnesium 250mg (100%); Copper 1.8mg (72%); Zinc 15mg (150%); Potassium 550mg (18.2%); Sodium 320mg (17.8%); Chloride 480mg (17.3%); Manganese 1.8mg (60%); Chromium 25µg (12.5%); Selenium 40µg (20%); Molybdenum 25µg (8.3%); N-Acetyl L-cystein 120mg; Sulphur 34 mg.**

Other basic foods such as **Iwisa maize meal** have added vitamins and minerals, which assist lower income families in particular to eat healthily. There is a little information about nutrition on the packets:

*Vitamin A* is important to maintain good vision, normal growth and a healthy immune system.

*Thiamine, Riboflavin, Niacin, Pyridoxine* are *B vitamins* which enable you to change the food that you eat into energy, help your nervous system to work

properly, and to maintain normal growth.

*Folic acid* helps to form body protein, genetic material and red blood cells.

*Vitamin B12* contributes to the health of the nervous system and is involved in the manufacture of red blood cells.

*Pantothenic acid* plays a role in the metabolism of fatty acids, glucose and proteins for energy production.

*Iron* helps maintain healthy red blood cells which play a role in oxygen transportation. Required for a healthy immune system.

*Zinc* is essential for growth and maintains a healthy immune system.

*Selenium* functions as a tissue antioxidant, so keeping cells healthy. It protects unsaturated fatty acids against oxidation in the body (a natural antioxidant).

Over the years, one cannot help but notice that lots of breakfast cereals pronounce that they contain riboflavin, niacin, etc but most of us never really knew what these things were, what they did and why we really needed them.

Now for the love of one little boy at Children of Fire, we are starting to read the small print on food

packets, to try to understand. To try to learn if a porridge e.g. gives him 78 per cent of something vital to life, where on earth is he meant to get the other 22 per cent? The average parent of an HIV positive child cannot become a dietician or nutritional expert but together we need to make the information as easy to understand as possible, for good lifestyle choices.

We'd like Sicelo to be the survivor who breaks all records but we didn't even know that he was HIV positive until late 2005. If there is any chance that you or your child could be HIV positive, get tested now. And then start learning about how to achieve the best quality of life.

One of our volunteers, Aaliya Munshi (16) who hopes to study medicine at the University of the Witwatersrand, has started a small study on the nutritional status of children in the Joe Slovo squatter camp. We'll bring you a report on that on the website or in future newsletters, along with details of Sicelo's progress.



Sizwe and Feleng say:  
"Eat healthily!"

## Surgery anxiety denies Michael freedom of movement

Michael Sithole was booked for surgery on January 3<sup>rd</sup> 2007 by consultant Anton Potgieter to start the new year with a neck that he can move. The Grade 11 pupil aged 19 has potential as a dancer. He was injured through a paraffin stove explosion and has previously not turned up for surgery that has been booked, and for other appointments intended to assist him psychologically. He stayed with us briefly and started to learn how to use the computer, as such facilities are not available at his school. We could do a lot more to help this youth, referred to us by the Starfish Foundation, but currently he is too troubled in his mind to recognise the advantages offered to teenagers from a long association with the charity. After a night in hospital his operation was cancelled and he was discharged (not helpful with a nervous patient...), all just for us to start the process over again a week later.... Michael did not arrive for the second scheduled operation despite pleading parents and friends. We have requested that he should attend six months' counselling to help combat his fears before any of us spend more hours sitting with him in hospital queues.... This is the

problem with helping young people who are legally adult for some purposes. You can take a horse to water but you cannot make it drink.

A previous youth that we tried to assist, was a follower of the Shembe religion. At the last moment the ancestors apparently told him that he could die on the operating table so he, too, abandoned any prospect of surgery.

In their depression, which is often not obvious to those around them, the youngsters build up fear about surgery and become convinced that the process will be enormously painful or life-threatening.



Michael Sithole with his mother

## Flickering flames triggered epileptic fit

Linda Tshabalala (17), burned through untreated epilepsy, was brought to Johannesburg in January 2007 so that Children of Fire volunteers and teachers could teach her how to read. Only at the age of 13, six years after being burned, did we first get her into school. But she pushed the principal to put her straight into Grade 3 so that she was not with children so much younger than her. She was never taught any basics, and she can just read and write

her own name. A week after her arrival this year, Linda's illiterate mother came to Johannesburg to take her back. She did not understand the importance of Linda learning how to read. When we had just managed to convince her, Linda herself butted in and the mother and accompanying uncle backed down. It was clear that the child was in charge. She is now likely to miss out on a unique trip to climb Kilimanjaro, as reading was a prerequisite to travel.

## Cruelly ravaged by veld fire

Thulani Nhleko (14) came to join us from Perdedorp for a year, now that he has been shown to be TB-free. But first there was a visit for half of December 2006 when he proved himself to be as naughty as other teenagers Jeffers Zitha and Bongani Madlala... one teenager is generally easy but three boys just itching to wander down the road and visit our near neighbour TV star Zola, or to try to mingle with the crowds in trendy Melville... can be like keeping three boisterous puppies on a leash (but harder). And their burned skin makes them generally look a fair bit older than they are. A lot of other charities set an age limit of 12 on the children that they will work with, but that is not an option for our kids—some of whom we'll have to help life-long.

Thulani's feet are a serious problem. He had not worn shoes for more than 18 months. All toes (except the big toes) are severely contracted. We emailed pictures of his feet to different specialists, podiatrists, etc in Richmond, Melville and further

afield, hoping that they could come up with an interim solution. No one has done so yet. He went in for surgery to ease the toe contractures on the right foot in mid January 2007... and was interviewed by the *Sunday Times*.



Thulani's scars are heavily keloided (raised).

## Golf Days, Concerts, Dinners, Shopping Centres

Thanks for your great fundraising ideas. Some work. But do you know the endless trail of people coming through our doors, who want several precious hours of time, guided tours, all our records, etc and then either do *nothing at all*, or raise money under false pretences and then do not deliver it to benefit our children?

Many second or third year marketing students think it would be "rather cool" to have a golf day on our behalf—but none yet have actually done so. A fundraising dinner was promised to us by a large company for November 2006 and did not materialise. Tukkies students held a concert with band Prime Circle and other musicians in August 2006, publicising the fact

in advance that Children of Fire would receive half the profits but by February 2007 *nothing had come in*. Other people and companies, e.g. SAB, made massive pledges to a radio station to give money to Children of Fire and did not honour their pledges.

And total strangers have taken newspaper articles about our children and other children and collected money from the general public in shopping centres. Other strangers have falsely solicited donations of goods in house-to-house requests in the Westdene area of Johannesburg, in our name.

We don't ever do house-to-house collections. Once a year we might have a stall at our closest shopping centre, Campus Square, primarily to disseminate

information about Children of Fire and about the school. But we do not ever have a stall or send collectors to any other shopping centre, *nor will we*.

We do not have collecting tins because we don't think we have the manpower to administer collecting and emptying them, or enough people to prevent misuse or theft.

The Project Group held a golf day on our behalf in 2006, and the year previously, we were assisted by airlines veterans' Varsa Trust. Thanks to them both.

## Anti toy guns

Children of Fire is a pacifist organisation.

Please do **not** give our children toy guns nor even hand on second-hand guns to us for distribution. All we do with them is let the children take a hammer or a rock to break them, and then put the pieces in the dustbin. Many of our children come from violent family backgrounds where they were intentionally injured. We want them to seek other forms of play, rather than imitating the intentional injury of another human being.



## Hospital records

Every time you go into hospital, public or private, you have to fill in a lot of forms. Even to donate blood there is a very long form asking about every possible disease, illness, medical condition or social habit you could possibly have.

For blood donations one can understand that if your social behaviour changes, you could become more of a risk.

But many hospital forms ask the same details *every single time* and it would be so much more effective if they could keep all the information in one file—and tag that file so that it triggers an alarm if someone tries to remove it from the hospital.

It is a waste of time, energy and paper to keep filling in the same information and e.g. with a burned child, the longer the time gap after the injury, the harder it is to remember the specifics. Also, if all the information is not in one file, it is impossible to conduct serious research.

Imagine a child admitted with a serious burns injury at age seven months. The use of heavy doses of antibiotics.

But these events are few and far between, because it is so hard to monitor the behaviour of outside entities—of course we *want* help and of course we *need* funds—but please prove to us (or any other charity that you want to help) that you can and will run an event effectively, that you *can prove* what was spent and what was raised, and that your actions will *really* assist those in need. And excuse us if we are abrupt or even dismissive of your idea—we have had our hopes dashed too often in the past.

At age three years or older, if that information was to hand, you might think to conduct a hearing test because hearing loss would be likely. You might even be able to research which antibiotics in the intensive care unit led to the greatest hearing loss—and at which age the hearing loss was most likely.

But that information is not accessible because each time the child goes to hospital you start a new file.

The rest of the information is theoretically in archives, or on microfiche, or if it is older than five years, it has been destroyed.

But when you are 12 years old and you have been injured as an infant, some of that information is still pertinent and no one asked you—the patient and directly or indirectly, the taxpayer—if you minded whether the information on you was thrown away.

It might be ok to throw out old bank statements or tax records; but medical records? Maybe never.

Marietta Neumann, Children of Fire's medical researcher, has started assessing the admission records at one Johannesburg hospital for data on fresh and historic burns. The information gaps are glaring.

## Charities work together to share supplies

Marang House (a charity which assists children on kidney dialysis, usually awaiting organ donation) sometimes has an excess of toys which they pass on to us and we share them with Joe Slovo squatter camp kids at our weekly Sunday library, or with children in hospital. They brought some more toys

along in December and so we were happy to give them 24 bags (120 kg) of Iwisa\* mielie meal as we had just received a significant donation of the maize product from Premier Foods.

*\*see comment on the nutritional value on page 5.*

## Theatre trip

December 14<sup>th</sup> Aladdin at the Civic Theatre proved a happy last day outing for Japanese volunteer Koichi Morita and the children. Thanks to Trisch Rosema of the Dis-Chem Foundation.

A previously-arranged pancake party and a tiny clown planned for the same day, sadly had to be

cancelled due to some belt-tightening at Premier Foods, but the company did send maize meal packets which will be distributed primarily to squatter camp families whom Children of Fire has assisted for a long time and who are at risk from malnutrition—marasmus and kwashiorkor. Thanks to Julie Botha.

## High cost metal placed in Bongani's skull

Bongani Madlala had new implants placed in his skull on December 6<sup>th</sup>—St Nicholas's Day—patron saint of naughty-but-nice children maybe! Thanks to then-registrar (now session worker) Dr Sunita Singh and colleagues, and for all the work done beforehand by Prof. Peter Owen, Dr Joseph Schmaman, *et al.*

The work was essentially to rectify the less-than-optimum placing of implants some three years previously.. when Bongani would comment that his ear might fall off with jaw movement while eating! Implants cost about R3000 from Southern Implants and the process of ordering them in the state sector typically goes through a "treatment plan" which has to be agreed by the Head of School Prof. Rashid Essop and an administrative head Ms Pamela Slater. Sometimes plans have to be agreed by people with no medical background at all and in this case it seemed entirely obvious to the layman that if the original implants did not do the job, they would have to be done again... therefore the original "treatment plan" would apply.

Then there is the cross-over territory between the University of the Witwatersrand and Johannesburg General Hospital and lines of authority become blurred.

### **Thinking point: Medical tourism—is it ethical?**

Children of Fire does not operate in Asia but the concerns of the developing world are common to more than one continent. Every 30 minutes an Afghan woman and six Indian women die in childbirth, yet annually India welcomes 150,000 "medical tourists" who fly in for cheaper treatment than they can receive at home in the 'developed' world. It is time that South Asia's governments got back to investing in essential services for their own citizens, says a report by Oxfam International.

See [www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=35451](http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=35451)

It was a bit of a bureaucratic battle to get the paperwork for admission signed... (ten forms) and then even more insane bureaucracy to get agreement to an operation being filmed.

There is an arrogance that can sometimes go with uniforms, stars or stripes on shoulders, or double-barrelled job titles, or simply obscure job titles where one wonders what the person *actually does* to earn his or her living. All men are created equal. And yet some people seem to think that they are truly superior to other human beings and take pleasure in blocking good work—*just because they can.*

Lets help the kids together and not let egos and "status" get in the way.



Zoo-to-You's snake wrapped around a brave Bongani.

# Notice Board

## Children for Children

On November 30<sup>th</sup> the children enjoyed a special meal prepared by child volunteer Ahmad Soni (formerly of The Ridge School) and appreciate the kindness of Blackheath Spar and of Impala Fruiterers for supplying him with ingredients.

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**Anele Nyongwana** (6) was told by one set of doctors to wait some years for further surgery, but we are glad that Martin Kelly of Netcare's Sunninghill Hospital is now taking an interest in her and surgery to release her mouth contracture took place on 5<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> February 2007. Thanks too to anaesthetist Dr. Des Lines.



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## Tanzanian High Commission

Christopher H. Mvula, Minister Plenipotentiary, of the High Commission in Pretoria, is interested in the Kilimanjaro climb and actively looking for a Tanzanian youngster who might be able to take part. Email [thc@tanzania.org.za](mailto:thc@tanzania.org.za) if you can help.

**Sizwe Hlophe** (6) was scheduled for surgery to release his lower lip in December but was re-scheduled for admission to Joburg Gen on January 29<sup>th</sup> 2007. He was discharged a few hours after his operation and sadly the skin graft did not take. We are looking for another solution.

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## Goodbye and Hello

Welcome to Felix Neumann, a new volunteer from Germany who came to South Africa for ten months, and to Tomoko Harada from Japan. Farewell to Koichi Morita, also from Japan.

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### Comment on our previous newsletters:

- ◆ "THANKS for the update. How moving to hear about your amazing volunteers. YOU ARE MAKING SUCH A DIFFERENCE in these volunteers' lives as well." *Lucretia Humphrey, Great Falls, Montana, USA.*
- ◆ "The charity is going from strength to strength. The letter is interesting and full of information. Having coloured photos adds to it all. Tristan continues to show excellent skills and leadership!" *Dianne Dixon, Calgary, Alberta, Canada.*



## Problem Child?

Do you need help with attention deficit disorder children; learning about autism; stress in families with a learning disabled child... and more? There are a lot of useful videos which can be bought (R100 to R250 each) from the Bellavista Assessment and Training Unit (tel: 011 788 5454; fax: 011 880 2674) and you can even buy some to donate to us please as we have a wide variety of children with different special needs, either here short term or long term.

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## Thinking point 2 (E-Civics): Philanthropy and Social Justice in Islam

The book analyses the principles and practices of philanthropy and distributive justice in Islam. It argues that the accomplishment of purposive philanthropy (not just charity), as commanded by the fundamental tenets of Islam, through the professionalisation and rationalisation of *zakat* management, modernisation of *awaqaf*, etc. has the potential of optimising impacts of philanthropic activities and thereby augmenting distributive justice in Muslim societies. For more information: [www.asnislamicbooks.com/your\\_order.htm](http://www.asnislamicbooks.com/your_order.htm)

## Sparkles and Skunks

### Sparkles to:

Hard working volunteers.  
Junius Hughes for the next stage of his documentary filming. And Tammy Mitchell for helping with the Kilimanjaro proposals.  
For a six minute video link on You Tube on the Internet about Children of Fire—**Please visit:**  
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iU\\_2gQAPWJI](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iU_2gQAPWJI)  
And to Telkom's Robert Mashapha for climbing over the rooftops late at night to get our storm-damaged phone lines up and running again and to Lerina Marallich for her help.

### Skunks to:

Putco for keeping young disabled children waiting for three hours when they were meant to be going on a day's outing.  
And to the nasty driver of the red Toyota taxi registration NU 13828 who forced four lanes to become five when he pushed through the traffic on the N3 in Durban at 16h50 on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2007, scraping against the Budget hire car. Fortunately the damage was minimal but the driver did not stop.

## Thank You

Thank you for donations received as gifts in kind (including maintenance tasks) or monetary help including a cinema trip, children's DVDs, cake, second hand toys, maintaining our pool; swings; etc from:

Shane Watkins; Rhema Ministries; Greenside High School Interact Charity Fund; Vivianne Stokes, Marang House, the Germonds and Win-Win; Greg Naidoo; Maryvale College; Slam Pool Care; Bavisha Bowan; Natalia Pereira; a local church (which left items when we were out without a name on); Jonem Marketing; North Business Systems; WSP Group; and more. Thanks to Cliffe Electrical for electrical help (Vaughan Cliffe: 072 925 7480).

For good legal help: leading firm Bowman Gilfillan especially Andrew Smith and David Geral as well as colleagues Rachel Underwood and even people working in the areas of copyright and trademarks; also for help given by advocate Matthew Welz. And for long term assistance from Moray Hathorn of Webber Wentzel Bowens.

Thanks to all the doctors, dentists, surgeons and specialists who continue to assist us.

### Contact Children of Fire:

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**Fax:** +27 (0)11 482 4258

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**Email:** [firechildren@icon.co.za](mailto:firechildren@icon.co.za) **Website:** [www.firechildren.org](http://www.firechildren.org)

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#### Children of Fire

**Account number: 614 920 23919**

**Sort code: 25-65-05**

**First National Bank**

**Melville, Gauteng**

**South Africa**

#### Children of Fire

**Account number: 901 033 30**

**Sort code: 20-17-92**

**Barclays Bank**

**Canterbury (East Kent branches)**

**United Kingdom**