

Christmas letter from The Kusasa Project

Greetings to the Somerhill family and apologies for the silence during the past three months, but events here have rather taken us over.

First and foremost, **The Kusasa Project Early Learning Centre** is a reality and we will open our doors to our first 40 children in January 2012. We will initially be working from a Church Hall until our little school has been built and that too is exciting news! We have established a partnership with another NGO, **Hope Through Action**, who have agreed to build our ELC as part of an indoor sports complex for the disadvantaged communities of Franschhoek.

All going well we should have a state-of-the-art little school in the very centre of the communities we serve and catering eventually for the whole of Foundation Phase. Thanks to the very generous support of a school in Sweden (IES Bromma), we have been able to purchase all the necessary furnishings and materials for the school and JPMorgan has given us the funding for three fully qualified and experienced pre-school teachers for a year!

You can imagine how much dancing-for-joy has been going on down here and for those of you who still remember 'madame' you know just how much I love dancing! The second big piece of news is that the **Chello Foundation** has agreed to sponsor a further 16 students to Franschhoek High School, which brings our numbers of pupils who are now on a full scholarship from Grade 8 to Grade 12, from 24 to 40. The logistics of all of this are daunting as there are only two of us full time on the ground, however there are so many willing volunteers and so much good will amongst the local and disadvantaged communities that things seem to just get done.

In addition, our two very passionate and highly motivated co-founders Dave Riordan and Doug Gurr, who both have full time jobs in the commercial world, give hours of their free time to the project. In this way they ensure that every aspect of our organisation runs smoothly and that neither the children nor the team lack for anything - they are inspirational human beings, who manage somehow to find funds and support through their vast network of contacts both locally and abroad.

It is also so much due to the generosity of schools such as Somerhill and more especially Yardley Court that we always feel looked after - we have been deeply touched by the numerous gifts and donations you have sent over during the past year and the many books and pencils you have given the children. They loved the pencils from the summer fair with your names on, boys, and they excitedly tried to pronounce your names in English - 'Jonethen' and 'toemiss' and 'jemmee!' Thank you, boys, what a brilliant idea and what a success it was!

We were also delighted to receive three very special visits from Yardley Court families both past and present - the Pinhorn family brought with them oodles of enthusiasm, warmth and generosity; Jo Leroni and Daniel brought suitcases full of goods, all beautifully packed and labeled in true Leroni-style and all donated by Yardley Court boys and their families and Juliet Dammers, who came laden with books and teacher aids, worked tirelessly helping with testing and assessment. We are hoping to see more of you next year?! There may even be some 'real' building to do.

A final word of thanks must go to the boys of The Kusasa Project club, who have kept up our morale and done fun things for the kids over here and exchanged letters and photos

and to Mally and Tineke – unsung heroes in the background – thank you all – you are all truly amazing – what WOULD we do without your generosity and your enthusiasm for this project and that wonderful Yardley Court moral support!

Happy Christmas to you all – you are always in my thoughts and prayers and know that I miss you all greatly.

Mama Jacquie (Madame)