

Fall 2013



Swazi Kids
Newsletter



A special fall newsletter update to report on Pam's recent trip to Swaziland that included a celebration of recent Swazi Kids graduates and Pam and Joseph's trip to Johannesburg to explore new funding opportunities.

Celebrations and a New Opportunity

Swazi Kids initiatives are growing fast enough to warrant a fall newsletter update. Although Swazi Kids is involved in many areas of community development in Swaziland (construction of community centers, playground infrastructure, health care delivery, micro lending, water infrastructure, etc.) the mainstay of our program remains funding for students. New possibilities have recently appeared for our students, specifically a major global scholarship program funded by MasterCard to the tune of half a billion dollars. In this fall supplement, we provide updates on our recent graduates and on this new scholarship opportunity.





Celebrations

This year, we celebrated the graduation of four of our post-secondary bright lights. We decided that this warranted a special party, an occasion to bring all of our grads, post secondary students and some of their family members together. It was a crashing success with about 40 people in attendance. We had it catered by the Mandela's restaurant and held in their lovely gardens on a perfect day. Our graduates were:

Phindile Matsebula: who is now a registered nurse. Phindy has been with Swazi Kids for 13 years of education. She has been faithful in her commitment to her schooling and a model student and young woman. She has qualified for a government scholarship for her 4th year in midwifery. We are extremely proud of Phindy.

Sifiso Mamba: has completed a 3 year electrical engineering program. He is currently interning with a large company in SZ and his future holds promise. He is also a very committed man to both his future and to his family. He is the eldest male of 8 siblings. Culturally this places him as the head of his household, as his father has passed away.

Thembi Mabaso: is now a teacher and begins her employment very soon. Thembi has successfully battled some health issue, loves children and cannot wait to begin her career. She too has stayed true to her path.

Lungile (Mumcy) Dlamini: is a bright, bubbly, creative and motivated young woman. Her schooling was in book keeping office administration and information technology courses. She obtained a drivers license and somehow landed a job at a teaching assistant in the rural areas. She now plans to continue on a part time basis to become an accredited teacher.

We are very proud of this graduating class. Each grad also was given the opportunity to speak to the gathered crowd and their comments and gratitude were most touching!



Zethu Shabangu (left), grade 12, Nolwazi Masina (above) grade 11, Thabo Shanbangu, (below) grade 10.





THE MASTERCARD FOUNDATION Scholars Program

Funded privately by the credit card giant, this program is a 10-year, \$500 million effort to provide education and leadership opportunities to young people to make, “a positive social impact in their communities.” The program, focuses on Africa and expects to provide complete scholarships, including fees, travel, living expenses, transition assistance, etc. for 15,000 students to attend school, including universities in Africa and Canada.

Learn more by visiting www.mastercardfdn.org

The Opportunity – by Pam Carlson

About 6 months ago, Swazi Kids sponsor David Burt tipped me to the existence of a new and enormous education foundation for youth in sub-Saharan Africa. David is a University of Toronto alumnus and heard of this through the university. The MasterCard Scholars Foundation is a ten-year project with incredible ambitions to educate 15,000 youth from all countries in Sub Saharan Africa and return them to the continent as leaders, movers, shakers and business people. The total budget for this endeavour is \$500,000,000. That is not a typo!

The schooling is done largely in North America with such partners as: UBC, Toronto, McGill, Stanford, Michigan State, Wellesley College, Arizona State, UC Berkeley, Earth U in Costa Rica, as well as a prestigious university in Ghana. And more university partners on the continent are being prepped to receive students over the next few years.

They are also partnered with one exceptional high school in Johannesburg,

South Africa, called African Leadership Academy. This school is for highly motivated, highly intelligent youth, most from challenged and disadvantaged backgrounds. Schooling here offers a two-year program providing International Baccalaureate and promising access to the MC Scholars program as well as a multitude of other scholarship opportunities, throughout the world.

To my shock and amazement, by simply sending a brief paragraph and a link to our website to the person in “contact us,” I was referred over to the scholarship admissions program at UBC. A fruitful meeting was had there with two of their admissions team, in July. Much more to learn...

I then managed a meeting with Anissatou Diakhate (originally from Senegal) who sits very near the top of the entire MasterCard Scholars Foundation chain, in the main offices in Toronto. I was back at the cottage and drove down to meet with her for an hour. Also learned a ton.

Hearing about an upcoming conference of all the partners and affiliates in this project, (still in its formative stages in some ways.) I



worked hard to gain a seat at the table. The perseverance paid off.

I have just returned to Swaziland from these meetings in Johannesburg. Joseph Aryee attended on our behalf at the first day, covering all aspects of the African Leadership Academy. We both attended the 2nd and 3rd days, all about the MasterCard Scholars Foundation.

Although, intimidated at the outset, feeling as though I had maybe pushed my way onto a bigger playing field that we were entitled to, I was pleasantly surprised. There were other NGO's like ours, working with relatively small numbers of promising students. With about 85 in attendance, there were reps from smaller organizations and heads of schools from: Zambia, Zimbabwe, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Ivory Coast, South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya, Botswana, Namibia, Burkino Faso, Cameroon, Mozambique, Malawi, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda. It was a broad and deep crowd. There were educators, administrators, large NGO's, small NGO's and PhDs. All universities had at least one admissions rep in attendance.

Many topics, challenges, issues were raised. Small groups were created for problem solving and some strong suggestions for best recruiting practices and best preparation methods for maximum benefit to the student were gathered, collated and digested. It was rich!

As is most often the case, the best learning at these think tanks is in the individual conversations and contacts made in the breaks and over a meal. Every single person that I met had warmth and a heart for these incredible young people with brains and ambition but no ability to escape the geography and circumstances of their birth.

Joe and I felt very much part of a larger family working hard towards change. I really pray that if such a meeting is held again, that we might be included on the invite list.

In the meantime, we have lofty ambitions to fulfill. We now must hire a part time admissions advocate for our most promising students. The application process to each and every one of these higher learning institutions is unique. Their requirements for levels of study, grades within that level, application costs and English requirements all vary. These kids would never be able to access these schools nor attempt this process without an advocate at their side each and every step of the way. The paper trail alone to even put in an application would take 3-6 months, (personal ID, past transcripts, letters of recommendation, personal essay.)

Then of course, should the student make it anywhere, that advocacy doesn't end. They would need incredible support preparing them for the transition to an entirely new country, culture, university life, homesickness, travel issues, visas, passports. The list is exhausting to even type.

However, as daunting as that seems, we now are armed with new resources that already exist (such as Education USA,) a small stack of business cards and email contacts lists from all of these NGO's, high-schools, universities and colleges, and it would appear that Swazi Kids is now to be part of a larger fraternity all out to help get these some of the highest levels of education in the world. It is very exciting.

My other take-away from all of this: our kids have as good a crack at these scholarships as any. Here we go.....



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WORTH program explodes into new territory:

In 2012, Swazi Kids began and ran a village banking project, called WORTH. It educated 300 women already working within the Gone Rural model. In 2013, Gone Rural approached us for additional seed capital of \$25,000, in order to place a very ambitious proposal into the European Union. With the aid of ONE Swazi Kids sponsor, we were able to say yes to this \$25,000 request. Amazingly, they won the contract and now the project (in partnership with Save the Children) is expanding to impact 5,000 Swazi women.

Our ongoing efforts to improve the lives of children in Swaziland require significant funds. We thank all of you who so generously donate to our projects. Donations to specific projects are welcomed:

- Community Center #3
- Elementary Student (\$200/year)
- High School Student (\$500/year)
- School Uniform (\$75)
- Medical/dental care for orphans

Send a cheque payable to Swazi Kids or visit www.swazikids.org to donate online.

swazikids@shaw.ca

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PS. Pam's new address is indeed "Swaizland Road" (Close but not quite Swaziland).