



## Swazi Kids Newsletter 2014

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**Gone Rural boMake's Shelly Belorhad (below). Swazi Kids works in partnership with Gone Rural to build community centers. See Page 5 for info on the proposed build trip in 2014.**



## An Expanding Purpose

The original purpose of Swazi Kids was sponsoring students to cover their basic costs to allow them to get an education. As you'll see in the report on Page 3, this remains a central pillar of our work and fundraising. We commit to sponsoring a student through their entire education and those elementary students who we supported starting in 2002 have, much to our delight, now graduated high school and in some cases gone on to post secondary education. In this newsletter you'll read about our expanding efforts to assist these young adults to find careers, which in some cases will lead them to universities in North America. More students could be sponsored than we have the ability to support, but thanks to your continued support, the number of sponsored students grows each year.

The African proverb that *it takes a village to raise a child* reminds us, however, that if we are going to help children we also need to help villages. Since 2006 we've been building wells and housing, since 2010 we've built four playground jungle gyms, and since 2011 two community centers. Originally planned as a production facility for the weavers of Gone Rural, the community centers have become, well, centers of their communities: venues for health care delivery, socializing and collective work. These centers are built in partnership with Gone Rural boMake, and construction project number 3 is planned for 2014. We have also leveraged our own funds through other international aid programs to provide village banking to over 5000 Swazi women. We are making a difference in peoples' lives. Thank you for your ongoing support!

## INNOCENT NKAMBULE

Innocent Nkambule has been with Swazi Kids since he was about 11 years old. He is now 23. Both of his parents have been gone since he was a very small boy. With our sponsorship, in 2003, he was removed from a life relegated to herding his uncle's livestock while watching his cousins go off to school. He re-entered in grade 3 at the age of 12. He is the

smartest student  
EVER from within  
our program. In  
fact, in grade 10, for  
his Junior  
Cambridge  
Certificate, he was  
ranked top 5 in the  
country.

Additionally, he  
finished top 5% of  
the country in his  
grade 12 finals.

And he did this  
after being banished from his uncle's homestead to  
an old animal shed, where he lived alone his last 2  
years of high school. This young man is incredible.  
Some of you may note on your "ask" that I would  
like to direct your annual giving in towards helping  
Innocent. Bruce and I have decided to bring him to  
Canada, to our home, as his living conditions have  
become completely untenable in Swaziland and we  
feel he is too precious a talent to waste. Please  
consider Innocent in your giving also.



## Jobs

So now that our kids are making it all the way through high school and then some of the brightest and lucky ones get through their post secondary postings, we are now beginning to see real jobs! This is not a given in a country such as Swaziland. An education doesn't guarantee much in terms of employment.

In particular, I'd like to feature *Sifiso Mamba*. He has come from a long way back. His story and life have had tough and tortuous turns, but he is a survivor. He has completed 3 years in electrical engineering at Swaziland College of Technology. He landed an internship and this has resulted in full time employment. Hats off to Sifiso! He is now no longer dependent upon Swazi Kids for support, and is on his own. He still connects with our groups and is always around for any of our older student gatherings. He is a great young man and we are proud of these accomplishments!

Also of note, *Phindile* has completed her 3 year nursing degree and is now taking a 4<sup>th</sup> as a scholarship student and is delivering babies as a midwife. She receives a partial salary. *Thembi* is a teacher and gainfully employed as well.

## Matanja Elementary School Meal Program

For the 6<sup>th</sup> year running, with the help of David and Lise Ash, of Langley, BC, we are providing one or two meals each day to about 150 children at Matjana Elementary School. Most of these kids would come to school on an empty stomach and in some cases would receive just one meal at home daily. Since the beginning of the meal program, our head of school, Elizabeth Nkabinde, has noticed a spike in growth and higher over all achievement by her students. Thank you kindly, David and Lise!

*Photo at right: Matanja students carry water for their school and its gardens.*



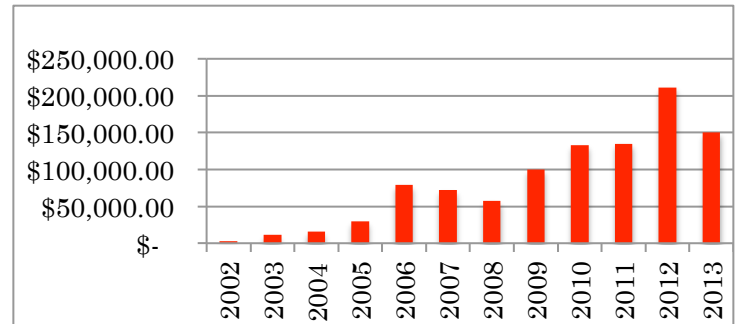
## Student Support Program

One of Swazi Kids' core purposes remains the support of students who would not otherwise be able to attend school. Although tuition for elementary school is state funded in Swaziland, students cannot attend if they do not have resources for uniforms, books, and supplies. These costs are not insignificant, reaching \$200 per year for elementary students and \$500 for secondary students. The World Bank reports that average annual income in Swaziland is less than \$3000, and more than 60% of the population lives below this level.

Since the founding of this program, the funds dedicated and the number of students supported has increased each year. Once we begin funding a student, we commit to maintaining that funding through to graduation. Over the years, the composition of students has tracked their progression through school, graduation and in some cases on to post-secondary education (chart below).



*Mbale Dlamini receives a backpack of school supplies.*



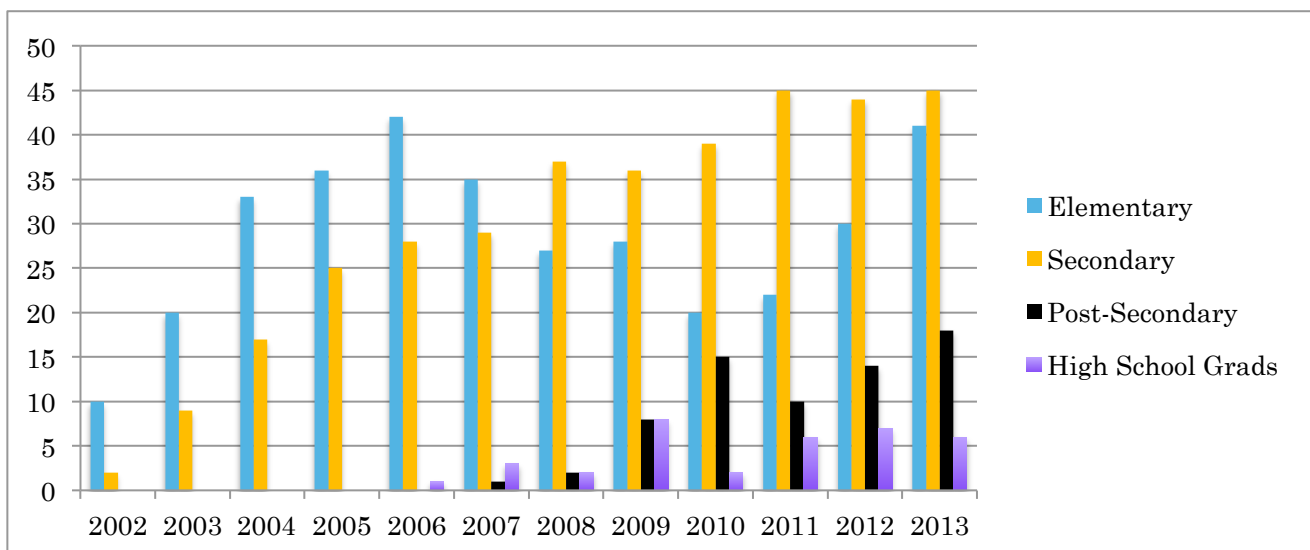
Total Funding for Swazi Kids 2002-2013.

In 2013, we had 20 elementary students, 32 secondary school students and 18 post secondary students. We also graduated 8 students from high school, 4 girls and 4 boys.

As of 2014, we have graduated 4 post secondary students, we are now working with 14 young adults in universities, college courses and trade schools. Included in this group are:

- a 4<sup>th</sup> year midwifery student,
- a 4<sup>th</sup> yr B. Comm student,
- a 2<sup>nd</sup> year civil engineering student,
- a 1<sup>st</sup> year nursing student,
- 2 students in accounting,
- 1 in 2<sup>nd</sup> year tourism,
- 1 in office administration, and
- 4 in a 2 year electrician trade school.

At the elementary and secondary level, in 2014 we will continue with 45-50 kids who are all doing very well. They all attend at rural schools; Matjana Elementary, Kaphunga, Kalamdladla and Lavundlamanti Secondary Schools.





## Admissions Advocacy

With the help of donors Keith and Sally Hamilton, we have been able to hire a part time advocate in Swaziland to support our older kids in their bids for scholarships and overseas educations. Cynthia Aryee is already an invaluable part of the team, as she gathers documents, orders transcripts, has medicals performed, consults and sensitizes family members and the students themselves about the potential journey ahead. Since learning about the Mastercard Scholars Foundation in June 2013 and attending the summit meetings in Johannesburg in Oct. 2013, we are now working feverishly to gain access to this \$500M of scholarship funding for our brightest kids.

It has been revealed that Swazi's schooling system, although based out of Cambridge England, does not elevate its' students quite high enough to apply directly into any of the Canadian universities within the MCSF program. They could apply straight into some of the US colleges, but it is our strong feeling that these young, children really, from such remote and rural settings,

would be far better served with a transitional experience before immersing them at, say Duke or U. of C. Berkeley. Holy culture shock! Our work on advocating for university scholarships so far:

**Zethu Shabangu** has been offered a 2 year partial scholarship at *Brentwood College*, Mill Bay, BC. Brentwood is an esteemed and highly regarded boarding high school on Vancouver Island. We are beyond thrilled with this offer from the headmaster and staff to work with one of our students from the most rural of settings. If she really succeeds, then it is our hope that she can apply and gain access to the MCSF funding. Thanks go out hugely to: Bud and Wendy Patel for supporting our projects and to Clayton Johnston for putting it into action. Now the fundraising on behalf of Zethu begins!

**Innocent Nkambule** is coming to BC, to attend at the Kelowna campus of *Okanagan College* in the sciences. If he produces grades like he did in high-school, then pray that he can gain access to MCSF also. He will be living with the Carlsons.

**Simiphe** and **Nomvuyselelo**, two very smart young women have been put forward to *African Leadership Academy* in Johannesburg. ALA is

another amazing learning opportunity. It is an international school with funding from the US. They take a percentage of kids from rough and impoverished backgrounds from other African nations on full or nearly full scholarships. It is these spots that we seek for our girls. From ALA, it is then also possible they could become MCFS students aboard.

Lastly, we are having 2 younger students sit exams to attend at *Waterford College* in SD for admission Sept '15. Waterford is a member of the *United World Colleges*, it is an amazing asset right within Swaziland. If we are successful and get one or two into their International Baccalaureate programs, then, once again, scholarships for university could be attained. It IS ambitious, but if we don't try, we will never succeed.



*Queenith, stellar Grade 8 student and future scholarship applicant.*



*Nhlanhla Dlamini, civil engineering scholarship student.*



*Cousins Thabo and Zethu Shabangu. Zethu is coming to school at Brentwood Bay, BC in September 2014 and Thabo has been identified as a future scholarship applicant.*

## BUILD PROJECT IN 2014

Scheduled for October 2014, we are working on a crew of Canadians to come and help us build community center #3 for the women of Gone Rural. In October 2013, Karin Burgess, Wendy and Antara Patel, Thula and I, visited the site for this next structure. It is the prettiest location yet, (see photo below) We had an official ground breaking ceremony and food prepared in our honour. I am looking forward in anticipation about this site, as I can really feel the community involvement, commitment and excitement actually increase with each build that we do. Our



ground crew learn from each past experience, how to improve next time.

After build #1, it was realized that more community buy-in, planning and involvement from the earliest stages was required.

From build #2, we learned that we need to upgrade some of the structural materials and to provide increased security to the builds in the form of burglar bars and heavy-duty doors. I am sure build #3 will also offer new insights. I would like to openly thank my dear friend, Shelley Belorhad of Gone Rural boMake, for her amazing support, incredibly conscientious work, her attention to detail and her ever-cheerful disposition when working with our Canadian-donor-partner-groups. If interested in being a part of this Oct 2014 build, please contact Pam Carlson for more details.



*Pam, Thula, and "Tall Gogo" of Gone Rural (above, left); Antara Patel plays with kids on the new playground structure (above, right).*

## A NEW CAR FOR JOSEPH



As many of you know, I could no longer run Swazi Kids without the devoted work of Joe and Cynthia Aryee. Joe works for us more than part time and our kids have become "his kids." Cynthia is our student advocate, as described above. They have 3 gorgeous boys of their own, Joe teaches school full time and he is also working on a Masters in Public Health, through a university in the US, online. Need I add, that their lives are insanely full! As part of their work for us, they drive kids around. They go to: interviews, doctors appointments, HIV clinics, print shops, to passport offices, to South Africa for exams, immigration medicals, out to the villages to meet with parent and educators. The list goes on..... Their car died! It is gone. They desperately need a new one. We are trying to raise an extra \$2,000 to buy them something suitable for all of these needs. You will find in the "ask" section of this letter that we are asking for an extra \$25 from our regular donors to help us with this. Please consider this request, thank you!

## WORTH

Our opening year 2012-13 for the worth program of "village banking" and micro-finance (a program created by PACT, a large US based NGO) was *very* successful. As mentioned in our fall 2013 newsletter, on the basis of strong early indicators, Gone Rural along with a chapter of Save the Children, applied for and was granted a \$225,000 USD grant from a blended fund out of the European Union. With \$25,000 seed capital as provided by Swazi Kids' largest benefactor, in 2014, this huge implementation is now rolling out to 5,000 Swazi women!!! We at Swazi Kids (although we did not write this proposal), take great pride in this success. Without that initial support from Swazi Kids and the \$25k additional grant money from our sponsor, this project would have been unattainable for the women of GR. Good on us and thank you to our huge sponsor!



## Featured Sponsors

This year I'd like to make a note to publicly thank two members of the same family. Karin Burgess has now travelled with me to Swazi about seven times. She is my long-suffering friend, assistant, confidante, helper with the students, with Thula and of course, an amazing photographer. If you see photos here that stand out, most likely, she took them. I also wish to put in print, Karin's amazing daughter, Emma (see photo, right). While still in high school, Emma created the Swazi Kids website. She continues to update, maintain and improve our website and blog and is now a member of the Swazi Kids Board of Directors. We owe a great deal to Emma for this!



*Karen, Emma, and Linnea Burgess in Swaziland*

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*Mangaliso, with a letter from his school sponsor.*

## Reach Out

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)
- School Shoes (\$35)
- Playground Structure (\$5,000)
- Community Centre (\$15,000)

Send a cheque payable to Swazi Kids or visit [www.swazikids.org](http://www.swazikids.org) to donate online.

***swazikids@shaw.ca***

**Swazi Kids Society  
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