



Dear Sponsors, Old and New,

Thank you for your ongoing interest and involvement in all of our programs. You will read below that existing work continues to groove along, while new ideas are also in bloom. We have hired on our part time employee, Joseph Aryee, on a full time basis and I would like to thank the employees of Leith Wheeler who raised all the needed funds for Joe's employment wages and package. Joe is thrilled, working hard and you will see pictures of him and his reports within.

I am writing to you from eSwatini (Swaziland changed its name last year.) My time here this year will be 4 months and as such, Joe and I are out in the rural areas often and in touch with all of our 125 students. After 20 years of doing this, I can say to you with pride and assurance that our work goes to extremely needy places and that our kids who make it through the education process are, for the most part, thriving. Many have graduated, most have jobs, some are married now and a few even own cars. The country of eSwatini is seeing a bit of a rebirth. It is a comfortable, beautiful and safe place to be and I feel the influx of people from other areas to live and work here. So construction is underway and jobs in the cities are available, if the kids get the education and extensive coaching that is needed to present themselves. These are just a few of the aspects that we cater to within Swazi Kids project work.

While the urban areas are upgrading, however, there is little to no change in the countryside. Fully 70% of this country lives rurally, where subsistence farming, a few farm animals, handicrafts and food aid are the only games in town. Seventy percent of the country remains below the international poverty line and the HIV rate remains one of the highest in the world. So, although successes are coming, the need remains high, so I appreciate you remaining on board with us in this journey.

Regards,

Pam C.





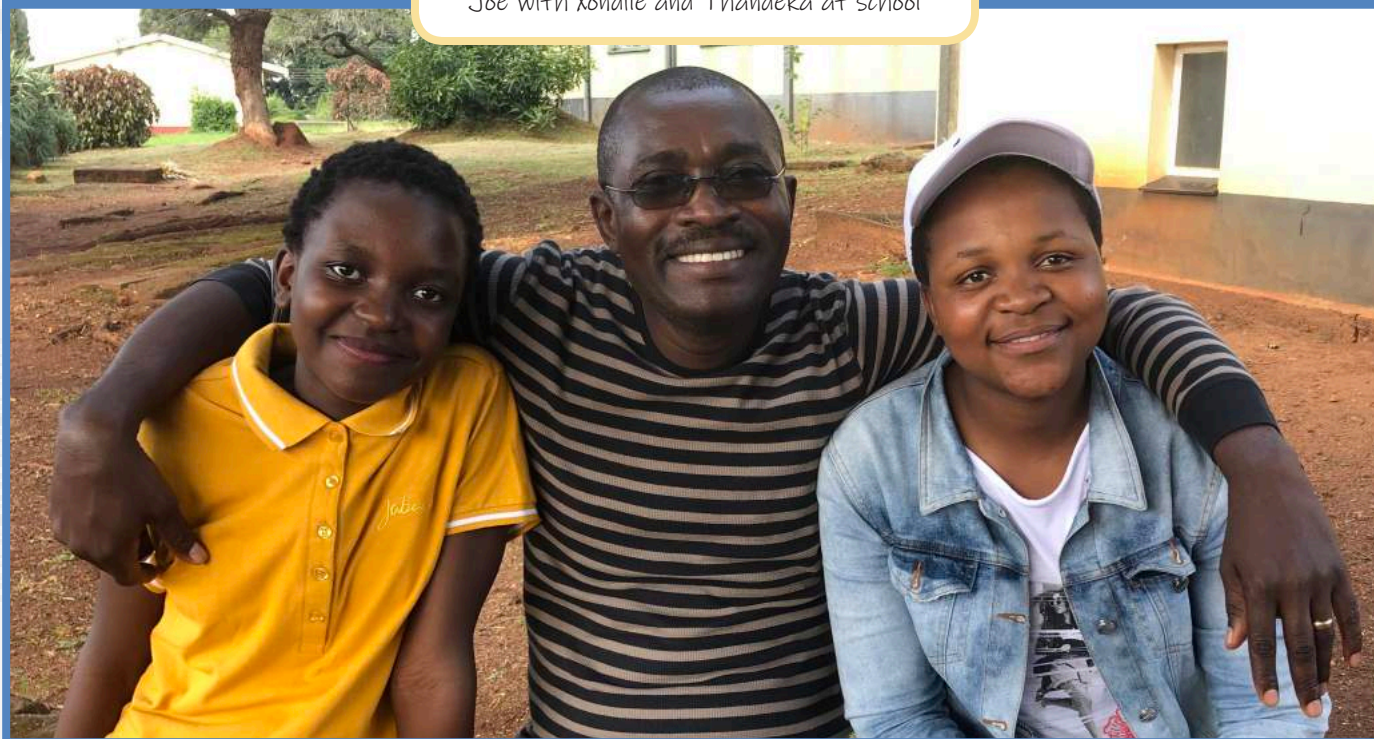
## Young Ones Mentorship program, by Joe Aryee.

With the hiring of our part time employee, Joseph Aryee, into a full-time position, we are now able to actively scale up our mentorship programme to improve outcomes for our children in the rural areas. This is to ensure the provision of some level psychosocial support, which currently does not exist at all in the schools. We aim to provide life and survival skills through counselling, play therapy, journaling, art therapy and learning workshops. Most of our children come from: homes with one or no parent, a senior person who is incapable, a complete lack of any finances, physical, emotional or even sexual abuse, some level of alcoholism, a child led household with no senior person at all, real rejection, loneliness and broken family structures. Our goal is to help support these children to overcome the many challenges faced with in this part of the world. We aim to make gains to improve their lives, those of their families and their entire communities. We are also developing a programme to involve our older students, who have graduated within Swazi Kids, to serve as mentors and role models to motivate, instruct and keep focused the younger students in the program.



Joe and our Emnotfweni young ones

Joe with Xondile and Thandeka at school







Gogo's current bedroom



Two of our oldies

## Help for Gogos in 2020, by Pam Carlson

A Gogo is a grandmother or senior female. In many regions, these women have lost most or all of their children to the AIDS crisis. They are living alone, in many cases. Seen in this picture is one such woman. She does not know her age, but estimates are in the mid 90's. They live in the worst conditions that I have ever seen in eSwatini. With physical labour provided by students of Brentwood College in 2020, it is our plan to provide some basic housing for a few old these old gals, who have put in a really long and hard shift.

She is in her 90's





## Elementary and Secondary Students updates, by Joe Aryee.

Currently Swazi Kids is supporting 63 students at the primary school level, 30 at secondary schools and 25 at post-secondary. This is a huge increase in the total number of kids on our educational programme from 55 students in 2018 to 118 students in 2019.

The increase in numbers has been among others as a result of the following:

1. There has been an increase in the number of children attending primary school because of government's free primary education program and there is a need to support these students with uniforms, stationery and food supplies. The Swazi government's funding is limited to payment of a basic amount for tuition only, which is not adequate for the running of the schools.
2. There is also an increase in the number of high school students who cannot afford to pay for secondary school fees because they have been beneficiaries of government's free primary education but have no funding for secondary education
3. Our efforts to scout for qualified, needy, and academically capable students had increased and netted us some new candidates. We are particularly excited about this small branch of our work, as it could result in more international scholarships.

Our students are, for the most part, doing well in schools and the provision of even a new school uniform provides a sense of being cared for and supported. In many cases, this may be their first real glimpse at hope for their futures. Some do not fair well, we can not win them all, but even for these we continue and offer other support mechanisms when we can, such as a change of living situation or one-on-one counselling.

I'd like to point out the resiliency of these women in this country to you. Note in the photo below the woman in the red dress. Five years ago, she was in a car accident, leaving only her alive, she lost both of her arms, as you will note if you look closely. Yet this woman never misses a meeting or a chance to support her last born child, of five. He has the big smile in the black sweater.



Little one in our program

Secondary kids and mothers

Crowded classrooms, often over 40







Mxolisi receives his laptop • Tertiary success stories



## Tertiary Students Updates, by Joe Aryee

At the post-secondary level, we have a total of 25 students being assisted in universities, colleges and training programs. This year six students are graduating with diplomas in: teaching, auto mechanics, business information technology and agriculture. Although government's scholarship awards have improved, as compared to a couple of years ago, the need for support at the tertiary level is still very high. Students who are granted scholarships are usually awarded only for tuition fees while accommodation, food, textbooks, stationery and laptops are not catered for by the government. We also support all our tertiary students, including those on full scholarship, with a monthly stipend for food, toiletries, daily travel, internet, cellular cost and travel home to visit families.





## Zethu Shabangu, by Joe Aryee

Zethu continues to make amazing strides in her academic pursuits. She is currently in her 3rd year of a Business Administration Degree at Ashesi University in Ghana on a full ride scholarship through the Master Card Scholarship Programme. She has applied for placement for her second internship this summer with some international accounting/auditing firms operating in Swaziland. Interestingly, she has started thinking of a Masters Degree programme in Human Resource Development and Economic Development after her bachelor degree.

Mrs Mamba show us her sanitary pads for her girls, made in school



Mrs Mamba even makes an outhouse pretty with flowers and bottled water to wash hands



## eDlangeni Community Centre #2, by Pam Carlson

Built just last year, with the help of Canadian volunteers, I am already amazed at the functionality of this building. This is a highly motivated group of women! Always on the lookout for more income schemes, in addition to their weaving, the mentors of boMake are also training these women into the production of re-usable feminine hygiene products and fencing. Also, part of the complex, the preschool is now full of adorable kids, chairs, some learning material and a teacher. We have eight more of these structures to build in order to complete with the women. I remain extremely pleased with these centres and the impact on their entire communities.

Women teaching women

Woman proud of her work

Preschools at Edlangeni



## Emnotfweni High School Construction, by Pam Carlson

Beginning with the first block of classrooms in 2015, with funding from Swazi Kids, we started our first high school. This school is in the most impoverished area of eSwatini that we have ever worked. In 2016 a second such structure was erected and a school was born. At the end of 2019 our first class of graduates will write their leaving exams from this school.

Bringing real hope to a horribly dry and destitute area that had no schools just a few years ago, this school with the addition of teachers and a sense of forward growth, has brought about some revitalization with a few small shops springing up and even some adults returning back to their homesteads. Before this school, children either did not go to school or they bussed a very long distance, a cost nearly all of these families could not bear.



Science block footings



Science block nears completion

## Consumers Sciences at Emnotfweni

In 2018, we constructed a massive structure for home economics and cooking classes. Brentwood College came with 20 students and three teachers to aid in the raising of the cement blocks. Great work was done. Unfortunately the completion phase has stalled for now. The government in eSwatini had a program called Micro Projects that was to finish the structure with roofing, gutters and electrical wiring. This program through an austerity effort, has ground to a halt. We are trying to be patient with the government in this regard, however if no head-way is seen by the end of 2019, we may need to find the funds to complete it within Swazi Kids budget, in order to get the building into use at the school.

## Science Block at Emnotfweni

Not ones to sit around, however, in 2019, we continued our efforts to finish Emnotfweni High School by building a tidy smaller building. This structure is for sciences and for exam writing. It nears completion and is in use by students, at the time of writing. Funding for this structure came from new sponsors, Mr. Bob Lunde and Barrick Gold. Many thanks to Bob Lunde, Kevin Thompson and Peter Sinclair for their faith in our program.





## Vocational Training

In 2019, we are entering into another area of employment training. Tsandza Weavery is offering to train four artisans for us. These women are guaranteed employment and a living wage upon completion of their 9 month training and mentoring program. Several Swazi Kids sponsors have contributed to this initiative. Thank you for this.





## National Care Point Centre

We are considering moving into helping very young children who have, for the most part, lost parents and are housed but not really cared for, by relatives or neighbours. These small kids currently attend at a free preschool on the edge of Manzini. They walk alone to school along the dusty roads with cars zooming past, as school is so much better than whatever is at "home." They are cared for and fed at the centre. Although life sustaining, the food looks and tastes horrible. The women working there, whose hearts are in the right place, barely make a living wage (\$120/month for example) yet trundle on helping as they can with very few resources. If Swazi Kids steps in, we would begin with food, improving on the existing gruel, then creating a garden, sourcing vegetables and greens from local markets. We would also bring in a small team of health care providers to attend to various issues facing these small children, as no one at home could or would offer such attention. Then if funds permit, we would improve on their cooking space and provide much better toys, games and learning materials. We are in the preliminary stages of finding funding for this project.



Urban kids preschool

Kids line up for gruel

Pam working on the head of a child with autism





# Reach Out!

Our ongoing efforts to improve the lives of children in Swaziland require significant funds. If you wish to make a contribution make sure to fill out our **Ways To Help Swazi Kids 2019** form.



**Any more questions, just ask!**

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