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**September 2006**

Hello again to all our friends

How quickly this term seems to have flown by. Nothing like having fun, is there?

This term started with Colleen Roden very cautiously trying the waters of Early Childhood Education, but she very quickly settled into the swing of things and had no hesitation in committing herself to the permanent staff after her trial period. So, we welcomed her with wide-open arms onto the staff as the teacher's assistant to Thobeka. Gail Mc Gee joined the staff as a permanent volunteer worker and joined Mirriam in her class as the teacher's assistant. Gail has extensive experience in ECD, having been involved in similar schools in Gauteng. This freed Liz up to work permanently in the kitchen with our daily volunteer chefs. And the last bit of staff news is that we celebrated Vasia's first anniversary since joining our staff as a volunteer admin worker. What a little miracle we have seen in her life. Just a year ago, she came to us using a walking frame and being unwilling to go anywhere without the support of someone's arm. Right now, Vasia no longer has a walking frame and looks at us askew if we offer the support of an arm. We are all waiting for the day when she runs across the schoolyard to get to the office in a hurry!!!!!!

We had a very sad and bad week this term, when one of our bridging class children was kidnapped for the day, by his replacement taxi driver (the regular driver was ill), and the man attempted to rape the child. He bought a chocolate for the child so that he would not tell his parents. The chocolate, however, was not enough to keep the silence with his friends and the friends duly reported it to the mother. This brought home to me again, just how vulnerable our children are, and how untrustworthy our transport systems are. I so desperately want a bus for our school, so that we can transport our children ourselves, but our funding, I'm afraid, just is nowhere near to accommodating this wish. Any really generous benefactors out there who would like to bless our school with a bus.....I cannot wait to thank you for your generosity!!! The next best thing we have put into place is to insist that we be given all the details of the vehicles, the drivers and the owners of the vehicles to give us something to fall back on if anything like this should happen again!!

We have also started an aftercare service for the parents who cannot fetch their children early, thanks to the services of Gail. This group of children is still small, but the parents have expressed such gratitude for her kindness, that her sacrifice is bringing great blessing to her life. Her compassionate heart has been an inspiration to us all.

The programme at school has continued steadily along its way. We have covered many of the pre-writing skills and numeracy skills this term. The children are all very busy and they are steadily progressing towards the end of the year, when 20 will be leaving us for the big, wide world of formal schooling.

We have had more new children join us this term. One or two have left, and our numbers now stand at 50. Our numbers for 2007, at present are standing at 42. So, it would seem that our task is never ending and that we are looking at growth, yet again. Therefore, we will be seeking more sponsors next year – if you know of anyone who would be willing to give just R50 a month towards the education of an underprivileged child, please encourage them to come on board and to bring enormous blessing into the life of a child. For more information, please visit our website.

The staff has once again attended several professional development workshops, and come away enriched from them all. We attended workshops on: The Impact of ADHD on Learning and Teaching, Dealing with Diversity in the Classroom, An Alternative View to Discipline, and Training in Evangelism.

Two other schools in the city that have similar visions to ours, i.e. educating the under-privileged children of our communities, have joined forces with me in networking and sharing ideas. We will be meeting regularly in future as a “support” structure to each other. It has been wonderful to have them recognise us as part of a team and to have received wonderful words of affirmation from them regarding our school. The following was written in a letter to us following our first meeting with each other: *“....the visit has inspired me to look at our systems and at the general running of the school to see how we can improve.....I was truly impressed by the admin of your school.....I am envious of your bright spacious classrooms (we have our school in a warehouse) – Well done! You must be very proud of The Udobo School.”* I am looking forward to a long and happy relationship with these partners in reaching the less fortunate children of our city.

Fundraising has been relatively quiet this term, with only two Scrabble Days in our pocket. But, the holiday ahead is promising, what with our very exciting Diamond Rush on 28 September looming in upon us. We are looking so forward to this event and are praying that it will be a roaring success. We still have tickets available, so please feel free to contact me if you want to attend this function. We also have a golf day coming up in October – so please feel free to hop on board with that one too.

I would again like to thank everyone who has come on board as a sponsor to a child, as well as all those who have made phenomenally generous donations to our school and our fundraising drives. I would like to make special mention of the Norton Methodist Church, Letchworth Garden City in the UK and to thank them for their faithful support of our project throughout this year. We have regular contact with them, and they serve to continually encourage and inspire us with their words as well as their generous financial support.

Finally, our Year-End Function will be Saturday 18 November. So please keep that date open. We will forward details at a later stage. We would once again like to send the children to school with their first pair of school shoes, so if anyone would like to make a donation towards this special gift for the children, please forward it to us with the designation – Udobo School Shoes.

And that closes our doors for the third quarter of 2006.

Always Fishing  
Kathy