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June 2005

Dear friends of Udobo

Term 2 has come and gone at an alarming rate. It is hard to believe that we have already completed our first set of reports for the year, and that our parents are now looking at applying for openings in Grade 1 for their children for the year 2006. The children have been progressing through the programme steadily – some with greater success than others, but then that is par for the course with all schools. It is certainly an immense responsibility to try to get these children to a level of holistic maturity that would have them “ready” for the step up to formal schooling in just one year. Nevertheless, I console myself with the fact that they are certainly far more “ready” than they would have been had they not had the year with us. We also still have 6 months to go, which gives us time yet!!!

Much water has passed under our bridge this term, so please forgive me if I end up rambling on too long for your liking. Firstly, the Annual District Meeting of the KZN Coastal Methodist Women’s Auxilliary have adopted our school project, along with another project further down the coast to be the recipients of their fund raising efforts for the coming year. We are truly most grateful to them for their kindness and generosity. Some of the individual WA’s have also adopted children for sponsorship for the year, and others have sent practical help in the form of equipment that is much needed for the running of our programme, as well as clothing items for the children. Thank you to everyone involved in these efforts. Your acts of compassion are what our project depends upon in order to stay “alive”.

We celebrated our first birthday (19 April) on Sunday, 9 May 2005, at a service especially dedicated to the school by the Montclair Methodist Church. It was most successful and the children did everything they needed in order to win the hearts of those present. I do wish that they would be as charming and delightful on a daily basis at school. They truly did us proud and the day seemed to have been enjoyed by all. Some of the parents were asked to give testimony as to what the school had done for their children, and that, indeed, was a most humbling experience. We, as teachers, sometimes forget the impact we have, not only on the children in our care, but also through the ripple effect of our actions and words that are carried home with the children. May this school continue to touch the homes of the under-privileged in a positive and Godly manner for many years to come. Also present at the time, were two wonderful ladies from Los Angeles, USA, who brought with them gifts for the school from the Glenkirk Presbyterian Church in LA, and the possibility of support for this project from the above-mentioned church. We want to thank Shelley and Barbara for the time they spent with us and for the encouragement they passed on to us in our efforts to serve our community.

Sadly, the chairman of our Governing Body, Mr. Charles Rae, was unexpectedly transferred to Cape Town, which meant that his wife, Dawn (our secretary), had to leave us too. We are in the process of finding a new Chairman, but our new secretary will be Mrs. Mabel Pretorius. We thank her for being willing to step into the gap for us. Charles was also the chairman of our fundraising team, so I have stepped into that gap until a replacement can be found. Not to end

The Udobo School is funded through the Udobo ED-U Foundation, a Charitable Trust established for this purpose.

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there, the secretary of the fundraising team has had to resign her position due to health problems, and since this was a very recent development, we have as yet, not appointed a new secretary. I am at peace about these hic-cups, since I have seen too many miracles in this school to allow these stumbling blocks to discourage me.

There are several organisations that need to be thanked for their contributions to our school. Kenmont School from the Bluff (in Durban) sent an enormous box of unclaimed clothing for distribution amongst our families. These clothes were accepted with much appreciation expressed by the recipients.

Maris Stella Grade 2, once again have sent an overwhelming load of non-perishable grocery items. The children also came to visit us and were given a tour of the school. Thank you to all the parents of these children who have so generously provided for the feeding of the children in our care.

Eskom, very generously gave us a huge donation towards art equipment and educational toys. There are no words to express our gratitude to them for their very generous gesture. Our vision of being a privileged school for the under-privileged is most certainly in the process of being realized.

The Mustard Seed Foundation in USA have also sent a commitment to funding us over a period of three years, with a view to our qualifying our staff for the job of teaching in this environment as well as in counselling and evangelism skills, etc. We cannot begin to express our gratitude for their assistance in this area.

Developments on the school property this term have been the completion of our texture garden, the re-organization of the Fantasy Room and the sorting and organization of the mountain of books that have been donated over the past year from individuals and schools in and around Durban. We have also received donations of books and other stationery from a school in Georgia, USA. Thank you to everyone who has had anything to do with the progress we have made in these areas. A special word of thanks must also go to the Jumble sale team who found and donated a stunning amount of clothing for use in our Fantasy Room.

We also need to mention Mrs. Irene Wesley, from Somerset in England, who has taken it upon herself to do everything she can, in a personal capacity, to raise much needed funding for our project. It is when we encounter people like her that we realize that the world is still a place of residence for wonderful people. We look forward to meeting her later in the year when she intends visiting the country.

One of our brochures also found its way, quite miraculously, to a church in Hertfordshire, England, and they too have phoned me (imagine that!!!!) to request more documentation so that they can be of financial assistance to us. Wow!! What can one say?? Thank you, our most heartfelt "Thank you!!!"

Good news is that we are in the process of designing a Website for the school, so soon access to all our information will be as easy as technological pie!!! We would like to thank Paul Lamberth (of Rorkes Drift Lodge) for offering to take this task on, on our behalf.

I will close by thanking my staff members for the tremendous effort they have put into the successful completion of this term. Without each one of them I would be lost and at my wits end. I pray that we, and the children will have a truly restful holiday and return for the third term feeling refreshed and ready to tackle anything that comes our way.

Once again, thank you for your support.

Proverbs 22:6

Always Fishing

KATHY MERCER  
(Principal)

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## **VERBATUM QUOTES FROM SOME OF OUR PARENTS**

### **ZANDILE – Guardian of Sakhi, mother of Vela – as shared at the Birthday Service**

“ I've got two children who are in this school. This school is for everyone even the poor. This school help me and my children, because if you got a problem as a parent, Principal is there for you. She's got an open arms for you. You can shared your problem with her, and she will solve it – she help us to get child support grant for Sakhi when we been waiting for two years for it. If your child got a problem in school she will contact you as soon as possible.

This school help my children:

1. To know and understand English
2. To use their hands by drawing and painting pictures
3. To sing songs in English, etc.

I wish this school is a primary school..... This school is the best.

### **JENNY – Mother of Jheonre - in response to first pottery item taken home**

“ Dear Teacher

I was so proud of the fancy which you taught my son to make. I thank you and greatly appreciate it.”

### **ALICE – Mother of Sechaba – as shared at the Birthday Service**

God is great! He hears those who trust in Him. Udobo is there for everyone, even those who are disadvantage. Mrs. Mercer, God choose you to lead Udobo to be one of best pre-school in South Africa, by teaching our kids the words of God. Even you don't have money to give to Trust Contributions, she allow your kids to come. We are so blessed in this country to have a strong woman like you Mrs. Mercer. Udobo teach our kids how to use scissors, drawing, to speak English and it supply our kids with some warm clothes and jersey for the winter. And we don't have to worry to say, “Oh, I don't have money to buy a bread for kids.” Udobo is done for all that. We like to thank Mrs. Mercer to follow her calling...God bless you. You supposed to be a Woman of the Year. Hey! To my side, I can't close my mouth, I never forget you. Even when I die I will tell the people who don't know you how important you are. Always I will remember the lot of things you done for me. I can't forget your friendly, more than friendly – you like our mother. All the time I praying so hard to God to answer all your needs for Udobo and I believe someday Udobo is gonna be raised, is gonna be a big school – maybe starting by Class 1 to up. Mrs. Mercer, I don't know how to say about Udobo. All the time tears of joy are dropped everyday. God bless you, Mama, and your family. I would like to share with you this verse – Jeremiah 33 : 3

### **– in response to groceries and jersey donated for her family**

“ Morning Mrs. Mercer, thank you for everything, because all the time when my plate are empty you fill it, When I feeling cold you make me warm, all the time I praying so hard. God bless you more and more for your need. My verse is sticking in Jeremiah 33:3. God bless you and your family.”

### **VIRGINIA – Mother of Carrenah - in response to the celebration of Carrenah's birthday**

“ Thank you for making a best day ever for my daughter. She came home much excited about everything. GOD BLESS YOU.”

### **WEZIWE – Mother of Fikile – as shared at the Birthday Service**

“ Udobo is very helpful to us as a parents. As we know and understand how it is difficult and expensive to buy and prepare a lunchbox for our children. I would like to suggest that the Udobo sponsors to extend / add more classes. Since the rate of unemployment is too high, many parents does not have enough money to educate their children. They will be more children coming to Udobo in future. Udobo is fighting for poverty so they will be more staff, cleaners and cooks needed in school once the classes has been extended and the school will get more sponsors, because in the future the school will need a car to deliver the school children in some activities and / or in hospital in case of emergencies.

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