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December 2005

Greetings to all our friends of Udobo

Looking back over the year of 2005 has left me feeling quite overwhelmed at how much has been accomplished at what began as a "little" school. I hope that as you have followed our progress over the year, you also have been aware of God's hand at work in and through this project.

Term 4 whizzed by without so much as a "by your leave"!!!! I am out of breath.....awe-struck that this year's group of children are now enjoying the holiday that is to guide them into their Grade 1 year at Primary School. We said goodbye to 14 of our children and 6 will return to have another glorious year in the company of an enormous group of new friends. Yes, we are at that place of extending the vision by at least 100%, by opening a second classroom in 2006, with the remote, but real, possibility of opening a bridging group of 4/5 year-olds as well (which will, in fact, mean a 200% growth). We will know with greater certainty, by the end of January 2006, what our strategy will be.

Several developments have taken place in this last quarter of the year. Thobeka has had her plans for 2006 frustrated by the College being unable to complete her course by the end of the year. She, therefore, is unable to move in as the teacher of the second class, but will fall in as the assistant to that class in the second term if all goes according to plan. Mrs. Taryn Kimble will join our staff as the teacher of the next group. She has a colourful background which includes, besides her "Children's Work" qualification, 3 years at Bible college, a qualification in tourism, a qualification in labour relations, Aids Counselling, and she has spent the last year working at the Ethelbert Childrens' Home as a house mother. We look forward with great anticipation to her involvement in the running of the school programme.

Miriam started her Early Childhood Development qualification this term and will complete the first stretch in March next year. She will do another 2 years in order to complete her Level 4 training. She has really enjoyed her training and has eagerly implemented everything she has learnt in the classroom environment.

Lorraine de Bruyn came on board to assist in the kitchen, while Liz Spiller was utilised as a teacher's assistant in Thobeka's absence due to college commitments. She has decided that she will not be leaving, since going home to become a "retired, old, 70 year old woman" does not appeal to her as much as being part of the daily excitement of seeing God's blessings at Udobo. She has expressed a desire to be Liz's assistant in the kitchen. We would like to thank her for her enthusiasm and the personal touch she gave to our meals.

Calvin Fox moved on to greater hunting grounds, and Jeff Stamp moved in as my Handy Maintenance – man. He has also tackled all the maintenance jobs with exuberant enthusiasm and has managed to cut my maintenance list by two thirds. I am so grateful to him for all the effort he has put into keeping everything ship-shape.

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

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The highlight of our year was the year-end function. What a blessing this day was to all concerned. The children outdid themselves with their presentation of Christ's birth from the innkeeper's point of view – after all.... *all* the innkeeper wanted was a good night's sleep and he found himself having to cope with all the interruptions of visitors to the stables, bright lights shining in his face from the heavens and loud choruses of angels ringing in the air. The madder our innkeeper was meant to become, with each interruption to his night, the broader his smile became and the more entertaining to the audience. Our graduates were presented with their certificates and their brand new school shoes. We then moved up to the hall where the biggest surprise of all awaited the children. Each one was presented with a brand new bicycle as well as two more gifts from their wish lists. Their delight was a gift in itself and the parents were stunned at the generosity of the sponsors. Fikile's mother was moved to give an impassioned word of thanks to the sponsors for making this school possible for the children of the poor, as well as giving so much towards the year-end function to enable us to organise a party of that magnitude for them. We, from the school and Foundation, would also like to take this opportunity to thank all who gave so generously towards our function – I only wish it was possible to capture in words the gasps of delight when everyone realized what was on the stage for them.

That was not the end of the story for the children though. The Montclair Pick n Pay Store, provided a 'last day of school' party for the children that left me speechless (quite an accomplishment, I might add). There was just so much cake, goodies, gifts, etc, that much of it was packed into party packs and sent home. The Montclair branch of Nando's invited the children to lunch on their last day of school as well. We arrived to find a long table on the "deck" prepared for the children and a meal of drumsticks, chips and rolls, as well as a fruit juice for each of the children awaiting them. On departure the children each received a party pack and the inevitable balloon. What a send-off!!!!!! We would like to extend our most heartfelt gratitude to Pick n Pay and Nando's for what they did for our children. These gestures are sure to remain as very vivid memories with these children for a very long time.

That pretty much wraps up our last term, except to thank the Westville Round Table for their very generous donation towards continued renovation to take place on the grounds – which, no doubt, I will be able to report upon returning to school in 2006. The Methodist Millennium Fund have also made it possible for us to purchase a much needed washing machine – again we extend our gratitude to them for their provision.

We will be closing our year with our Art Auction under the banner of "An Art Experience on the other Side of the Tracks" on 16 December. We have approximately 16 artists from Durban and further afield who are selling their work via the auction. We are standing in very 'testing' faith for a good attendance of the public and those invited and hope to raise a healthy amount of funding for 2006. Anyone who requires gifts to be wrapped for Christmas can come to Toys R Us at the Pavilion and Udobo will wrap them for you. Thank you to Toys R Us for giving us this wonderful opportunity. We will begin our year with a show at the Barnyard Theatre, "Rock around the Clock". This promises to be a really fun evening and I invite all to purchase a ticket and enjoy the evening with us.

In closing, I would like to thank all who have made this incredible year possible. Your generosity, interest and support have been the foundation stone upon which we, through Jesus our Lord, have been able to build this vital work for our community. If anyone requires a Tax Certificate, please could you contact us and we will issue one as soon as possible. Also, if you, as sponsors, do not wish to continue to support us in 2006, could you let us know, so that we can adjust our expectations accordingly. Thank you again to one and all for a wonderful year.

Always Fishing  
Kathy.

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Our graduates cannot wait to try on their new school shoes.



The surprise that awaited the children in the hall.

Fikile's mommy thanking the sponsors.

