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Dear Friends of Udobo

Once again I greet all the friends of Udobo. The end of 2006 has come with alarming speed and has left us standing back in awe at how much water has raged past under our bridge this year. This holiday is indeed very welcome – and we intend finding our breath again, somewhere during the next 6 weeks.

The fourth term, of course, is always focused on completing the curriculum, getting the final progress reports printed, and preparing for the school's year-end function.

We did, indeed, manage to complete our 40 week curriculum programme, as well as our entire phonics and letter formation schedule, and we are sending 22 young bloods into the arena of formal schooling in the year 2007.

Our year-end function was the highlight of our term and it turned out to be a box-office performance this year. The cheering of parents and sponsors alike made the effort and time all worthwhile. It was our first function that included the bridging class, and they managed to steal the hearts of all parents, especially with their rendition of "Jan Pierewiet". The Grade R's outdid themselves with their spontaneous and enthusiastic performances and the girls performed to Mango Groove's "Star Dance" – this was the highlight of the show and had to be repeated by popular demand.

Once again, all our "graduates" were "capped" with a brand new pair of school shoes and each also received a bag of "back-to-school" stationery. I believe it would be appropriate to now thank all the sponsors who so generously sent extra funds for this purpose. There were many peals and tears of gratitude from the parents for your kind generosity. All the children of Udobo were also blessed with a gift or two according to their wish-list. The KZN Gymnastics Union, who has been working weekly with our children, was also represented and our children did wonderful gymnastics displays for their parents.

At this point we need to express our gratitude to Montclair Pick 'n Pay and the congregation of Montclair Methodist Church for their very generous supply of eats for the function. A very special word of gratitude needs to be expressed to Nando's (Montclair) for their very generous supply of kiddies' meals and balloons for each of the children on the day. Our heartfelt gratitude cannot be sufficiently expressed in words. May you all be blessed for helping to make this day so special in the lives of our children and their parents.

All-in-all, our year end function was an overwhelming success and the staff of the school needs to be congratulated for their effort.

I know I have mentioned the birthday cakes before, but I do need to express, once more, our gratitude to all who sponsor birthday cakes for the children. The joy these cakes bring to these children is impossible to describe. If anyone would like to provide a cake, but cannot bake, some of our regular bakers are willing to bake on your behalf for only R60 per cake. So please contact us if you would like to join the team of birthday sponsors.

While we're on the subject, I would like to thank the 87 sponsors who are now on our Operation Pizza data base as regular sponsors of the children. These 87 generous folk add up to a full sponsorship of 24 children. What an amazing blessing you have been, not only to the children, but to the school. Thank you for making our load lighter. Of course, I must mention that we are still in need of more sponsors – the fishing game is never at an end – so please, if you have not joined our "Pizza-consumers" and would like to be part of blessing a child – contact us and we will send details on how you can go about it.

By the end of October, we found that our applications for 2007 were such that our three classes were literally jam-packed, and we still had 2 ½ months of open applications ahead of us. Therefore, we are opening our fourth classroom in January 2007 and find, at closing date 2006, that this class is already half-full. We stand in no doubt whatsoever, that by the end of January, just 2 yrs and 9 months after opening our doors with 3 children, we will have an alarming total of 80 children at the Udobo Grade R School. Our God is indeed a GREAT BIG GOD!!

Because of the popularity of our school within the community, we now find ourselves in the position of having to watch for "wolves in sheep's clothing" so to speak, i.e., those who would try to con their way into the school as a "low-income family", when in fact, they are no such thing. Therefore, the governing body have elected a screening committee to screen all applications that cast doubt in my mind. We have also had applications from people who have fallen victim to debt-vultures, or who are under "Ubuntu" obligations. All these applications are screened and approved or refused by our committee. If approved, they are then accepted on condition that they work through our school's credit controller who will take charge of giving them guidance in the area of financial management. MMC is

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also going to be running workshops on financial management for the community in 2007 – so we pray that our ministry will prove to bring relief and healing in this very real area of stress in the lives of our people.

Our Golf Day in October was a wonderful success and the fundraising committee have planned a full and exciting schedule for 2007. Our immediate fundraiser is our Gift Wrapping Service at Toys-R-Us at the Pavilion, starting on Friday 8 December. Please come along and support us. If you don't have gifts for wrapping.....you can give us a donation anyway!!!!

This term has also seen the implementation of Performance Appraisal Workshops with our staff. It has been a very interesting exercise and has already brought about some exciting developments within the staff dynamics and inter-relationships of our environment.

One of our most exciting developments is a wonderful group of people from Letchworth Garden City in the UK who have taken ownership of our school, and who are doing everything in their in their power to assist us with our cause. The wonderful folk of the Norton Methodist Church, via Peter Cannell, have rendered the most wonderful financial, as well as moral, support and have pulled out all the stops in their efforts to recruit more support for us. We welcome with grateful and open arms our “fishermen” from Alrewas and Arlesey who have recently joined the team. To top all this, Peter's chiropodist, Fiona, is celebrating her 40th birthday by doing a sponsored parachute jump as a fundraiser for the school on Sat 9 December. How does one ever find a way to thank people such as these for their support??

Time to close. It is that time of the year again when we are seeking nominations for the School's Governing Body. Our secretary, Mabel Pretorius has resigned due to relocating to Pinetown. If you would like to support our school by standing as a member of the GB, please contact us so that we can forward your name for nomination. We would like to thank Mabel for her faithful and loyal support right from the inception of the project. May our Lord Jesus bless her abundantly as she opens this new chapter in her life.

Finally, may I now pray the richest blessings of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, upon you all, as we enter in this period of advent. May His birth and purpose become a reality to each one of you this year.

God bless you all.

Always fishing

Kathy

Exciting news: Carennah Franklin – a student from 2005 entered her first fun gym competition this year and got the Silver Medal!!! And it all started at Udobo!!

Sad news: All the photographs taken at our year end function did not materialise. The camera had some nasty weavel at work on its insides!!

UDOBO CHILDREN THINK BIG – HERE WE COME!!!!

Tasmina Duma. When she grows up she wants to be a good girl & a Model – so that she can wear pretty clothes.

Sechaba Mokoena wants to be a teacher when he grows up. He wants to teach children to love Jesus & they must love & listen to their mummies & daddies.

Maligbongwe Ntanz wants to be a Policeman. He wants to take the tsotsies to the police station.

Minenhle Mvuyane wants to be a taxi driver because he wants to drive children to school & back home again. When asked what he wanted as a gift, he did not hesitate in saying that he wants a license so that he can drive his taxi.

Dee-Ann Sokweleti wants to become a security guard because if someone comes to the shop & takes something without paying, she will take them to the police station.

Davon Smith wants to be a nurse. He wants to get more money to spend on food and then he can have a dog.

Asisipho Boti wants to be a nurse when she grows up. She wants to check someone when they are sick and give them medicine. If a baby is sick she will give it to the doctor.