

KENOSIS NEWSLETTER

Issue 27

December 2004



Ntobeko Zulu and David Carrhill

Dear friends, some days ago the children and I started talking about angels while we were practicing a play for our community service, which took place on the 21st of November. As the children were dancing and singing, I happened to appreciate one of the children for acting like an angel as she danced to the song. Because of more comments and questions from the children, we ended up talking about the host of angels who appeared singing to the shepherds on a first

Christmas Day (Luke 2:14). An exciting part was our attempt to sing and dance the angels' song, which we sang in Latin: **Gloria, Gloria in excelsis Deo...Hallelujah, Hallelujah!**

This was a wonderful afternoon for me with the children. Our experience together helped me to meditate more about the meaning of the word of the angels to the shepherds. "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours!"(NRSV). What does that mean for us today? For our children, one of the meanings is that people can live with the assurance that there is peace because Christ Jesus is born (*and present*) for us. The gift we receive on Christmas wipes away all tears of unhappiness, and crying is no more.

But, what does it mean to those parts of the world whose people are upset and desperate because of wars and destruction around them? The meaning of the angels' words lies as a challenge to today's shepherds, all those who are called and assigned to proclaim the gospel of peace and the presence of Jesus who is our peace in every situation. To remind them and each other of the biggest gift God ever gave to human kind.

May this Christmas bring joy to you all. The joy of knowing that we have received a gift that will wipe away all our fears in our journey of faith. May you also begin this coming New Year with new strength and hope.

Shalom!

Sr Happiness Khumalo

Elke reports:

Again it is the time of Advent and with it the mad rush of buying and wrapping Christmas presents, cleaning the house, getting the guest room ready for visitors and baking Christmas biscuits has started. When all this activity 'kicks in' we know: Christmas is on our doorstep. But I find it is more than the rush of activities that awakens this realisation within me. Christmas is something I believe one can feel in the air: A really hot December day in Pietermaritzburg, the Jacaranda trees in purple bloom and the buzzing of the Christmas beetle - THIS makes me feel its Christmas time. I know that for many of you this is incomprehensible, as you associate Christmas with cold and snow and

you would probably not 'feel' Christmas in South Africa in the same way as you would 'feel' it in Europe. However, even though we all experience this time of Christmas differently we are all celebrating the same thing: The birth of Christ: The coming of our Saviour into our world. I wish for all of us that we may, regardless of where we live in the world, regardless of whether it is 32 degrees or - 10 degrees, find a moment in all the activity to become quiet and to reflect on his birth and to experience a piece of the peace which he has brought into our world. The peace that fills us with a sense of being content. It is a peace that can be compared to the experience we have when holding a sleeping baby in our arms.

Since July of this year I know, more than before, what this 'peace' feels like. On the 2nd July 2004 our son David Nicholas was born in St Anne's hospital in Pietermaritzburg. He has brought Neil and myself a lot of joy and he is a real blessing to us. We are thankful to our Lord for a healthy and happy child.

The four months following David's birth I was on maternity leave while Sr Happiness held the reins of Kenosis in her capable hands. I am thankful for this opportunity of being able to spend some time at home with my child during these very important months. But now I am glad to be back at work and look forward to the challenges that await us in the coming year.

On the 14th July 2004 another child was born in Kenosis - Ntobeko Zulu, Patricia's son. Patricia is one of our ex-students and has lived with us in Kenosis for the past 3 years. We also thank God for his life and the joy he has brought Patricia and into the lives of Kenosis.

Sisters

In our last Newsletter I reported that Rosemary left our creche in May this year. We are thankful that Sr Lindeni was prepared to fill her position at fairly short notice. She has written a short report on her experience in the creche for this Newsletter. Sr Happiness will complete her studies in Theology at the end of this year, and looks forward to focusing on building up the sisterhood in the next year.

Creche

Midst all the life and joy in the creche we have also experienced some real sadness this year. In August one of our 5-year-old girls lost the



fight against AIDS. Whenever she was well enough she attended the creche, even though she could often not participate in all the physically challenging activities that were offered. She was a special child and I will always remember her eyes

that spoke of her will to live and her confusion over 'why life seemed like such a battle to her'. The death of a child is always tragic, because it is so innocent. But this child's death has made me realise again that HIV and AIDS does not care about innocence. It kills. It also made me realise that AIDS is alive and well in our midst. Even in the midst of the life of young children.

On a more happy and successful note, TREE has awarded the Kenosis Creche the title: 'A Place of Excellence'. We are very proud of this, and congratulate Rhoda and her team on this achievement. We also thank all of you who have supported the work in our creche, and for all the toys and materials that have been donated to us for this purpose. All these gifts have made it possible to equip our creche to the standard required for 'excellence'.

Foster Care

A couple of days ago I was looking through the photos of when I first arrived in Kenosis, and I suddenly realised how much our children had grown. The 2 children where I notice this the most are Hlegiwe's twins - Lihle and Nkosi. I remember when they came to us about 2 years ago: their eyes frightened, how they cried and cried and cried. I remember the open places on their skins and how their eyes never met yours when one spoke to them. And now, nearly two year later, WOW! WHAT A CHANGE. Often they come and play on their own in our front garden. I am amazed at how they have grown to trust and how they greet me

and call after the other children. A real joy to see, and a real reward for one's Spirit. I do not dare to think what would have happened to them had they not come to stay with us. This observation and reflection has filled me with a real sense of a achievement and has given me the reassurance that 'Kenosis is a good place for children'.



As I reported in June, we have decided not to take on any new children, but want to look into improving the quality of care for our children. One of the first steps in this is our venture to try and encourage them in their schoolwork. For this purpose we have introduced 'Home Work Times' in the afternoons. Our volunteers painted and arranged a room for this purpose in the Main House and Mr Keyser, a member of the Hayfields congregation, has made and donated a table. Now the children have a place in which they can concentrate on their work, away from all other activities. The children are divided into small groups and each group has one responsible volunteer who works with her group on one afternoon in the week. We hope that in this way we can encourage and help them in improving their schoolwork.

We also try and arrange outings for the children now and then, in order for them to experience the bigger world. In August, Arden and Susanne Strasser visited us from the USA and, during their stay, they took the children on an outing to a nearby game farm. The children had the opportunity of driving on an open van and watching the wild animals - a first time experience for most of them.

Volunteers

In August of this year we had the sad task of saying farewell to Conny, Insa, Marlene and Viola, our 4 volunteers who had spent the last 12 months with us at Kenosis. It is always sad to say good-bye to our volunteers because 12 months is enough time to build good and solid relationships. But, as with sad hearts we said farewell, we could welcome a new group of young women in our midst. Hanna

Ebertshäuser and Marie Thöne were sent to us by the Evangelical Mission Society Southern Germany which is based in Stuttgart. Susanne Abshagen came through the Ev. Lutheran Mission based in Hermannsburg and Anne Hammer from the Bavarian Mission based in Neundettelsau. All four have settled down well at Kenosis, and have already embarked on the process in building good relationships with members of our community.

Our volunteer programme has become an important part of the Kenosis Community. I believe it is a programme that is mutually beneficial to all parties involved. Kenosis obtains some willing and competent hands, with creative ideas and time to help around the grounds and creche, time to play with the children as well as assisting them in their homework etc. The volunteers, on the other hand, have the chance to



experiencing a piece of South Africa with its colourful people and their cultures, but also the difficulties such as sickness and death that our country faces on a daily basis. Just after the new group of volunteers arrived they were faced with the death of Thule, a young woman just 2 years older than

themselves. Thule, with her strong will to live which carried her through many months of illness, is sadly missed by all at Kenosis. But her positive attitude and her sense of humour live on in my memories. She was an inspiration to us all.

In closing

As I sit here in Kenosis on a hot November morning, my thoughts wander to Christmas Eve, and a picture develops in my mind. A picture of candles and Christmas Carols, family and friends, of David (my son) looking with fascination at the candles on the Christmas tree, a picture of joy and peace. And as I am thinking of these things my thoughts wander to other places of the world, and I hear sirens, and gunshots. I see a crying child and an hysterical mother. I see fists of aggression and

eyes filled with revenge and hate. I see sickness, despair, suffering and death. And where the one picture filled me with a sense of peace, this picture fills me with a sense of sadness that the love and peace of Christ does not rein in our world. And I ask myself: What can we do this Christmas to bring peace into this world of ours? The conclusion: We can only bring this love and peace into the lives of the people around us. Let us share it with our neighbours and friends. Let us pass it on to strangers and enemies. Let us bring this peace into the world where we are. And let us pray for it elsewhere in the world. Let us pray that forgiveness, compassion and kindness find their way into the hearts of those in despair, afraid and sick as well as those with clenched fists and holding guns.

God bless you all.

Pastor Elke Carrihill

Sister Lindeni reports on her experiences in the creche:

It is a privilege for me to have this opportunity to share with you my experience in working as a pre-school educator. In May this year, I was asked by the community to work in our pre-school since there was a need for the second person.

In the beginning it was not easy. I remember the first day when I was not sure where to start as I did not know the procedure and the children were waiting for me to tell them what to do. The worst part was the difficulty of remembering the children's names. With the help of my colleague, I managed and now everything is smooth and I can handle everything. I enjoy working with the children although they can be very naughty.

I am sure it is a challenge for every teacher to work with pre-school kids because this is a stage where the life of a child can be healed or damaged. Therefore, for me, working in a pre-school is a calling.

Sr Lindeni Mavundla



WE APOLOGIZE

If you did not get our Newsletter in June this year, we apologize for this. We had sent all the letters out, but many of the addresses had not been stuck onto the envelopes properly and came off in the post. We then got a whole stack of letters back with: *Return to sender – No address!* We did not know who received the Newsletter and who did not. If you were one of those unlucky people who did not receive the June 2004 letter, and would still like a copy of it, please let me know and I will send it to you as soon as possible.

Our volunteers introduce themselves:

Hello, we are the new volunteers, Anne Hammer, Hanna Ebertshäuser, Marie Thöne and Susanne Abshagen. We come from totally different parts of Germany, but since the middle of August, Kenosis has become our new home.

Now a short introduction:

I am Susanne and come from the small town of Lüchow in Lower Saxony. After school I did not want to start my studies immediately and am enjoying having a year's 'time out' in completely different cultural surroundings. In Kenosis I particularly enjoy the work with the children – even if I don't know exactly what I want to be, it must certainly have something to do with children.

I am Anne and I link the northern and the southern part of Germany. I come from Düsseldorf in Nordrhein-Westfalen.

Together with Susanne I work in the creche and also enjoy the work there. I have always liked to work with children of

all age groups and accepted the post as Kenosis volunteer with great enthusiasm. Now I am very happy to be able to live and work here for a year together with the three other girls.



My name is Marie. Together with Hanna, I represent the South of Germany. I come from the beautiful town of Tübingen and am happy to miss it only rarely. I, too, arrived with my 'Abi' (Matric) in my pocket, but my future plans are still vague. I try not to waste too many thoughts on that and am happy to get to know South Africa from different sides. I am Hanna and come, as Marie mentioned, from the sunny South. To be precise, from Reutlingen, just under 20 minutes away from Tübingen. After the Abi-exam I needed, like others, a break. I was born in Nigeria and desperately wanted to return to Africa to get to know another side of it. I cannot describe how happy I am to have 'landed' in Kenosis.

Since October our duties include, besides the work in the creche and the garden, the 'little school' as our children call our 'extra lessons groups'. There we try to teach them to read and write in small groups, and they



and we are enjoying this equally. Nevertheless, there are tears sometimes and we are disappointed to find how little the children have learned at school. Even if progress is slow, we already recognise small successes, which encourage us to continue.

Of course, life in Kenosis does not only consist of

work. We have already made pleasant contacts which enable us to get to know the country and its people.

We look forward to the coming year and the challenges of everyday life in Kenosis.

Anne, Marie, Susanne and Hanna

Bridge building Camp

The All Lutheran Committee is comprised of various Lutheran congregations and institutions around Pietermaritzburg. For a long time it has been discussing how it can bring together all these institutions.

Among a number of suggestions, was one to invite someone to do a "bridge building encounter" with the youth of all different institutions. This event then took place during the last weekend of July this year. We are very thankful for pastor Arden Strasser from Our Savior's Lutheran Church in California in USA for his willingness to take up this challenge and lead the event with the youth.

For young people this was a wonderful experience, which they enjoyed very much. They saw this meeting as a challenge for them as future leaders of the church. They were willing to continue to keep fellowship through organising more events together as Lutheran Youth. This brought an idea that they would need a 'bridge building team' who will be responsible for the future planning of events. During the All Lutheran Committee meeting, it was suggested that the youth meeting from all institutions should be called again with the main aim of electing the Bridge Building Team where all institutions would be represented.

As a member of an organizing team of All Lutheran Committee, I was entrusted with a task of keeping the momentum of these youth meetings going. The first youth meeting was planned for the 2nd of October where the youth was excited about meeting again and enjoying fun together, as we played some games. There was also some disappointment as one of the institutions could not send any delegates. In this meeting we then planned for another meeting where we would elect a leading team for the bridge building. This took place in the middle of October (the 17th) before most of the youth started with their exams. This leading team will work together closely with the All Lutheran Committee, and will take suggestions from youth and plan the events where the youth can meet and have fellowship.

Home Based Care Course in Kenosis

During the month of September, Pietermaritzburg City Health offered an HBC Course at Kenosis for members of the Bishopstowe community. Home Based Care is becoming more and more of a necessity as our hospitals are overrun, and very sick people are often sent home because of the lack of available beds. The idea of Home Based Care is to equip people with basic First Aid skills so that they are able to care for a sick person at home. Linda Knox, a good friend of



Kenosis, organised the course and also put together a basic First Aid kit for each participant. Some of equipment used were bandages which had not been used by Swiss doctors during the Second World War.

A WORD OF THANKS

Looking back on this year I realise that again there is so much to be thankful for.

Thank you for all who came and visited Kenosis and showed interest in our work.

Thank you to all who sent letters or phoned to find out 'how things were going'.

Thank you to all who prayed for us.

A big **THANK YOU** to all who have so generously supported us financially. Our work in Kenosis is only possible because of all the generous donations we receive. As many people want to know where their money is going to, and rightfully so, I would like to take this opportunity of sharing with you briefly what the money we receive is used for.

Our running costs in Kenosis are around R55 000 a month, and this amount includes the following:

Salaries of staff and grants for the Foster mothers (for as long as these are not paid by the state), electricity and water, telephones, transport and upkeep of vehicles, support of parents who cannot afford the creche fees of their children, school fees of some children associated to Kenosis, food for the creche, equipment and toys that need replacing in the creche and foster homes, board and lodging of volunteers, printing and sending out of bi-annual newsletter, maintenance of buildings and grounds, security for vehicles and houses, insurances, training of staff and foster mothers, winter school uniforms etc. Should anyone have any questions concerning this, please do not hesitate to contact me.

I would also like to use this opportunity to ask the following: As we would like to send thank you letters to any donors, please remember to note the name and address of donor clearly on the deposit slip of the bank.

**THANK YOU AGAIN TO ALL
WHO HAVE SO GENEROUSLY
SUPPORTED US!**

OUR CONTACT DETAILS ARE:

Kenosis Community

P O Box 46215

Bishopstowe

3252

Tel / Fax: 033 390 2746

Email: kenosis@telkomsa.net

Website: www.kenosiscommunity.org

Our Account Numbers:

Kenosis Community – First National Bank – Hayfields

(22-14-25) 5677 111 4919

OR

Kenosis AIDS Orphans Project

First National Bank – Hayfields

(22-14-25) 620 4669 5576

A blessed and peaceful Christmas to you all!