

### THANK YOU ALWAYS FOR YOUR DONATIONS!

Our staff at Volmoed Retreat Center are our greatest asset, after the extraordinary natural beauty of the property. It takes a lot of dedicated work to keep the grounds looking as beautiful as they are. Our visitors often comment on how well the property is maintained. This can be very challenging work, especially with the strong winds that can blow tall trees down, or the well-aged trees that become diseased and need to be felled. Once felled, the wood is cut into firewood, which is very useful for the



fireplaces in all the houses. Our cleaning team are all professionals and bring their energy, hard work, and commitment to the job every day.



Staff are sent on appropriate training sessions to learn new skills and over the past year, there has been a particular focus on Health and Safety trainings. This has included the use of power tools, amongst other skills, needed for all the cutting of wood that takes place each week.

Our staff live with a number of challenges. Volmoed has increased the wages and salaries each year for the last two years, in order to help staff cope with the increased costs of electricity, fuel, and food. We are not yet able to pay a living wage but that is the goal. The winter is the challenging season as there tend to be fewer visitors when the weather is cold and rainy. This will most likely always be a challenge and we continue to live with it and do all we can to support the staff as much as possible. The donations we receive for the project help support staff with unexpected medical costs or family deaths and burials.



The larger context in the region is cause for concern, as gang violence is something very real in our local townships where the staff live. We live with concern for their safety and every other innocent person caught in the middle of it. We hope that the beauty and peace of Volmoed gives daily strength to our staff who are so committed, loyal, hard-working and make this place as amazing as it is.



As ever, we are more than grateful for our staff. Sadly we had to say a couple of goodbyes, to Yohane and Anna, and happily we welcomed Verosa onto our staff.

**Thanks to your generous donations, Volmoed was able to stretch and increase the wages and salaries each year for the past two years....THANK YOU!**

