

Global Giving Volmoed Report December 2024

Warm greetings from Volmoed and a big **THANK YOU!** as always. We happily moved into the summer season about a month ago and now embrace the warmer, sunny days and the lovely longer days and evenings.

Our biggest gratitude for the year is a fantastic team of workers from a town an hour's drive away, provided by the local Hemel and Aarde Conservancy and the government Department of Agriculture. They have been hard at work since September to clear the alien vegetation that grows out of control on the mountain slopes and even in the Onrus River that flows through the property. It takes over the landscape and prevents other indigenous vegetation from growing and flourishing. They sent one team for two months and have now added a second team. They have transformed the landscape, which was in danger of being overrun by alien trees like



wattles and bluegums. They are doing this initial clearing now and will send a team back once a year to maintain the clearing. We are so grateful to them!

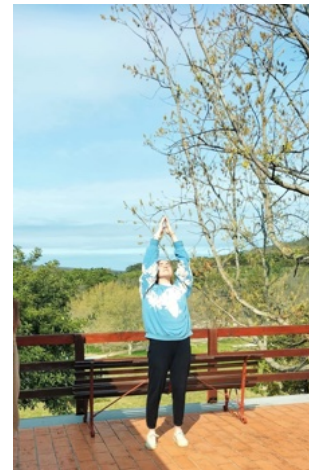
We are also consulting engineers about how best to go about restoring the river flow so that the causeway across it is not constantly under water. Without this road there is no access to the land across the river except by boat. The threat of fire is real, and we need the road back in action. There are differing opinions! and we hope to move forward in the new year.

Volmoed continues to be a beautiful place tended with love and care by loyal, committed staff. The beauty of the large property can be challenging to maintain, especially as our now older infrastructure like water pipes or pumps, tractors and equipment, need to be fixed or replaced. People comment on how beautiful the landscape is and what a peaceful place it is. There are some lovely quiet spaces with benches to sit and reflect or just gaze at the beautiful views.



We continue to have groups come on retreat to this place that provides peace and quiet and a good space to reflect. Silent retreats these last few months included clergy from different townships in the Western Cape. Another group from a non-profit called Not I But We,

www.notibutwe.com who work with women survivors of trafficking and gender based violence, came for a semi-silent retreat with staff, volunteers and supporters. Both groups needed deep rest and refreshment, and their retreats were very meaningful for them.



The biggest events of the year took place in November, with the visit of former archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams. This was a highlight!



First, there was the annual colloquium with Volmoed and the University of Stellenbosch. There was a good mix of diverse, intergenerational academics and students, including Canada and the USA. The colloquium was followed by a retreat on 'The Prophetic and the Spirit in these days.' Dr William's mix of philosophy and theology, along with pertinent, inspiring, profound stories, was wonderful. There were Table Talk discussions after supper where people

could ask questions about anything, and they did. The week ended with a public lecture in the Hermanus municipal auditorium on Faith and the Arts in Public Life, which was



In these weeks before Christmas, before we get really full and busy, our staff held their annual Christmas lunch, and we all said goodbye to David, our wonderful, young volunteer who lived at Volmoed and helped the maintenance staff for the past six months.



terrific. Our youth drummers welcomed everyone to the lecture in great style.



Our annual Christmas carol picnic was a great success, even though we had to again hold it at the local church gardens rather than at Volmoed. We are still challenged by the high water table following the floods last year, and the lack of roads good enough for a large group of people. The stellar band from Manenberg provided music again,



joined by the gorgeous Hermanus Angels, local young girls, who all sang favorite Christmas songs and then a set of Christmas carols. This is a favorite fundraising event that brings a lot of joy!



What a year it has been! We would not make it without your generous donations and support. Thank you so much, we are so grateful! May the holidays bring you time together with loved ones as you celebrate your particular traditions. May there be great joy and love and may the hope of peace continue for our troubled world.

