

**Volmoed Retreat Centre Report
April 2024**



THANK YOU FOR ALL YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS!

These first few months of the year have brought us many reasons for gratitude. We have a larger number of groups coming to Volmoed, doing some very interesting and meaningful programs. We have continued to clear up after the floods last September. And we have begun to go solar!

Here are a few of the many different groups that have come to Volmoed so far this year. The Tutu travel seminar group, from the USA, focuses on learning about the legacy of Archbishop Desmond Tutu, and on issues of justice, reconciliation and healing in South Africa. They spend time in Johannesburg and Cape Town, and then time at Volmoed to experience the local context of a small town, enjoy the beauty of nature, and reflect on their experience.



We also held an icon course and retreat, led by a Danish woman, a seasoned, international teacher of icon painting. This is a small, intense group experience and participants paint their own icon, learning not only technical skills but find that the process also fosters learning about themselves and their own lives.





Another highlight was the Leadership for Humanity group from the Desmond and Leah Tutu foundation, returning for a second time to Volmoed. This group of young entrepreneurs and activists, explore the legacy of Archbishop Tutu, the concept of Ubuntu, and the healing of society through healing themselves. Every morning before breakfast,

they engaged in silent mindfulness exercises, outside in the beauty of Volmoed. It was during their visit that the bridge across the river was uncovered!



They had learned about the floods last year and the impact on the river, the loss of the road and the bridge which were under the mud and water. During that week, the digger excavator was able to move enough mud, sand and water, to discover that the bridge across the river was still there all the time. It was intact enough, and needed just a bit of fixing. Instead of crossing the river on a plank, people can now use the bridge.



After Easter a group of Palestinian young people came from Bethlehem, for a three-day retreat and reflection after their two-week visit to Johannesburg and Cape Town. What an energetic, articulate and dedicated group of young people! They met with the young people of the Volmoed youth leadership project and were able to drum, sing and talk together with them.



Our wonderful news is that Volmoed has started to go solar! Following a major gift from a benefactor, and donations from many like you, the majority of the rental houses, and several other buildings, are now solar powered. This will help decrease our enormous electricity bill, which will help us free up money for staff and other much needed projects. It was very exciting to be in the dining room at a point there was going to be load shedding (rolling blackouts) and discover there was enough power stored to cover the two-hour period. This is seriously life-changing! Gratitude to all who donated to this.

**YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS ARE ALWAYS MUCH APPRECIATED!
THANK YOU!**