

## 2023 REPORT

### HILLCREST ADVICE BUREAU & BURSARY FUND SCHOOLS PROGRAMME

Our first request for the year came from **Hlengiwe Msomi** of **Future Stars cc NPO** in Ngcolosi. Rosie, Caitlyn and Caitlyn's two young children went down to the Future Stars Church building in Ngcolosi to do the hand over and fittings of these uniforms in January. Hlengiwe is a wonderfully kind woman who serves her community in so many ways and this was again highlighted for us during this handover. Apart from the temperature being in the high 30's and there being no electricity in their community that day, we were greeted with warm smiles and singing by the children. Hlengiwe demands respect and is a strong influence in the area. She told the learners about HAB&B: that they must be proud of their uniform and care for it; attend school regularly and on time; take their school work seriously and work hard. Her manner is strong and rather abrupt however the message she shared was so appreciated by us.

The remainder of January and into February were a blur as instead of spreading out our school orders, we opted to submit many of our newly received lists from the various schools across the Valleys, at once to **Pinetown Bargain Bazaar**. This proved efficient from our side however we were disappointed with many of the sizes of pants, skirts and jerseys being incorrect on delivery to us. The sorting of these was thus time consuming however Bargain Bazaar were very obliging in collecting the incorrect items and exchanging them for better sized ones.

Last year, we had the joy of buying **Nqobi Sithole**, that exceptional young man, at Hillcrest High whose mother is a domestic helper and father a gardener, the uniform that he required. He did not need a new uniform this year but we did supply him with a matric jersey and scarf. We also went shopping for his stationery requirements.

**Caitlyn** had also done a small monetary collection of her own for school shoes for impoverished children. These school shoes came along with us on the above mentioned school visits, where we then spontaneously fitted them onto little feet that had no school shoes on at all or very old ones on.

**Lungi Khwela**, the Development Services Worker gave us her uniform request list. On a Sunday morning Rosemary met the learners at Lungi's house. 9 uniforms were then fitted and a total of 5 schools covered.

**Winnie** from the **Advice Bureau** in KwaNyuswa requested uniforms for 5 learners from 2 different schools. Winnie handled these fittings.

## NOTEWORTHY OBSERVATIONS

One highlight was our visit to **Laboure Primary School**, where Caitlyn had walked outside the room we were in to see if there were any children walking by with old shoes or no shoes at all. She asked one learner as to whether he had any friends without good shoes. He didn't seem to understand and off he trotted. About 20 minutes later, this little boy returned to the room we were in, with 3 little Grade R's in tow all wearing very very old shoes. It was a very precious moment for us and one we won't forget.

Another interesting drop off was when we visited **Hlahlindlela High School** in Ngcolosi. We know this school relatively well and usually enjoy visiting them. On this

given day though, we noticed on our arrival that 3 students were lying outside the reception area, on the floor. We were rather taken aback on hearing that these children were being bothered by evil spirits and were acting up. The children were thrashing themselves around, screaming and the girls had torn open their shirts. We heard from the new headmaster at the school, who was present at this scene, that this had become a regular occurrence at the school and that they had even had to close the school for a day the week before due to over 40 students being overcome. \* Caitlyn has since looked into this and it appears that it is happening more and more in the schools around the Valley, and took place at Pinetown Girls High on 1 occasion last year too.

**UkuKhanya KweAfrica Primary School** in Molweni was a new school that we were requested to provide uniforms for this year. The request came from **Pastor Naboth** (we did food parcels with him during covid). We were informed that these uniforms could be made and supplied by a lady in Molweni itself. We had the privilege of visiting her home (and small container factory) and were hugely impressed. She runs a sewing business where 6 young men are employed to sew for her, and she does everything from making the uniforms to embroidering on the labels. We then went to the school for the drop off which proved to be a particularly interesting drop off and fitting. The school looks like any model C school in Sector 1 and has over 900 students enrolled there. We were treated with enormous respect however the school were not organised and many of these students on our list had already now received uniforms elsewhere. We did however manage to find students who were needing uniforms and fitted these on them.

Other schools visited were **Khanyakhwezi**, **Khanyisani** where the Principal was delighted to welcome us as we have been associated with his school for many years. Caitlyn showed Mr Mamba a photo of Rosemary handing him a donation (from Ruetli Bank) taken in 2007 which resulted in much hilarity! **Kwabazothini** High was disorganised as several of the uniform recipients were writing exams. We found the girls to be ungrateful with an attitude of entitlement – no thanks received. When speaking to Mrs Ntombela – a teacher who has been at the school for well over 20 years, she told us that the learners at present are often the offspring of school going mothers. Family life with discipline and guidance was often lacking.

Rosemary and Caitlyn visited **15** schools and provided some item of school uniform to about **300 Learners**.

### **FOOD PARCELS**

This year we have tried to find the best prices for the items in the food parcel bags resulting in more invoices than usual. Every month 3 are delivered to our office in KwaNyuswa where Winnie and Nokuthula select worthy recipients. Occasionally there have been requests from other desperate folk and we have been able to assist them. One student received 10 kg of mealie meal so the number of parcels is approximate at 40. The price per parcel being about R180.00

**PINETOWN UNIFORM BAZAAR** This retail outlet has given us excellent service and we have a convivial working understanding.

The Hillcrest Advice Bureau received an invitation to attend the **Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign (QLTC) Launch of KwaNgcolosi Schools**. We were honoured to

attend. Subjects such as **Social Ills** (eg child-headed families, crime, bad behaviour at home); **Security** problems, **SGB** - lack of support by parents and the community etc. were discussed.

We also received an invitation to a **Farewell Celebration to Paul Govender from INKAZMULO** school in KwaNyuswa. The obvious love and respect that the staff felt for him were touching. He is highly regarded and admired by other school principals, the Councillor and members of the community. It was a great honour to be present and to hear the wonderful accolades for this fine man.

As always, thanks is never sufficient to describe our gratitude to the donors for allowing us this privilege of serving our local school-going poverty stricken families.

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Caitlyn de Beer and Rosemary Dickinson  
Administrators – School Programme  
Hillcrest Advice Bureau & Bursary Fund

