

the OUTCRY

May/June 09

Alan and Sheena Gaston work with children in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa

Mothers' Day In Khayelihle

(on May 10th in S Africa)

It was a big day in the Gaston household as we celebrated having such a wonderful Mother.



On Balance

When Henhry came to live with us, over three years ago now, he was poking in the kitchen cupboards one day and found our large kitchen scales. "What are these?" he asked. "Scales," I replied. "You weigh things on them." Well, I never did again as Henhry stood on them, mistakenly thinking you could weigh people too.

One of the things we are learning these months is balance. There are 7 of us in the household, each with individual physical, emotional and spiritual needs to balance. As you will guess, this is demanding. To make everyone feel special and loved takes not only time, but

energy too. But it is also a privilege and pleasure.

We have met several inspirational people in the last months. Some have been orphaned themselves and have encouraged us on the importance of our work and our input to these young lives; others have adopted children themselves even in later life - 78 to be precise!

We are learning to take time with our 'core family' and try to have one afternoon a week when Natalie looks after A and S to give us time with Henhry, Siphos and Sihle. At Easter we went for a week's camping at the beach with just Siphos and Sihle.

We realise that our marriage is foundational to all of this and we try to carve out time together to build and nourish this on an ongoing basis. We are learning that our days go better when we commit everything we have to do to God.

Cheers:

- All the children are flourishing. A and S are settled and happy. A's eczema is much better and S is starting to talk much more.

- 3 volunteers come some afternoons to help with the children. This is a great help.

Challenges:

- A and S have been with us for 3 months. We continue to pray they will be adopted or fostered by a loving Christian family so that they do not end up in a children's home.
- Stamina - 5 children aged 11, 5, 4, 4, and 3 is a lot of work! Sheena has had a sore shoulder for a while and needs it to get better.
- Balance - pray that we would get it right!





What a Difference!

For six months we have had Toyse and Mpume in Edendale each day from 10am to 4pm. They play a vital role supporting the efforts of the hospital staff and have become very well known to the children. The benefits are really starting to show.

The doctors have noticed that the children are much more responsive. I met the speech therapist who helped to set up the scheme and she was so excited at the impact on the children. What a difference a little love and attention can make!

And the change is not just medical. There is a devotional time each morning for the staff and mothers. Increasingly it is the children in the ward who are answering the questions about the bible stories!

Back to School!

We have mentioned before a little girl, M, who was in hospital for well over a year. Sethembile's teaching helped her to get accepted into Grade 4 not the Grade 2 class she had left. Last year, we were deeply saddened when we heard that her mother could not be bothered sending her to school. Just last week we got the great news that she is once more back at school! It is such an encouragement to Sethembile.

Please praise God for his goodness in providing the staff and the finances so that we can show God's love to these children.

At a meeting of the members of ZB, we agreed that we should continue running this programme for at least another year.

We also want to have a similar scheme in Greys. The staff are very enthusiastic, and we are preparing a proposal to submit to the hospital management. Greys has more long-term patients needing help with education, so we are proposing having Sethembile based there as she is really developing in her role as a teacher.

Please pray for wisdom and resources as we take this next step in reaching out to the children.

A loving home

There is a little girl in Edendale who is asking for just that - a loving home.

She was abused and raped by her step father. She was then taken to live with her aunt. There her aunt's boyfriend abused and raped her.

She is praying for a loving home.

Too much to ask?

At our weekly prayer meeting Hlangiwe, a volunteer, was pouring out her heart to the Lord, asking that a good Christian home would be found for this little girl. Please join with the team in praying for her

Zanini Bantwana is registered in South Africa and is an associate ministry of African Enterprise.

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