



The OUTCRY Newsletter :
March 2015

Zanini Bantwana is a Christian Outreach Organization dedicated to meeting the needs of lonely, sick and disadvantaged children in the Government Hospitals in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa. Our passionate team visits the children daily, telling Bible Stories, facilitating developmentally stimulating craft activities and bringing the children toys to enable this. They love and listen to these precious children, and, in so doing, help to assist their healing process.

A New Year filled with New Opportunities

"Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven..." Luke 2

After a wonderful and well deserved 3 week Christmas break, the team returned to the hospitals to continue their work. We have expectant hearts for the new year and are excited to see what 2015 has in store for us.



Previously we introduced you to our 3 Senior Team members, so now let's learn about our 3 Junior members



Love has a face...

Thobile, Khanyi and Lindo

Thobile is a delight to have on the team. Her gentle, consistent and playful nature is one the children gravitate towards. Thobile is a single mother to a beautiful 3 year old girl called Khwezi. Thobile visited the hospitals with her mother, Toyse, in 2007 but felt very overwhelmed and distressed at seeing the pain and suffering of the children in the wards. It was only after the birth of her own daughter that she felt a change in her heart and deep calling to return to the hospital. Thobile works with Hlengiwe at Northdale hospital. Thobile is an excellent team member and has played a pivotal role in growing the programme at Northdale.

Khanyi officially joined the team in 2007 but had been volunteering with us on and off prior to this. Khanyi brings vitality and energy to the team. She is a driven woman who has shown much personal and professional growth during her time with us. Khanyi was raised by her sister in a child headed household as both her parents passed away when she was only a few years old. She feels a deep calling to the work in the hospital as a result of her own upbringing and understanding of what it is like not to have parents. Khanyi loves to connect with the children. She is a fun filled asset to the Greys Hospital team.

Lindo brings a different dynamic to the team and his Christian witness is a powerful one as culturally it is the women's responsibility to care for the children. The boys in the ward warm quickly to Lindo's caring 'big brother' nature. Lindo felt called to pray for the children in the hospitals and it was during this time that he came into contact with Mpume who encouraged him to join her in visiting and praying for the children. Lindo was not raised in a Christian family and so he feels a strong calling to share the gospel with others. He has a thirst for knowledge and for a greater revelation of Christ in his life. Lindo's playful, thoughtful ways and huge smile are a blessing to the team.

Please pray for our carers, that they would be strengthened with Christ's love, peace and joy as they continue their good work.

"Come children, listen to me and I will teach you the fear of the Lord"

Getting Serious about Teaching: Launching of our new Education Programme

It is with great joy we announce that we have expanded our hospital work to include a structured education programme. We are thrilled that Callie-Jo A'bear ("CJ"), a qualified teacher, joined the team in February 2015 and has commenced 1-1 and small group teaching in the hospital wards. This is a project that has been on our hearts for a number of years and has been made possible by additional funding. This is uncharted territory as no other formal teaching programmes exist in the hospitals. We have decided to trial the project for a year to see if it is effective enough to continue with into the future. We are excited that a group of 5 Masters Educational and Research Psychology students have identified us as their research project for the year. They have committed to assisting us in establishing effective & culturally appropriate screening assessments and teaching materials for use in the hospitals. Our intention is to establish a programme that can then be replicated in other hospitals

We would like to extend a HUGE thank you to the Christ Church Hilton Ladies Bible Study group and Build It who have generously donated bags filled with stationery to be used in the hospital. This has been a great support to the program and gives the children the necessary resources to do their homework!



Networking with CHOC (Childhood Cancer Association of South Africa: www.choc.org.za)

The paediatric cancer ward is a ward that we have not previously been able to work in due to their strict infection control policies. The CHOC foundation offers ongoing support to these children and their families. Through our new educational programme we have established a working relationship with CHOC and the medical team in the oncology ward and CJ has the opportunity to teach these children during their hospital stays.



Introducing CJ

I love Jesus. I am in awe of how great He is, yet He is also interested in every detail of my life. People are important to me, and I love making solid, lasting friendships. I love being outdoors. The Berg mountains are my favourite place to get away to. And music keeps me going ☺ I have always been around children, from babysitting, to teaching Sunday school, to boarder mistressing, to volunteering in children's homes. Although I love children, I did NOT want to be a teacher and vowed I would never be one. However, God had other plans. After completing my honours in Psychology, I decided I would do my PGCE, with the hopes of becoming a school counsellor. Alongside that I did an internship at The Wykeham Collegiate junior school, and I fell in love with teaching! I loved coming up with creative lessons, I loved watching children learn something new and that moment when they grasp the concept, and I loved how much love they had to offer. It was not long into the year that I had decided teaching was definitely for me. I knew that I wanted to work for an NGO that dealt with children and education, at some point in my life, I always imagined it would be in the future once I had gained experience in teaching. Yet again God had another bigger and better plan. I am so excited to be working with Zanini Bantwana, and I am expecting to see God continuing to work through us this year.

Snake Bites and Superstitions



Snake bites are a common occurrence especially during the warmer months. Most hospitals stock the anti-venom and patients are managed at their local hospital. Elpheus was bitten by a particularly poisonous snake on his right cheek while sleeping. He was rushed to hospital and fell critically ill. After a prolonged ICU stay he was referred to the wards where he continued his road to recovery. It was during this time that he participated in our activities.

Luyanda, a 7 year old girl, was bitten by a snake on her ankle while playing on a stack of fire wood with her friends. She had to go through foot reconstructive surgeries and rehabilitation to regain her mobility. She spent 2 months in hospital over Christmas and New year away from her family. She was very receptive to the teams visits and loved the creative activities.

"Come children, listen to me and I will teach you the fear of the Lord"



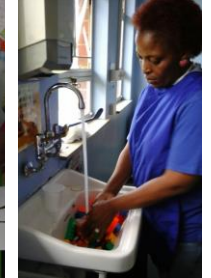
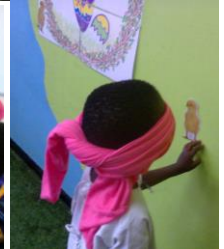
Please join us in

- a) Thanking God for his healing power and that both these children have returned home to the families
- b) Thank God for the doctors, nurses and rehab team that are working in these hospital for children such as these two
- c) Praying for Luyanda and Elpheus as the Zulu culture it is believed that a snake is sent to attack a family when a curse is placed on them. When connecting with these children we were overwhelmed at how their fear was not of the journey they had survived or the scares that they would have for life, but rather for the curse that had been placed on them and their families. Please pray that they would be freed from this.

Please join us in praying for

- The team: for renewed energy, good health and joy as they continue their work with the children
- The Hospital Authorities: to continue to support our involvement in the paediatric wards
- CJ and the Educational Programme: That she would have an increased capacity to establish this programme despite the numerous challenges of varying age groups, grades and illness.
- Ongoing opportunities: to share God's love with children, their parents and hospital staff
- Wisdom: To follow God's lead as the Zanini Bantwana Programme continues to grow and evolve to meet the changing needs and dynamics in the hospitals

Pictures are worth a thousand words



Your Donations enable us to do this work - Thank you!

Donations can be sent to:

South Africa: FNB Account: 62180674270; Branch Code: 220825

UK: Cheques payable to "Fitzroy Presbyterian Church" sent to Garth Graham, 1 Malone View Crescent, Belfast BT95PL and marked for Zanini Bantwana.

Secure online credit card facility: http://www.givengain.com/cgi-bin/giga.cgi?cmd=donate&cause_id=1809

REF: Your name if you wish to receive an acknowledgement.

"Come children, listen to me and I will teach you the fear of the Lord"

Alan & Sheena Gaston News

One of the highlights of our trip to the UK in December, was the wedding of Naomi and Andy in Glasgow. How wonderful to see two young people so obviously in love and both keen to serve the Lord in their life together. We enjoyed our time in Scotland and in Northern Ireland being with new and old family and friends. It was also the first, and possibly last, time Alan wore a kilt. There has been great demand for a photo to prove it so here it is!



Another highlight was meeting our grand daughter, Miriam, and what a delight she is! Time with all our children, parents, family and friends is very special for us and all too rare.

It takes time to recover from a busy trip and to readjust to life in South Africa and the new school year which starts in January kicked off with a very busy term, but we survived. We are trying to get Henhry (17) to be diligent about his schoolwork. His results are disappointing and he is going to have to work very hard if he is to get to any sort of tertiary education. It is hard to get Henhry to think about consequences. We would appreciate your prayers for him.

Sipho (11) had a very good term and is working hard with good progress in Maths and reading. Despite being the least able academically, she has the best grasp of life and gets on with it with very little trouble. She has started to learn the piano and is getting on well.

Sihle (10) had a very good term. His teacher, Mrs Botha, has been teaching for 38 years and understands little boys very well. Sihle thinks she is great and she loves "her boys". She even comes to watch them play cricket on Sat mornings when she is off duty! He has had a few clashes with other boys, but generally not his fault and he has handled it well, without retaliating. Real progress and a great answer to your prayer.

Nzuzo (6) had a good first term of real school and is doing well at everything except sitting still! There is always something more interesting to investigate or get involved in!

We have just said goodbye to David and Steph Ebert who were staying in our cottage. It was lovely to have them around. The children would pop in to see them most days and there always seemed to be interesting things going on. They also looked after the children for a few days each term so that we could get away on our own – what a luxury! The children loved David and Steph and we will all really miss them. We are modernizing the cottage a little and then hope to rent it out again to help pay the school fees!

As you can imagine the practical and emotional demands of our bunch are huge. Please pray for us as older parents! We are thankful for continued good health. Sheena has continued her running career and completed a half marathon recently. She is generally in great shape. Alan has made several visits to the gym, mostly for cups of coffee, but feels much the better for it!

Over Easter we went camping at our usual destination in the Berg. It was lovely to get away and relax in such beautiful surroundings. Of course the children were busy from sunrise to sunset - soccer, cricket, swimming, bike riding, etc, etc. We had no trouble getting them to sleep at night.

Thank you very much to so many who make our family a matter for prayer on a regular basis. We certainly need it. We hope you can see that your prayers are bearing fruit and we are deeply indebted to you all.

"Come children, listen to me and I will teach you the fear of the Lord"