



The OUTCRY Newsletter :
August 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 facilitate this. They love and listen to these precious children, and in doing so help to assist their healing process.

Birthday Celebrations: Happy 10 Years of Zanini Bantwana

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

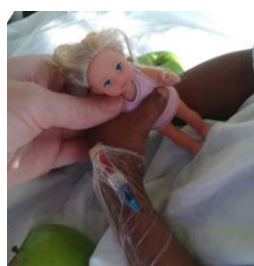
It is hard to believe that it has already been 10 years since Sheena and Alan first started to visit the children in the hospitals. With your ongoing support we have interacted with and loved 1000's of children.



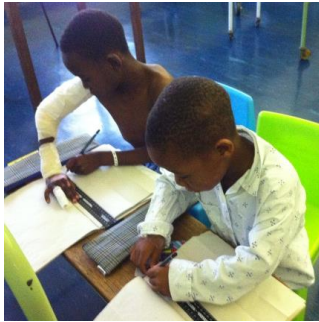
Moments

What a privilege it is to be called to work with these precious children. As a team we invest a lot of ourselves into the lives of these little ones and it is not uncommon for there to be tears shed when talking about or praying for their healing and personal circumstances. The hurt and suffering that we see daily is, however, punctuated with many moments which bring us such joy. It is these moments that confirm in us why we do what we do and refuel our hearts... here are just a few that come to mind from the team

- When we enter the ward we are stamped by children with big smiles excited to see what the day's activities will be
- Toyse tells of how the children cry when she leaves and sometimes she thinks if she wasn't careful they might follow her home
- In the Burns ward there was a young boy who would not interact with any of the hospital staff and would not engage in therapy sessions. We were approached by a therapist to find out how he was responding to us during our visits. Our experience of him was the complete opposite, he was excited to see us and happily participated in the activities we brought for him to do
- It is not uncommon to see the children in F-ward standing on their beds looking out the window after lunch eagerly waiting to spot the team in blue uniforms arriving to take them away from the ward to the ZB room for an afternoon of fun, learning and games. The ZB playground with its swings and slide remains an absolute favourite!
- CJ finds it such a joy when she sees a child grasp a new concept. The delight in their faces when they finally 'get it!'
- Mpume says that she loves that we feel a part of the hospital community. The doctors will stop and ask what story we are doing this week and will sometimes ask the team to translate for them when they are speaking to a child.
- Hlengiwe and Thobile tell of how during the story of 'Jesus calms the storm' they got the children to make the thunder, rain and lightning sounds. A chronically ill and emaciated little girl who refused to eat or engage with the hospital staff responded wholeheartedly, making the most realistic sounds with accompanied actions. This was a breakthrough moment
- The nurses tell us that the children love Lindo like a father or a big brother. Some of them, although discharged, will want to finish their ZB activities before they go home



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Getting Serious about Teaching: Some news from CJ about our Education Programme

CJ writes: I can't believe we are half way through the year and that I have been with this incredible team for 5 months now! I was looking over the register I have kept with all names of the children I see, and I was amazed at the number I have seen. They have all touched my life during their stay in hospital. I only hope, I too, have touched their lives in some way.

In Oncology there have been 6 children of differing ages who have been admitted more than twice during my stay and they tend to stay for at least 2 weeks. They have been truly delightful and even though they have been so sick on their chemo days, they always manage a smile and pull out their homework - even if they haven't finished it! (these kiddies don't need to make up excuses like "my dog ate it").

In the Burns Unit there have been 4 children with whom I have been able to work for extended periods of time. The first two months I had a very sweet little grade 4 girl and a hard working grade 7 boy. We did lots of Maths together, and by the end of their stay we seemed to have conquered subtraction!

Currently, I have three boys in the Burns Unit. Although they are all in grade one, they are at very different academic levels! However, their enthusiasm inspires me to keep pushing them.

In Orthopaedics I have worked with two grade 6 girls, both leg amputees, who have been in approximately a month. Some days were hard as the pain seemed unbearable, but both of them were such determined young girls who were adamant to "do school" while they were in hospital.

These are just a few of the children I have seen; altogether, I have seen 22 children on a long term basis. Plenty more have passed through on short term stays.

THANK YOU for your support in helping to make this project possible, the need is great and without you it wouldn't be possible!



The Wykeham Collegiate Toy Drive



We were invited as a team to speak at one of the Private Schools during their morning assembly. The team were very excited (and a little nervous too!) to share about the work that God has called us to do in the hospitals and what fun we have helping the children. We had an overwhelming response from the children as they were encouraged to think of others less privileged than themselves. We were blessed with many boxes of new and second hand toys, books and games to take to the children in the wards.

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Singakwenza recycling workshop

Together with CHOC (a charity helping with childhood cancer) our team participated in a Singakwenze toy making workshop. Bread bags became skipping ropes and balls, yogurt containers become shape sorters and milk containers became catchers. What a fun hands-on learning experience that reminded the team of how important it is for children to learn through play and that we can make toys from recycled materials in resource-poor contexts for free!



The Girl and the Red Dress

Please pray for 6 year old Lihle, her story upset us deeply. She was a victim of sexual abuse in her own home and had to be moved to a place of safety. We spent precious time with her during her hospital stay and loved her as best we could. During one interaction the team asked her if there was anything we could do or get for her, and she responded by saying that all she wanted was a red dress. She rippled with excited when Thobile dressed her in her very own red dress 😊

Please join us in praying for

- The team: That God would continue to equip us to do His work. For wisdom as we journey with the children
- The Hospital Authorities: to continue to support our involvement in the paediatric wards. To give thanks for how relationships have grown over the past few months. The therapists are now consistently referring us children.
- CJ and the Educational Programme: That she would be given wisdom as she compiles educational packs and continues to juggle the challenges faced when teaching in the hospital's ever changing environment. To give thanks for how the project has grown and for the children who have gained from her teaching
- 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



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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.

Alan & Sheena Gaston News

As well as the ZB 10th birthday celebrations, we also celebrated Alan's 60th birthday in June. We had a Sunday bring and share party at home and were thrilled to have over 80 friends here! It was a happy reminder that we have built a life for ourselves here and have a network of support. It was a fun time with lots of people, lots of food, and a game of touch rugby for the young and fit!



We were also delighted to be able to go away on holiday with our big children and little children during our winter holiday here in South Africa. Matthew, Peter and Katy and Miriam, our grand-daughter, Naomi and Andy all came out to visit. It was special to have time with the 3 generations and to be reminded once again of how faithful God has been to us and to our family over the years. As David said, "Who am I, O LORD God, and what is my house that you have brought me thus far?"

The children are all back into the routine of school now. This is soccer, hockey and athletics season accompanied by piano and recorder learning. We are very thankful that our children are healthy and well and are keen to participate in everything that is going on. They are all very excited as we have just got a new puppy, a 7 week old Rhodesian Ridgeback named Jack.

Specific points for prayer are for **Henry** that he would focus on serious studying and that he would know what to aim for after finishing school in December 2016.

We are thankful that **Sihle's** behaviour and performance at school continue to improve. However, we feel this will be a long haul so please continue to pray as he comes to terms with who he is. A deep sense of loss pervades this talented little boy.

We are thankful that **Sipho** enjoys life and manages to hold her own with the boys. Pray for her as she grows and develops that her strength would come from God.

Nzuzo has settled well into Grade 1. Although he is the smallest boy in his year he is a dogged little fellow and no pushover on the rugby, soccer and hockey fields. Pray that as he grows and develops he will model himself on Jesus.

Alan is giving a lecture course on Ethics at a local Bible college this term and he is really enjoying this new challenge. Pray for good stamina to meet all the demands of life.

As ever, **Sheena** loves being a mum. Give thanks for better health after a broken toe and a series of minor ailments. She is glad to be back to running now, with her next 10 k lined up at the end of August. She has also started Afrikaans lessons so she can help the children with this compulsory subject. Also pray for continued strength.

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