



Incorporating the Missionvale Care Centre Trust

PO Box 11053
Algoa Park
6005
Republic of South Africa

Tel: +27-41-811-7525/6
Fax: +27-86-529-3349

Email Address:
info@missionvale.org.za

Website:
www.missionvale.co.za
www.facebook.com/missionvale

Attention: Missionvale Australia
By email: beckan@optusnet.com.au

27 February 2023

Dear, dear friends

REPORT TO MISSIONVALE AUSTRALIA: January – December 2022

Quick links to report highlights:

- [Missionvale Australia welcomes two new committee members](#)
 - [Normoyle Primary achieves 90% pass rate again](#)
 - [Youth development programs booming](#)
 - [Vegetable gardens mentorship program launched](#)
 - [Impumelelo Training Centre shows huge promise](#)
- [Doctor, social worker and support groups added to healthcare services](#)
 - [Meet one of our beneficiaries – Athi's story](#)
 - [How your money was spent](#)

We entered 2022 with uncertainty. It was the year of crushing firsts – the first Care Centre anniversary without our darling Sr Ethel. The first Valentine's Day (she used to LOVE Valentine's Day!) The first Easter, Mandela Day, birthday. The first anniversary of her passing...the list goes on. We were struck with grief, but also with a beautiful sense of unity. Together we promised we would let her legacy live on through our daily activities and interactions with the community she gave her life for.

While there were difficult days, there were many wonderful days too and many, many occasions where we couldn't help but think "she's still with us!"

Through it all, it was YOU, our wonderful friends and supporters in Australia who ensured the people of Missionvale received the care they need. They have been in a state of grief too, but your continued interest, love, support and donations have carried us all.

We are so grateful for every one of you and wonder if you truly know how much it means to have people so far away actively contributing towards easing the lives of people who are living in unbelievably difficult circumstances.

Behind every dollar that reaches us from across the seas, there is our phenomenal Missionvale Australia Committee making it all possible. The link between us will always be sacred. It stems back from a deeply meaningful connection that grew into a wonderful friendship between Sr Ethel and Frances Exley. In 2005, Sr Ethel travelled to Australia on Little Company of Mary business, and met up with Frances' daughter, Ann. She told Ann her greatest difficulty was finding a steady flow of income so that the Centre's activities could operate unabatedly. Ann agreed to help find people who could support the cause, and I don't want to say the rest is history, because it has been a mammoth journey to get to this point!

Every day of every year that followed that meeting with Sr Ethel, Ann has dedicated towards building Missionvale Australia. There were golf days, school talks, music concerts, dinners, emails, campaigns. We will never be able to thank you enough...

Today a group of equally amazing and incredible people volunteer their time and skills so that this can continue into the future. We think of them as superheroes:

Nicolette Rubinsztein, Michele Beck, Jane Harris, James Mohr, Gareth Beck, Nicolette Hughes, Peter Beck, Mark Beck... your names are in bold because they are engraved in our hearts. We think of you with gratitude and awe. When the community gather in the mornings, we hear them giving thanks. They may only have seen you for a few minutes during a visit, or they may never have met you, but we know beyond a doubt that they are immeasurably grateful to you, and for you. Thank you for walking beside us this last year. Your steadfast dedication brought comfort in difficult times. We would be so lost without you! We see the impact of your contributions directly influencing the quality of life for the people here, and it is the biggest blessing anyone could ever dream to ask for. Thank you, thank you...

We also want to give a special mention to John and Jane Farrington. From the very beginning, you have been there, generously contributing for all this time. You are two of the most generous, selfless people we've ever met. You are amazing! Thank you for continuing to believe in us.

We are also thrilled to introduce two amazing new members to the Missionvale Australia Committee:



Lovemore Ndou - Three-time World Champion Boxer turned Lawyer

As a child growing up in South Africa, Lovemore Ndou experienced poverty and the injustices of the apartheid system, witnessed atrocities committed against his family and community, was a victim of police brutality and saw his best friend gunned down in a street protest.

Yet, against all odds, Lovemore succeeded and rose through the ranks to become a three-time world boxing champion and then a successful lawyer, while making Australia his home.

He has been called "The Brainiest Boxer in History" courtesy of his extraordinary journey of self-education that has delivered seven university degrees. He now runs a successful Sydney legal firm in southern Sydney.

His extraordinary life story has recently been documented in the book **TOUGH LOVE**. A powerful public speaker, Lovemore's story is one of inspiration, unshakeable hope and triumph.



Sheron Sultan - Student Wellbeing Facilitator/ Speaker

A South African native of Mozambican, German and Indian heritage, Sheron had to develop strategies to overcome the challenges of defining her identity in a multicultural society from an early age.

Since 2010, Sheron has been facilitating wellness, self development, cultural awareness and movement programs at Youth Centres and community organisations to promote social cohesion and since 2020 expanded her business Yatimba! into daycare centres, Primary and High Schools across NSW.

Conducting interactive workshops, group discussions and cultural dance fitness programs, Sheron has empowered thousands of young people with actionable skills and strategies to deal with bullying and stereotyping as well as implementing healthy habits and resilience building.

Both Lovemore and Sheron participated in the 2022 South African night out event that raised \$32,000 for the Missionvale Care Centre. Welcome to our family! We are so grateful and proud to have you!

Below are some of the highlights of 2022, and we hope that it will bring you great joy to know that you are such a huge part of it all!

EDUCATION:



The school looks back on an excellent year with many highlights. Below are a few:

We began a March and Drill team, and after just 3 months they participated in a local competition where they won 4 trophies: with 1st place (grand match), 2nd place (best drumline), 3rd place (best dress), and 3rd place (best drum major).

For the first time in 3 years, our school was able to put on a proper concert again. It always brings a lump to the throat to watch the little ones perform, singing and dancing, eagerly looking around for a parent in the audience.

A big highlight for the children is the year-end outing. In December we took them to the beach for a day of fun to reward them for tremendous hard work. **We are so proud to report that the school is back to the 90% pass rate they had before Covid!**

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT:

The youth development team really boomed this year!

Our ballroom dancing kids competed on an interprovincial level, and then qualified to go to Nationals in Cape Town! It was their first ever time in our mother city, and the generosity of our donors made it possible for them to also experience Table Mountain!

We had 12 youth submit works for our Legacy Art Project. An amazing exhibition was held in our Boardroom which was then moved to the Nelson Mandela Bay Art Museum. We were amazed by what they produced in such a short time. You can imagine the excitement when some of the works sold!

The literacy group hosted a very successful spelling bee and the drama group had 3 local high schools compete in a drama competition where learners wrote, produced and starred in a production depicting the life of Sr Ethel. It was a deeply moving event.



SKILLS DEVELOPMENT:



The gardens have produced the most amazing vegetables again this year. In the past we would allow the volunteers to take one third of the produce home, but we have changed this slightly. Instead of produce, they now earn "MCC Bucks" which is a token currency that they can use in our Swop Shop. Here they can still "buy" some of the produce back, but they also have the opportunity to "buy" other items like toiletries, oil, rice, clothing, stationery etc. We have also reduced the period the gardeners are with us so that we can have a higher turnaround time to train people and move them into producing home gardens. The training period is now 6 months and our current group will leave us in March 2023, making room for new

community members to learn this valuable skill. Once they leave, we offer a mentorship program of 1 year, to maximise the success rate of the home gardens. Our dream is to see the community trading produce with one another and becoming more and more self-sufficient.

Our ladies in the sewing room continue to blow us away with their skill and imagination! We have been invited to sell some of our stock to tourists coming into the harbour on cruise ships. These sales happen on an ad hoc basis, but it is wonderful to get this kind of exposure and support! The ladies have also made new netball uniforms for our school girls and they are looking so smart! We also landed a new contract, making shopping bags from recycled coffee bags and sweet wrappers. These are not sold from our shop, but are included in an online shop belonging to a local entrepreneur.



IMPUMELELO TRAINING CENTRE



In July we began a pilot project based on the NEETs program (which stands for Not in Education Employment or Training) which was developed by Prof Tom Ryan, Emeritus Associate Professor UCT. Prof Ryan is an experienced facilitator who uses systems thinking and design thinking approaches.

Unemployment in our area is rife and many could not complete their schooling. We know that there is great potential in these young lives, and we want to unlock it through practical skills training they could use to earn a living. This unique course in retail is designed to impact on the employability of youth, community development and sense of

belonging. Theoretic knowledge on entrepreneurship and retail is provided in a project based learning environment. While doing the theoretical part the candidates already start working in retail spaces who agree to partner with us on weekends. Through a rigorous selection process we chose 40 candidates to participate in the programme. All participants received a tablet to enable them to connect digitally to some of the course content. The energy in the room was incredible! Our first group have just completed their theory and are now volunteering in the community at schools, creches and churches.

What we didn't expect, was how quickly word would spread, and how in demand our candidates had become! We have had so many successes – by December 2022 we placed over 20 learners with local retailers and the feedback has been incredible. One company, a local chocolate and biscuit manufacturer, had this to say: *"Thanks for your help in getting this started – our supervision group have fully bought in to the programme and it is keeping us supplied with excellent work candidates – people who really want to work and value their jobs. We have had one person that did not work out sadly. He was just not physically able to handle heavy equipment. Apart from that it has been great for our company and hopefully for our new employees as well. I hope this will be the start for each new worker to develop and grow their self-image. That first job is so important."* Most of the placements were temporary, but 2 candidates have since been offered permanent employment with a local clothing retail outlet.

HEALTH CARE:



With our beloved Dr Strömbeck unable to volunteer due to his own ill health, and seeing the complete lack of care and treatment our patients receive at State facilities, our Board granted permission for us to hire a Doctor onto our staff. We are delighted to have found a most competent, compassionate and caring individual in Dr Karen Schuster. Her passion for community health radiates through everything she does.

One of the biggest benefits in terms of community impact from our clinic side, is that we can fast track diagnosis. The State Health Facilities are so overrun, and it is completely normal to wait in line for very long periods of time, in some cases even days. If follow-up tests are required, this process could continue for months and years. By having a Doctor on a full-time basis, we are able to see to things before they become serious. In the past year we have had a number of cancer diagnoses, as well as TB – in both cases early intervention is everything!

Another superb addition has been our support groups. Community members have a wide variety to choose from including:

- HIV / Aids Support Group
 - Women's Group
 - Men's Group
- Substance Abuse Group
 - Parents Group

These groups are created as safe spaces for people to share experiences, learn from each other, and to have a place of care and understanding where they can debrief and let out all their frustrations / anxieties. The feedback to date has been phenomenal. We have seen people with addiction problems take serious steps towards recovery, families are healing and youngsters involved with gangs are beginning to take more and more responsibility for their actions. We still have a very long way to go, but it is a great step in a positive direction.

A great example of this was something special that happened at the year-end Christmas distributions. (Every year we distribute Christmas presents to approximately 5000 children). In recent years, it has sadly often happened that they get robbed of their gifts as they walk home from us. This year, our support group attendees (many of whom are, or have been involved in gangs), volunteered to walk the children home safely! No one messed with them this time! 😊



One of the biggest lessons we learnt this year, is that everything comes down to love. Whether in our school, ITC program or in the support groups, the one thing that stands out above all is a human being's need to be loved. To be recognised, to have a sense of purpose, to feel like you matter.

Sadly, for many of the people coming to our Centre, this very basic need is not met at home. This is largely due to generational poverty. Years and years of extremely harsh circumstances have led to people being in a constant state of survival. They have become overwhelmed by it, their self-worth is non-existent and addiction to substances is higher than ever. Gangs often offer a young person a sense of belonging and a life of crime tends to follow, beginning a vicious cycle.



Through the support groups we also came to know Athenkosi. We know him as Athi, and he attends our Young Men's Support Group. Athi dropped out of school in Grade 4 because his mother was very ill and there was no grown-up around to look after her. Can you imagine being 10 years old and having to find a way to provide for your family? His biggest challenge was organizing food, and he soon found himself involved with gangs to be able to secure it. This life is not what he had dreamed about, and now he is a young adult wishing for change. He began coming to our support groups and has been one of the most vocal in sharing his life experiences. A few months ago we noticed that he was not attending anymore, and when we investigated why, we found that he was in hospital after being severely beaten up. Athi had stopped to eat with his friends, when a rival gang from another area came storming in, claiming that one of their places was robbed. Athi happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time and was found guilty by association. Witnesses at the event said that they did not think Athi would survive. He had a very severe head injury and spent a few weeks

in hospital. After being discharged Athi was back at support group, and continues to make positive changes in his life.

When the Centre was approached in December to provide workers for a local supermarket, Athi was one of the candidates who worked through the festive season and impressed everybody he worked with his positive attitude. Our coordinator was actually asked where we find people like him! He earned himself the nickname “supervisor” as he was forever checking on the other candidates, making sure they got to work and were doing what is expected of them! Athi has been a regular at the Care Centre, even when the support group doesn’t meet, he is here to help where help is needed and he never asks for anything in return. Last week an opportunity came up and Athi is now working at a local bakery, continuing to make us proud.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT BUILDING:



Having outgrown the existing space, and with the addition of new programs, we need a bigger youth development centre. Building is still in progress and it is very exciting to see! Soon we will have our own robotics lab, maker-space, lecturing rooms, art spaces and more!

HOW YOUR FUNDS WERE SPENT:

Our heartfelt gratitude goes to a couple in Australia who wish to remain anonymous, for their wonderfully generous contribution towards our new youth development building.

Many thanks to everyone at Global Development Group (GDG Project Number J1028N) for their facilitation and processing of our donations – an unbelievable \$200,000 in 2022!! We enjoyed meeting and showing Josh Edwards, our Project Officer at GDG, and colleague Dan Watts around the Centre and look forward to many future visits as we work towards sustainability.

From the graph below you will see that 50% of Missionvale Australia funds in 2022 went to Youth Development. A large portion included the building, but it also went towards the running of our Impumelelo Training Centre and the new recycling project. The second biggest portion went to Education. One percent went on costs such as fuel, electricity, water etc.



- | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| ■ Education 20% | ■ Gardens 3% | ■ Health Care 12% |
| ■ Nutrition 3% | ■ Other 1% | ■ Recycling 9% |
| ■ Skills Development 2% | ■ Youth Development 50% | |

On behalf of all the people in Missionvale, and all of us at the Care Centre, THANK YOU for all the miracles you make possible here!

Our hearts are singing.

Linda van Oudheusden
Marketing Manager
info@missionvale.org.za