



COMBINED CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES TO THE POOR

NPO Reg. - 046-047

25 February 2007

I'm sure for all of you, as for me, the holiday season and all that happened is a distant memory. It is the end of February already and most of us are privileged to be back at work! And by the sounds of things, it's been a busy, busy start to the year for most people – myself included!

So busy in fact that I haven't even been able to put the time aside that I usually do to write these letters so this might turn out to be a short letter for a change! Yeah, I know I always say this and then send you no less than four pages!! Well, let's see.

Food collection is still strong. One store however has us on a rotational roster with two other ministries so every six months our collection days change and until the end of June one of our collection days has moved to Saturdays turning this all into a genuine seven day a week commitment!

The Centre programmes are in full swing again and a really exciting development has been the formalization of a Centre Management Team consisting of 6 of our community volunteers and 3 other individuals from "the outside", like myself. The work itself hasn't changed much but each Team member now oversees one of nine portfolios (from centre resources, to youth programmes, to social assistance, etc). The Team meets formally once a week to share feedback on different programmes and to decide together on any matters that need to be dealt with.

It's amazing to see what happens in people's lives when they feel you have confidence in their ability to do something! They just rise to it and things begin to happen!! Although what should make the work load lighter sometimes actually makes it heavier because now all the things you were trying to get done by yourself, one thing at a time, are now all happening at the same time and you still have to be involved in it all!

This coming week our volunteers are participating in the first phase of Capacity Building training which is part of the Barnabas Trust mentoring programme we are now a part of. We are also able to host this three day workshop, which includes five other community based organisations, at the Centre.

I would like to really thank everyone who has contributed towards the needs on the list I sent out last month. We have received some carpets, a bit of paint, gates for the veggie garden, school bags, a couple of decent computers, clothing, books, etc. There is still plenty on that list that we do still need so, if you don't mind going back to it and looking to see if there is any way you can help with something on it.

Some focus areas for the next while will be coordinating the different individuals and groups who are involved this year in the different programmes. Preparing things for our first "official" financial year-end at the end of March – audits etc. and organizing our first real AGM (by the end of June) where everyone involved or interested can get together, hear the details of what has been happening and contribute to our direction for the future. I'll keep you informed. Fund raising is also a large focus right now. We are streamlining a

running cost budget which is continuous, i.e.: what it costs to just keep the doors open. We are then putting together individual budgets for projects and programmes which are more concise with time frames. We are hoping that segmenting things in this way will help us raise money for specifics and donors will be able to contribute with a bit more focus. If anyone has details of contacts/application procedures for funding or community support from social responsibility sections of large businesses, I'll appreciate it if you could forward this to me.

Over the last two weeks we have been doing follow-up visits to the homes of people who are on our list, qualifying for food and other assistance, but haven't been around for a while. Of the almost 200 families who met our qualification criteria this time last year, only 60 odd still come regularly! We want to know what has happened and our findings so far have been interesting.

Some have moved to other areas (from a shack to an RDP house, to live with family or just away from the river to another shack area), some have found work, some have died (mostly HIV and TB related) and some had unrealistic expectations of us (like we were going to supply building material and buy fridges for everyone who needed!!). Some are just permanently drunk and some have said they have been afraid to come to the Centre because they are pregnant again by another guy and fear that we would scold them and chase them away! Life can be tough out there and often our "obvious" solutions actually just don't cut it!

On one visit we caught up with one of our missing families in their RDP home. (For those of you who are unfamiliar, an RDP house is a one room house – not one bedroom but just one room! With a sink! Mother and father are in their mid thirties and Anelisa is seven years old. All three are HIV positive with different levels of TB infection and their only income is Anelisa's R180 monthly child support government grant. Anelisa attends our programmes sometimes and her mother has been a regular volunteer in the vegetable garden but they haven't been around for a while which has been a concern. Through the visit we found out that her father has become sick and needs constant care. Fortunately Anelisa and her mother are quite healthy and strong but Anelisa goes to school each day without a uniform and without books! We checked with her school and these are her requirements for the year: 1 x 30 pocket flip-file, 2 x large glue sticks, 5 x HB pencils, 1 pack of 24 colouring pencils (long ones), 1 pair of scissors, 1 eraser, 1 sharpener, 1 big tin floor polish, 2 x sunlight bar soaps, 3 x toilet rolls, 1 x 72 page A4 hardcover book, R50,00 annual school fee, R50,00 annual computers fee, a school uniform. She is in Grade 2.

Maybe you can do this for her. A real challenge, I know! And she is not the only little one who needs help. Let me know.

Blessings

M a r k

Matthew 19:21 Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

- in the words of musician Michael W. Smith, "Now to live the life."

mark@ccmp.org.za

Contact:
Tel: 041 360 2780

Cell: 082 473 4389