

10 June 2025

Dear Mrs Pohlen, Teachers, Parents, Pupils and friends of St Ursula Gymnasium.

On behalf of Dr Maria Lindner (Sr Ellen) Programme Director of Sizanani Outreach programme, I would like to thank you for the very generous donation of 3710.33€ which you collected for us at your annual Advent Bazaar. This was a wonderful effort on your part and we thank you very much for your support and willingness to sponsor our project.

In the past year we have experienced both challenges and high points, as we strive to make a positive difference in the lives of the poor and vulnerable in our area. Like so many other organisations around the world, we have also been negatively impacted by the American Government pausing all foreign aid.

Many organisations in South Africa working in the area of HIV/AIDS support have had to close and stop providing services as they are no longer able to continue without the support of international funding. Although we are uncertain about receiving promised funding from the US, we have still been able to continue with our work thanks to individual sponsors who continue to support us.



House made from mud and branches

Around 83% of the dwellings in Nkandla are traditional i.e. made from mud bricks baked in the sun, stones, or branches, which are readily available in the environment. These houses though cheap to build, are very susceptible to damage by wind and water. The moisture soaks into the mud, mould grows on the walls, and people live in almost constant damp conditions, causing them to develop chronic respiratory problems or skin conditions which in turn weaken their immune systems. As the moisture content of the bricks increases they become soft and collapse, resulting in damaged walls or collapsed houses.

Heavy rains over the past months have had a huge impact both on our ability to provide services to clients and on the well-being of clients themselves. The heavy rains turned the maze of dirt roads leading out to isolated areas into impassable mud, cutting people off from transport to clinics, schools, workplaces and social services. Fragile seeds and seedlings in home gardens rotted in the ground destroying precious sources of fresh vegetables. Some people were also displaced as their houses collapsed or roofs were blown off by strong winds.



Collapsed house



SOP with the support of generous benefactors has helped many families to stabilize mud structures with concrete plaster, or built two or three room houses for families living in unsafe and dilapidated dwellings. In the past year SOP built Five houses costing between R60000.00(3160€) and R86000.00(4530€) each

We have continued to promote economic sustainability among our clients through the food garden, chicken rearing and craftwork projects. Funding enabled us to send 17 young adults to the Bethlehem Basic Training Project to learn plumbing, welding and bricklaying. Many clients are in need of water tanks as most homes in Nkandla do not have running water - people have to collect water from a community tap or from the river. Where possible we have assisted clients with water tanks so that rain water can be collected and used for domestic cleaning and agricultural projects. The water tanks can also be filled when the water tankers bring water into the area.



SOP helped this woman establish a food garden and trained her in chicken rearing. She has been very successful with these two activities and the profit she has made from the sale of the vegetables and chickens has enabled her amongst other things to build a two room house.

Sr Selina Baloyi with women from the Sizanani Huts project doing traditional grass work.





The Peer Education Programme is an educational service provided by SOP to primary and high school learners. In the Peer Education Programme, learners at the schools take part in sessions which include topics such as: Introduction to Peer Education, Self-Awareness, Goal Setting, Leadership, Bullying, HIV/AIDS, Substance Abuse, Gender-Based Violence, Teenage Pregnancy, and Decision-Making. The impact of these programmes is measured by: observed positive behaviour change, learner understanding and participation in all activities relating to the programme and an increase in self-confidence and the willingness to work together in groups.



Peer Education Sessions were held with learners in five primary schools, three high schools, one combined school, and one prevocational school.

Support groups for children with chronic health issues especially those infected or affected by HIV/AIDS have always been an integral part of the services offered by Sizanani Outreach Programme. In these groups the Patient Advocates working at Thalaneni and Chwezi clinics provide treatment adherence support, health education as well as memory box work to help children deal with loss and to build resilience, by helping them to have fun, succeed in activities, make friends and have new experiences while at the same time learning important life skills.



Playgroups help children develop cognitive, physical and social skills.



Sizanani Child and Youth Care Centre (SCYCC). These children have either been abandoned or removed from their families by court order as a result of severe neglect and/or physical and sexual abuse



Sizanani Child and Youth Care Centre (SCYCC) provides residential care for up to 35 children placed by Court Order. The children range in age from birth to 18 years, Initially SCYCC took in children who were left orphaned or vulnerable as a direct result of HIV/AIDS and these children for the most part had issues dealing with the loss of a family member or chronic health issues. Over the years this has changed and more and more children have been placed at the Centre coming from backgrounds of domestic violence, abuse and/or neglect. Most of the children at SCYCC are in their formative years, where factors such as adequate healthcare, good nutrition, a clean and safe environment, psycho-social support and trauma counselling as well as educational stimulation will to a large extent influence their future as adults.

Dr Maria Lindner with a child at SCYCC

We would like to thank Mrs Susannne Lemmer for all her efforts to promote the work of Sizanani Outreach Programme and for her faithful support over many years.

Thank you once again Mrs Pohlen and everyone at St. Ursula's for the very generous donation and support for our project, it is very much appreciated. Thank you for your care and concern for those living in impoverished and vulnerable situations and your willingness to reach out and help. May God bless and reward you.

Kind regards.



Debra Buckham  
Finance Administration  
Sizanani Outreach Programme



Annual Christmas party for vulnerable children