



## New Montessori School at Mantsase:

After a year of collecting equipment, trying to win over the teacher of the existing pre-school, we are now very excited to be starting school on Monday. Ester has been training in Gonubie (near East London, South Africa) at Maya's Montessori for the last six months and has now come back to help run our school. We are schooling the Mantsase preschoolers and are going to introduce English from the very beginning. We are also privileged to have the fantastic equipment that was used at Little Babes English Montessori and equipment donated to us from Jake, Betty and Paula in America. The children have been busy helping us put shelves together and display equipment on to them. They now have real glass jugs for practical life and all sorts of "toys" to "play" with. This is a very exciting time for us and we all look forward to starting first day of school on the 25 January. I'm sure many little Einstein's will walk through our doors. Thank you to all who have made this dream happen.



*Our pre-schoolers enjoying their first day of Montessori school with their new teacher*

## Monthly Bio:



Khabane, age 14, arrived at the Home in 2005 with his sister. He is an exemplary student who passed Standard 7 in December and has just started Secondary School this month. He is also a skilled athlete and was chosen by the Olympafrica Youth Ambassador Programme last year to represent Lesotho for football. His favourite foods are rice and fish, his favourite subject in school is science, and his favourite hobbies are football and drawing (he's a great artist, too!). His best friend at the Home is Neo.

## Education News:

A new school year started on the 18<sup>th</sup> of this month. Welcome back to all of our students, and good luck in this New Year! We have a new volunteer at Mantsase who is running an after-school tutoring programme to help our children with their studies. So another welcome to Peter, who hails from Uganda. He began work just a few weeks ago, and has shown himself to love both children and education. He has seemingly infinite patience when teaching difficult material and has children all but queuing outside in their enthusiasm to learn. We appreciate his hard work.



We would like to welcome the newest member of our staff, Ester, who is now our preschool teacher in the morning and our librarian in the afternoon. Ester is originally from Mohale's Hoek and has been a preschool teacher for 10 years. She spent the last 6 months training in East London, South Africa, to teach in the Montessori style of education. Her inspiration to become a preschool teacher was her love of children (she has four herself), and her desire to help improve their education. She came to Mantsase because she has seen so many orphans working on the streets, as they have been unable to support themselves and go to school. She wants to help them receive a good education so that they can, as adults, get good jobs to and become successful and active members of their communities.

## Birthdays:

### **January:**

Mamoshoeshoe Ralekhetla – January 7

Kenuoe Tsolo – January 7

Morepeli Nkalosi – January 10

Manoti Maroba – January 10

Mamello Montsi – January 25

Mpatliseng Kometsi –

January 26

Bokang Marou – January 31

### **February:**

None

A special wish for each one to have a wonderful and blessed Birthday.

## Farewells:

We are saying a bittersweet goodbye to many of our older children, now adults, who have recently left the home. Retselisitsoe and Bokang are finishing their final year of school in town, while Mankhala, Thato, Motlalepula have successfully found jobs. Mpho is thinking of moving to Maseru and Mantoa is deciding between continuing her academic career and seeking work in town. Malehloa and Khotso, while no longer under Mantsase care as children, have both opted to remain at Mantsase to work in our gardens. We wish them the best of luck in whatever paths they have chosen.

I have frequently heard peals of laughter coming from the playground as the children enjoyed their new toys. Thanks Msizi and Clarens!



## Home Improvement:

Another project currently in the works at Mantsase is the re-thatching and repair of two of our historic rondavels (traditional circular houses). One of these buildings houses our library and only needs minor additions to the thatch on the roof. The other rondavel's roof is caving in and will need to be completely re-thatched. Two of the windows also need repairs. The frames are torn off the hinges, so the room will need new window frames and panes as well.



*This is the roof of one Mantsase's original rondavels. As you can see the thatching is badly damaged. The roof leaks when it rains, preventing us from using the room*

## New Playground:

Msizi Africa and Clarens have collaborated to fund and create a playground for the children. Off to one side of the Mantsase compound, the playground contains a garden, slides, swings, jungle gyms, and a sand box, with two outdoor rocking horses and a children's toy car dashboard coming to us soon from Bloemfontein. We are also recycling many old tires from Mohale's Hoek to paint with bright colours and use for play and for flower beds. Lucy of Mzisi Africa even came out to help set up the playground, and to build and paint a retaining wall to one side of the play area. Throughout the summer break



*Some of the children enjoying their new slides (left) and sandbox (above).*

## Thank you:

A big thank you to Jacob and Whitney Gauthier, and to Norman Bates, who graciously donated toys to the children for Christmas. Because of them the children were able to have presents, which made the day a little more special. Thanks also to Rich and Nancy Carlson for donating fruit, and to Emily Sinagra, Elena Sinagra and all of Landmark School in Massachusetts, Carol Razzel, J. Lang for their generous financial donations. Also, a special thank you to those not mentioned who have visited us, donated money, groceries, time and prayers for the children and staff.

If you are interested in giving to Mantsase, we have a [new website](#) to receive financial donations. All proceeds go directly to Mantsase through our partner Msizi Africa.

## Christmas at the Home:

The children woke up on Christmas very excited, knowing that the day was special. They asked continually throughout the morning when they would get the presents they had

seen wrapped and awaiting them. Lunchtime brought the first gift: a woman, M'e Mahashane, had paid for a caterer to provide not only a feast, but all the fancy dishware, tablecloths, flowers, etc. that goes with it. A typical holiday here usually includes foods like rice, meat, a couple different salads, and a soft drink. The children were not disappointed. Only after the meal were they given their gifts. Thanks to generous donations every child was able to receive one present. They spent the afternoon playing with and enjoying their new toys (or in the case of the older children, their new clothes and lip gloss). All in all it was a pleasant, quiet day.



*The children opening and enjoying their presents*



*Lunch from the European Union's Visit in December*



*Above: Some of our children posing for the camera*

*Right: Mamoshoeshoe*



# Khotso, Pula, Nala!