



Newsletter

| Issue 1 | January 2011

Dear Friend

Very best wishes for 2011 - may the Lord lead and bless you in the year ahead so that your hopes and aspirations are realized.

I am so excited to share all our incredibly inspiring news - so much has happened since the last Newsletter. Firstly we had a wonderful 10 year Celebration of the Friends of Mosvold Scholarship Scheme on 4 December at Mosvold Hospital and a highly successful Student and Graduate Imbizo on the 3rd and 5th December respectively - I will elaborate on these events later.

Results

The breaking news, however, is that the pass rate of our 108 students in their year end examinations was an incredible **90%**! This is an awesome achievement in any one's books, but even more so when it is achieved by rural youth, who were subjected to poor schooling. This pass rate is way above the national average, and even exceeds the improved 2010 Matric pass rate! This can be attributed to the mentoring support we provide to our students and the student's commitment to succeed.

Our mentoring support aims to assist students to address both academic and social issues which they face, in order for them to focus on their studies, and pass. Clearly the students have been able to do this through the mentoring support provided by Dumisani (Student Mentor) and his team of local mentors. The local mentors are: Thembaletu Mncwango (UKZN students); Catherine Hitchcock (UKZN students); Nhlanhla Nsele (Mangosuthu students); Lynette Harding (Western Cape students); Irene Roy (Wits & Medunsa students); Mthulisi Siwela (UKZN-Pmb students); Kirthee Pillay (UKZN-Pmb students); Dr Andrew Ross (UKZN medical students). Our sincere gratitude to you all for walking alongside the students and helping them succeed.

Imbizo

Of course without the self motivation and determination of the students these results would not be possible. That leads me to the wonderful Student Imbizo we had on 3 December at the Tiger Lodge in Jozini – what a wonderful time of interaction with the students, where we could celebrate being a family, discuss our achievements over the year and discuss our plans for this year. By the end of the Imbizo, I was so impressed by the quality of young people that we are supporting, who in most cases have overcome incredible obstacles, and shown immense determination, to be enrolled to study a health science degree in order to change their life, their family's and ultimately the community at large.

Celebration

On the 4 December 2010, we held a 10 year celebration at Mosvold Hospital. The function was organised to acknowledge those whom had the vision and faith to start the scheme (when many

said it would be impossible), acknowledge and recognise the achievements of the students who were successful and are now graduates (especially the first students who were pioneers), recognise the support of the parents of the students and the community at large, as well as appreciate the many individuals and companies that provided financial support for the scheme to become a reality.

The occasion was graced by the KZN MEC for Health, Dr S Dhlomo, other Department of Health and Education officials; local traditional leadership, parents, friends, graduates, current students, representatives of funding organisations and members of the community. Dr Dhlomo in his speech called out and commended the first graduates, France Nxumalo (Optometrist); Dumisani Gumede (Physiotherapist) and Nkosinqiphile Nyawo (Biomedical Technologist) for working hard and showing that it was possible for rural youth to succeed at University. In addition he commended the vision and commitment of Dr Andrew Ross, Mrs Elda Nsimbini and the first Trustees who conceived of the scheme and ensured that it became a reality.

It was a true celebration, with all the graduates dressed in bright orange golf shirts - they demonstrated their joy by singing and dancing, which caused the audience to applaud and cheer loudly. The growth of the organisation was obvious to see as the 109 students wore white golf shirts and the graduates wore orange - the marquee was awash with white or orange shirts!

The celebration was a time of looking back and acknowledging all that has happened, as well as looking ahead to what we hope to achieve in the future. In this regard, the vision of expanding the programme to other rural hospitals, and the associated name change was shared.

The MEC requested a delegation of graduates, Trustees and staff to accompany him to share the success of the programme with the KZN Premier, Dr Z Mkhize. In the meantime we are assisting the Department of Health to strengthen their bursary programme.

After the celebration and for a number of hours on Sunday, the graduates held their annual meeting at the Tiger Lodge. They discussed a range of topics and set goals for 2011.

There is so much more to share, but I had better leave it there until next time! Please visit our [website](#) and [Facebook](#) page.

Regards

Gavin

Our latest [Annual Report](#) is available - download a copy - it makes great reading!

Contact Details: Postnet Suite 10328; Private Bag X7005; Hillcrest; 3650 Tel: 031 765 5774 - Fax: 031 765 6014 - Email: info@umthomboyouth.org.za - Website: www.umthomboyouth.org.za