

Hillcrest Advice Bureau and Bursary Fund

A Better South Africa, One Degree At A Time...

Chairperson's Report For 2015

Deep thanks are extended to all Stakeholders in Hillcrest Advice Bureau and Bursary Fund for your commitment, be it in time, money or things, to making '*A Better South Africa, One Degree At A Time...*' through empowering a few of the underprivileged members of the Community of the Valley of 1000 Hills, KwaZulu Natal, to help themselves out of the poverty cycle and to become economically contributing members of South African Society.

In 2015 we were blessed with an increase in revenue over that received in 2014 which was due to one of our long term Trust Funds donating both for 2015 and 2016 within the 2015 financial year. This move is most welcome as it shows that this Funder has confidence in our work and allows us to start to work towards an actual budget rather than towards a 'hoped for' budget.

The Advice Bureau continues to operate from the African Gospel Church in Qadi and assisted 115 clients during 2015, also issuing food parcels used while those clients who would starve wait for their applications to go through. On average 3 to 4 food parcels are issued per month and each eligible client receives a food parcel for between 3 to 5 months. Mrs. Mtakwende is being assisted by a volunteer from the Community, Ms. Sokhela, whose interest is warmly welcomed and appreciated.

The Schools Fund, run by Rosemary Dickinson, assisted 143 Learners from 9 Quintile 3 and below schools located within the KwaNysuwa, Inanda Dam and Molweni areas with school uniforms as well as paying Golden Hours school fees for a mentally challenged Learner. Funding continued from the Solon Foundation and additional funds were provided from a private donor. Rosemary travels on her own visiting schools and homes in the remotest of areas and freely provides of her time, petrol and smile to complete this valuable work.

During 2015 the Tertiary Fund, operating from the Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Hillcrest, assisted 53 students with their studies by making up shortfalls in fees not paid by the National Student Finance Assistance Scheme (NSFAS), by paying for books and by making a contribution to transport costs where appropriate to enable students to attend lectures and exams as well as to travel to remote parts of the province for their allocated work experience sessions. 11 students graduated during 2015 of which 5 are already employed. The problems with Nsfas funding in 2015 led to a number of our students having huge arrears after having been promised Nsfas funding and then having that promise withdrawn during the course of the year. Some of the arrears were covered by HABandBF whilst for others we have entered into payment plans with the relevant Institution. The net result of these additional costs is that the average payment per student during 2015 jumped up to R16 000 (2014 R11000).

94% of students assisted by the Tertiary Fund passed their 2015 exams.

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Report of the Advice Bureau For 2015

We would like to thank the Reverend Ngcobo for allowing us the use of the African Gospel church on Shayamoya Road, Qadi. A potential Funding Company is considering investing in building alongside the church for the Advice Bureau, Health Clinic and Soup Kitchen to operate out of. This would allow clients to be seen privately and not share with 20 pre-schoolers. It is possible that the Funders may also develop a Community Vegetable Garden on the grounds with water provided by rainwater run-off stored in jo-jo tanks. Permissions from the land owners are currently being sought for this work to go ahead.

Greenacres Foundation again provided funding for the Advice Bureau for 2016 and we are extremely grateful to them for the security in budgeting and planning that these funds give us as we are to Solon Foundation which funded food parcels used while those clients who would starve wait for their applications to go through. On average 3 to 4 food parcels are issued per month and each eligible client receives a food parcel for between 3 to 5 months.

115 clients have been assisted during 2015. Service levels improved with the addition of the Telkom mobile landline which enables us to speed up the process of solving issues.

We are also benefitting from an additional volunteer, Nokuthula Sokhela, who lives in the area. The Tertiary Fund is funding her studies to become a Paralegal which will mean that she can provide the Advice Bureau with sickness or other absence cover.

2015 saw staff development as Mrs. Mtakwende completed a computer literacy course and a Counselling Skills course. The counselling skills have enabled a significant improvement in the management of staff stress associated with hearing client's personal traumas. It has also enabled staff to be able to refer clients for appropriate help.

Problems resolved include the following:-

Problem	2015	R	2014	R	2013	2012
Civil Pensions		2		0		0 3
Child Support Grants		17		3		2 2
Motor Vehicle Accident	0		0		0	1
Foster Care Grants	10		3	2700	1	1
Death Benefits	6	8000	2		0	3
Disability Grant	73	26692	99	18900	24	4
Workmen's Compensation			0		0	4
Identity Book	2		2		3	0
Dependent Benefits			0		0	5
Transfer of File to new area		0		0		0 1
Share Entitlement	0		0		0	4
Issupol Insurance	0		0		0	1
Maintenance	3	6200	1	48000		
Miscellaneous		2				

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Total 115 40892 110 69600 32 29

Areas where clients live are:

Qadi, 70
KwaNyuswa 30
Embo 12
Emolweni 3

Report dated ___ March 2016 By Mrs. W. Mtakwende

Example Advice Bureau Case - Disability Grant

Mfanizane Khumalo, was receiving a Disability Grant from the place he was living and it lapsed. He moved from that place to KwaNyuswa where he found someone who said he would help him restore his grant but that he must pay R900 so that this person would take him to the doctor in order for his Disability Grant to be restored.

His sister lent him the money which he was going to pay back. The client paid that R900 but all was in vain as it was a scam.

Luckily the client talked to one of the CareGivers who took the client to the Advice Bureau and we wrote a letter to the doctor at Botha's Hill clinic which is the clinic the client was now collecting his medicine from.

We were able to help the client obtain R26000 arrears and his monthly Disability Grant.

Example Advice Bureau Case - Miscellaneous

Dudu Shange has got 6 children, 3 are at school and 3 are too young for school. Her husband works 2 days a week as a gardener.

Dudu and her husband do not have I.D.s. All the children have no birth certificates. They have never attended a clinic since birth. They were all born at home. She cannot apply for birth certificates as she has no papers. Therefore she cannot apply for Child Support grant.

The children are starving. She sometimes does washing for neighbours in order to get some food. Both Dudu and her husband are alcoholics.

Social Services were contacted and the children have been taken into temporary care while the parents are receiving parenting counselling and help with their alcohol problem through the Social Worker. The Social Worker has taken over the case of applying for Birth Certificates, I.D.s and Child Support Grant.

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2015 REPORT - HILLCREST ADVICE BUREAU & BURSARY FUND - SCHOOL PROGRAMME

As well as the regular, much appreciated donation from the Solon Foundation of R28 000.00, we received a further R10 000.00 from an anonymous donor. This allowed us the freedom to extend our assistance beyond the parameters set in the Grant Agreement between ourselves and the Solon Foundation.

To this end we paid R3 000.00 for school fees at Golden Hours School, R1 000.00 towards transporting students from Khabazela High School in Embo to UKZN Open Day, R6 000.00 for school uniforms and for stationery for the brother and sister of one of the tertiary students.

Few requests came through the drop-in centre this year. One family whom we helped last year came again and we were able to help them after having checked that the items were not repeats from the year before. Khanyisile Sima from Mnamatha in the KwaNyuswa area came with the report of her 14 year only son who attends Golden Hours Special School in Durban North requesting uniforms and assistance with transport and fees. Simphiwe is unable to speak but according to his report is a confident learner, is polite with teachers, an enthusiastic member of the choir, understands the concept of time, understands most of the instructions given but cannot express himself verbally but uses gestures to make himself understood. In the hostel he is helpful with younger less capable learners but unfortunately lately has been disruptive at bedtime and has thrown things out of the window. After careful consideration we decided to assist this young boy and bought him a full set of school uniform and from another donor were able to contribute towards his hostel fees. Rosemary visited the school and met Simphiwe and was full of admiration for this Mother, Khanyisile, who managed to get her son a place in this well run school for mentally challenged learners. The staff were caring and compassionate, radiating love and concern for those with disabilities.

After approaching a few schools and others contacting us, we have assisted about 143 learners with items of school uniform from 10 different schools namely: Kwabazothini, Khanyisani, Laboure, Vusumuzi, Inkazimulo, Khanyakhwezi, Siyababula, Silindile, Gwadu Zenex and Golden Hours Special School.

Gwadu Zenex was a pleasure to deal with and Mr Zaca was his usual charming self. A little girl in Grade 1 showed absolutely no emotion when we fitted her new school dress and despite my trying hard to get a smile out of her, no response was forthcoming. We learnt from her teacher that she did not speak and that her parents died and she was taken in by the neighbours who abused her and 'burnt her with plastic'. She was then put in a home. Intent on wanting to help this unfortunate child we bought all the extra items of uniform that she needed only to discover on the next visit a week or two later that the home had closed and the children taken away by the police and no-one knows what has become of Bonisihle Makhoba and her brother Dlwethu. Our hearts ache for these tiny tots who have no love or security and little opportunity in life. About 20 children were assisted at Gwadu Zenex.

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The Food Parcels have become more expensive and average at about R125 each with the result that we exceeded our allocation. Winnie now asks us for 3 or 4 a month – we are hoping that the grants that are in progress will become a reality very soon. In total we purchased 29 food parcels. At the beginning of the year Holy Trinity Anglican Church provided these parcels for us and we are extremely grateful to them for helping us over many years.

Thandeka Ngema, our mentally challenged youngster who attends Molweni Zimele Centre for Physically and Mentally disabled, is growing up well and looking cared for and we were delighted to contribute to the cost of her transport . When visiting the Centre and meeting with Thandeka, her smile as always melts and warms our hearts.

Pinetown Bargain Bazaar have given us good prices and have been friendly and accommodating with all the returns. We have used Nu-Shop as well and try to get the best prices from both suppliers.

As always, we are indebted to our donors for making it possible for us to reach some desperately poor children and to give them pride in their appearance.

Rosemary Dickinson
School Administrator
Hillcrest Advice Bureau and Bursary Fund.

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Report of the Tertiary Fund For 2015

Highlights:

- **94% of our students passed** (50 out of 53)
- 11 Students Graduated 5 of whom are already in employment
- 53 Students assisted towards the completion of their tertiary education
- Current Students and Graduates from previous years linking with us through LinkedIn so that we can keep in touch with them throughout their careers, e.g.:-
 - Cyril Shezi (2011) is lecturing at Elangeni College
 - Sanele Mpanza (2014) is teaching in Mpumalanga province
 - Innocent Xulu (2006) is working for the Department of Education
 - Sithabiso Phungula (2015) is working at St. Mary's Hospital.
- 34 Distinctions achieved by our students in the November 2015 exams
- Collaboration with The Valley Trust, KwaNyuswa

Lowlights:

- Nsfas (National Student Financial Aid Scheme) failed to pay an increased proportion of our students
- Nsfas Appeals were not successful in 2015 - previous years we have assisted students in successfully appealing the Nsfas decision.
- This resulted in some students having huge arrears for 2015. After in depth discussion with Trustees we entered into payment plans with the relevant Institutions and the affected students have been allowed to register for 2016 although their results remain withheld until the fees are paid in full.
- 3 students failed and were told that we will help once they pass failed modules.

The Tertiary Team welcomed a new member - Akos Railston-Brown - who has been able to fill in when one or more of the main members are not able to attend the Drop In Centres.

We entered into a collaboration with The Valley Trust to set up an Internet Cafe within their premises for use by our students. In June our students cleaned and cleared for 5 hours at the Valley Trust. Ewing Trust provided 10 second hand desktop computers for the project and Hillcrest Trading and Electrical undertook the rewiring work at a discount. Nikordi Group has promised to provide unlimited wifi and Wesley Blake, IT specialist at Nikordi, has wired up the server and set up all of the computers. We are hoping the project will be live by the end of this Semester.

More modules and assignments are online and those which are not online have research associated with them which requires access to the internet. Students who are lucky enough to have received donated second hand laptops through us are able to use the free wifi at their Institution for online work but the majority of students have to try to fit in online work in the 2 hour pre-bookable timeslots on their Institutions' computers, which is not enough time. Students often end up having to pay R17 for internet cafe usage which is expensive and inconvenient.

We would like to thank Members of the Holy Trinity Anglican Church for allowing us to hold our Drop In Centres in the hall and for the use of the Fellowship Room for interviewing new applicants and providing C.V. Coaching and Interview Practice. We deeply appreciate being able to photocopy fee statements and certificates - we could not meet our Auditors' requirements without this facility.

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2015 STUDENTS, RECORD OF STUDIES

QUALIFICATIONS STUDYING FOR:

33 DEGREES IN:

B Com	2	B Soc Wk	3
B. Tech	2	BSc Computer Science	1
B Law	6	BSc Microbiology	1
B Ed	14	BA Youth Development	1
PGCE	1	Nursing	2

19 DIPLOMAS IN:

Pub Rel Man	2	Environmental Management	1
Nursing	2	Financial Management	2
Chem Eng	1	Information Technology	1
Operations Management	1	Human Resources	1
Youth Development	1	Marketing	1
Library Info	1	Journalism	1
Politics, Philosophy and Law	2	Office Management	1
Civil Engineering	1		

1 CERTIFICATE IN:

Mechanical Boiler Making	1
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INSTITUTIONS WHERE 53 STUDENTS ARE STUDYING:

Universities

UKZN	15
UNISA	21
Univ of Zul	2
DUT	6
MUT	2

FETs

Ethekwini	2
St. Marys' Inst of Nursing	1
Mpumulanga Inst of Nursing	2
Nursing & Primary Health Care Institute	1

11 STUDENTS QUALIFIED AT END OF 2015:

DEGREES

B. Soc. Sc.	2
BSc. Computer Science	1
B.A. Law	1
BSc Microbiology	1
B.Tech. Law	1
PGCE	1

DIPLOMAS

Enrolled Nurse	2
Dip. Operations Man.	1
Dip. Phil. Pol. & Law	1
Dip. Pub. Rel. Management	1
Dip. Financial Management	1