



NEWSLETTER, MARCH 2020

The first quarter of 2020 has been full of excitement as our programmes have got going and we want to share some good news stories with you during this uncertain time of COVID-19.

We are all affected by the pandemic and the measures taken by government to limit its spread: we are now all working from home and trying to keep in touch with our beneficiaries as far as possible.

Help us feed the children- In the lockdown to limit the spread of COVID-19, schools and early childhood development centres (ECDCs) have been closed and the children are spending their days at home.

This is necessary to manage the pandemic but the ECDC principals lose the income from fees paid by parents, the ECD practitioners lose their pay and the children lose the nutritious meals which are vital to their health and development.

Please help us to reduce the impact by providing food parcels for the ECD practitioners and supplementary meals for the children, now and when the ECDCs reopen. R340 will feed a family of 4 for a month. Your donations of R340 will buy Relief Boxes from a local supplier to feed the ECDC staff and children.

Click to donate through our website, and for information, use the reference "Feed children"

We need so much more help now than before the pandemic and we ask you to:

- **Stay engaged with us**
- **Continue and increase your financial support for SAEP.**

Hope Scholars Programme - Late in 2019 we were approached by a young organisation called Tshilidzi (Grace) which had been started by a number of committed Hope Scholars alumni, all of whom are now tertiary students, who wanted to provide tutoring to school children in Philippi along the lines that they had received while at SAEP.

We were very excited to see their commitment and immediately proposed a partnership to support each other. The new joint programme is called **Ihlumelo Hope Scholars programme**. SAEP is taking responsibility for presenting life-skills, environmental education and excursions, and Tshilidzi will continue with their after school tutorials in mathematics, natural science and English. We have 120 learners in the programme this year, in Grades 8 and 9 at Zisukhanyo and Sophumelela high schools in Philippi.

A meeting with parents was well attended and they showed commitment and enthusiasm. We look forward to a busy year of tutoring, hikes and excursions, and are ready to start again as soon as the schools reopen.

Early Childhood Development - Strengthening ECD centres as small enterprises – Thanks to a grant from the SMME Booster Fund we have been able to work intensively with 15 ECD centres to make them viable small businesses. We were very happy to welcome back Pumeza Mahobe, who has a wealth of ECD experience, to run the programme. She and the ECD team have already trained the principals and governing bodies at the participating centres and placed a trained

young person to work at each of these centres as a classroom assistant for 6 months. These young people have training in ECD but need work experience and will be mentored during their placements to equip them to work in the field.

Muhlale Manise, one of the assistants, told us what this opportunity means to her. [Link to video on website.](#)

The programme sponsor, the provincial **Department of Economic Development and Tourism (DEDAT)**, conducted an independent survey of trainees to assess the benefits of the training thus far. They have reported to us that the participants were very satisfied with all aspects although many wished it could last longer and some asked for extra classes in income generating skills.

In particular they appreciated learning about time management, gaining new knowledge on how to manage and govern ECD centres, and new skills to earn extra income. The principals will transfer these skills to the unemployed parents of the children in their care.

Long service at SAEP – In February we celebrated Andile Nqoko's 10 years of service at SAEP. Andile joined SAEP in 2005 as a Bridging Year student, and then returned as a staff member in 2010. He has run many programmes over the years and is sure to be remembered by many past volunteers and staff members. Andile is a qualified mountain guide, member of the Mountain Club of SA and leader of hikes for SAEP programmes.

His knowledge of the mountain and his responsible and careful management of hikes is exemplary as he introduces our students to the mountains and teaches them how to be safe in the outdoors.

Andile also keeps all our office ICT systems running and he trains Bridging Year students in computer skills. Thanks to Andile for all that he does and all he has contributed to SAEP for so long!





Learning session facilitated by Tshilidzi member, and parents' meeting

Early Childhood Development –

We are delighted to tell you that, during the December holidays there was great progress in the refurbishment sponsored by Prudential Investment Managers. Luntu Educare Centre and Thandolwethu ECD centre have been transformed into safe, bright, nurturing spaces conducive to children's learning. The centres have been refurbished, inside and out.

The third centre, Sithembele, is more complicated. Work will start on this centre soon, once there is agreement between all parties and the contract is signed. In addition to sponsoring the refurbishment of these centres, Prudential donated funds for toys and essential equipment to the 3 centres, so that the children have fun and stimulation.

Thank you Prudential!



Luntu Educare

Thandolwethu



A new **Bridging Year** cohort started at the beginning of March with 75 very keen new students. After orientation and career assessments we have unfortunately had to put the programme on hold during the lockdown but are keeping in touch with them via SMS and WhatsApp and providing what support we can.

The Tertiary Support Programme (TSP) was very pleased to welcome Sihle Joja as the new Tertiary Support Officer for 2020. Sihle has a long history with SAEP programmes, and is an inspirational figure to younger students. She first joined Hope Scholars in 2010 while in Grade 9, matriculated in 2013, registered for a BA at University of Western Cape and became a beneficiary of TSP. Later she became an adviser to a younger TSP student. She has experience of working with the student representative council at UWC so is very well connected to support students.

“Coming from a township school, with teaching and learning styles different from how tertiary is, I was grateful for being part of SAEP and felt they had prepared me well. It was easy for me to adapt at tertiary and I was helped to understand the style of teaching, and how to associate in a multi-cultural environment. I was helped a lot: academically, financially, personally and emotionally. Whenever I had academic issues, my mentor/ adviser would quickly assist me. And when faced with emotional challenges I would check-in with the social worker (all information discussed was confidential). In 2015 I changed course to LLB and am now studying a masters in law part time. Being at SAEP taught me the importance of community service and Ubuntu.”



Sihle plans to provide legal services pro bono to people who need them. She is currently trying to match tertiary students to advisers who can support them throughout the year, but particularly during this challenging time of lockdown.

- Annual General Meeting -

Our AGM is due soon and we will send the invitation when the date is set. Even if the lockdown is lifted by then, we will not hold a gathering which might place people at risk of infection. We will hold a virtual AGM through a mechanism which will be announced when we announce the date. We hope you will attend.