



## Project Director's report - November 2012

Often at meetings we do a review of how our project has grown

- The geographic spread

- The number of volunteers who are involved

- The number of schools where we serve

- The number of children we feed.

These are of course important, but they are not the most important.

Numbers tell us how many volunteers make the project work or how many meals we have served. They are important because they tell us:

- that we are being effective,

- that our time and money is bearing fruit

- they talk of SCALE

Scale is important, but more important is the issue of the quality of the work we do and the quality of our efforts is best described, not through numbers, but through changed lives. And surely that is why each of us is involved in e'Pap - to see lives that have changed for the better because we as a team cared enough to do something with our time and our money.

So today I am not going to spend much time telling you about that changes in scale - we have a new newsletter that will do that. Rather, I want to tell you a few stories of changed lives. Stories that have touched my heart and motivated me to keep at it.

I hope these stories will do the same for you.

### **A School - Joyful Noise**

We were introduced to Veronica Tshazibana and Joyful noise a few years ago. Veronica was a domestic worker in the home of one of our volunteers but what she really wanted to do was teach children. Veronica lives in a very poor area called Oupad and started the crèche 4 years ago in her back garden with one room which was divided into 2 sections, one for the babies and the other for the 3 to 6 year olds. She had a couple of ladies helping to run her little school while she worked. As time passed she decided that she needed to give up her housework and work full time at the school. What a good decision that was. Her e'Pap volunteer had time available and quickly became very involved with Veronica and the children. Their little school building was literally a shack on the the most unbelievably bad road. Helga supported them with toys and love and soon because of the

good care and education more and more children came and soon the schoolroom was too small. Helga then went around to various firms in town and had building materials donated. The building was enlarged, a lovely covering put on the walls inside and learners from Oakhill painted the building.

*A quote from Helga "Yesterday afternoon the Oakhill "service club" descended on Joyful Noise with paintbrushes in hand and did a sterling job in brightening up the little school both inside and out!*

*There were so many young people there that I could hardly see the inside of the classrooms at all but you could certainly feel the excitement and buzz that they enjoyed while "painting, fixing and doing"!*

*The children and parents will find it hard to recognize the drab wooden school that once was, it is now bright and cheerful thanks to Oakhill... "*

Astro turf (plastic grass) was laid outside to help with the dust and give the children a place to play. Shade cloth was put up and they now have a small but lovely area for the children to learn and be nourished and loved.

In my last email from Helga she excitedly said *"I have just got home from Joyful Noise and was VERY pleased to hear and see that the Municipality have started with the mainline pipes! Colarossi workers are there and some residents are being relocated temporarily.*

*The local councillor, a Mr Witbooi has said that they should be connected by March, which is wonderful news for the creche and a flushing toilet.*

*The Municipality planners have been to Veronica and give the creche building a number and marked it as a creche, separate from her house. Veronica has also requested, if possible, to be allocated another piece of ground behind the creche.*

*Lally has also been following up with KET for training for Veronica.*

*What a year for Joyful Noise, their staff and the little ones?"*

## **A Teacher - Nomfunisela**

Nomfu is a teacher whose life has been touched and changed through her involvement with e'Pap.

She had been teaching at Sinethemba and when times became tough for them they had to retrench her. Because she was such a good teacher and had done so well on a training week she was on, I was very sad to hear this news, and knew she would be an asset to whatever school she joined.

At that particular time the Rainbow of Hope Educare which belongs to the Methodist church was looking for a full time teacher. Let me give you a little background to this little school.

The Methodist church ran a soup kitchen from the church in Nekkie's. The children in the area literally ran around the streets with nothing to do as their parents were not able to pay

for pre-school. The Methodist church started feeding them e'Pap in the mornings and then our minister Rodney (who is here today) decided that they needed to be able to learn too. Nomfunisela was appointed having been interviewed by Di de Waal a very accomplished lady who has spent her life in Pre-school work, writing syllabus and training teachers. Another pre-school teacher Susan also helped get things off the ground.

With the help and support of Di and Susan, Nomfu has become an excellent teacher and the lives of both children, teacher and volunteer have changed.

During the year, Nomfu's little boy who was under 2 at the time pulled a kettle of boiling water over him while at his place of care and was rushed to hospital. They were supported and loved through this traumatic event by a multitude of people in ways she had never experienced before.

Di has never delivered e'Pap but is a wonderful volunteer and supporter. Without her, and Hilary our e'pap volunteer, Rainbow of Hope and Nomfu in particular would not have flourished in the way they have. Di has also secured a matching grant through an oversea Rotary Club to make improvements to the building and add a Jungle Gym. Together Di, Nomfu and the Methodist church have changed lives in a big way in Nekkie's. The children are being well prepared for "big school and are being well nourished each and every day.

### **A volunteer - Kathy**

is one of our volunteers from Plettenberg Bay. It's a story that is both tough and uplifting. Her story starts years before her involvement in e'Pap when she suffered a family tragedy that changed her life forever. She lost a 22 month old child in a drowning accident. Arising from this pain and suffering arose a ministry to children which Kathy pursued through thick and thin, but the major part of it came to a sad end.

With her permission I am going to read the balance of the story

*"Now we get to the E'pap story. Dawn asked me to become an E'pap volunteer. and I agreed, but in my heart I decided not to get involved further than just to deliver the e'pap. But slowly but surely as God works in our lives, my heart became entangled once again with these little people as healing took place and I could once again reach out in love and service and do what God had called me to.*

*E'pap again opened the door to my heart and my life to serve and do as best I can in His service."*

Then we have a story from a second volunteer who has sadly left Knysna

### **June Marais story**

*"The stimulating and joyous change in my life, started in a most unexpected way ! Nearly 10 years ago 2 delightful ladies offered me a lift to Garden Club, and en route chatted away about feeding e'pap to disadvantaged children at TWO preschools. I happened to*

*mention my love of children and 3 days later, I was “enrolled” at Tiny Tots in Hornlee—the start of a wonderful and rewarding involvement in a new community and environment. Meeting dedicated and caring women, who give lovingly from the little they have, and affectionate demonstrative children who have thrived on e ‘pap’, has been both humbling and joyous. Cherished memories of laughter and close ties with people I met – attending Meraai’s wedding, photographing Betty’s daughter’s matric dance, and seeing Margaret feeding hungry children with love in every spoonful, brought the realisation that the same human hopes, aspirations, and emotions are common to us all, but not as easily achieved in a deprived environment.*

*Thank you Shelly, Peter, and Lally for the opportunity! Best wishes to loving friends in the e’pap community--- miss you all.*

*Love from “Mister June”. (as those darling children called me)”*

**One of the additional activities that we do, is to assist student teachers with funding their studies. My next story of a life changed, is about Dorothy Hartzenberg**

We met Dorothy many years ago in Sedgefield. She was a helper at Wielie Walie. Dorothy went on training at Bronnesentrum in Oudtshoorn and really had to be spoon-fed all the way. The volunteer at the time even took her through one time because she missed the **bus** and would have missed the whole week of training had they not very kindly done so.

Dorothy continued her training and was appointed to a Grade R post at the Karatara school. On the first day of school she was so nervous that she arrived at school, took one look at her class and ran home. The headmaster had to go and fetch her and bring her back.

She has settled in very well and become a very good teacher. Another setback was when she failed to tell the headmaster that she was due in Oudtshoorn on a particular day. He correctly said she could not just leave her class without a replacement and sadly because of that she had to delay a whole year of training.

I am pleased to tell you that Dorothy will be graduating with her full Diploma in a few weeks time. From a little insecure girl she has become a confident teacher who said *"My training has enabled me to take a big leap forward from being an assistant at a pre-school, to being a qualified teacher at a Primary school. I have learnt so much during these two years, have grown in confidence as I've absorbed the wide range of disciplines that the course contained. This qualification empowers me to teach at this level wherever I go, and I am most grateful to the GRCT for believing that I could, despite difficult circumstances, stay the course and graduate!"*

**Donors are a vital part of the team that changes lives. Sometimes their lives are deeply touched by their involvement in our project.**

We are blessed to have many hundreds of donors. These are amazingly varied, from individuals in our own town and many countries overseas to churches, service clubs, LIF, motor club, Harley Davidson bikers' club, elderly folk and children .

I am going to give you two examples of very different donors whose lives have been changed.

The first is of a friend of mine who lives in Surrey, UK. She & her husband are ex South Africans who have been living overseas for many years. Penny was a teacher and visited us on one of their trips back to Knysna. They had a home in Belvidere. She saw what we were doing and decided that when she retired she would teach drama from home and donate the funds to e'Pap. Well I must tell you that the drama never got off the ground but in it's place she and her husband Patrick started the GRCT which has been in existence for 6 years and contributes significantly to our Feeding Project. Penny now talks at churches, schools and various gatherings telling the story of the feeding on the Garden Route and in this way collects funding for us. She has a very supportive group of trustees including some young people who run the Trust. Her idea of retirement has changed radically and she has found great meaning and fulfillment in what she is doing, knowing that this is what God wants her to do.

At the other end of the spectrum are the children at our local Knysna Primary School.

Each year around March the Grade 6's learn about nutrition. A few years ago I was approached by Margie Nolte the English Gr 6 teacher who asked us to come and address the children on what we do at e'Pap and the nutritional value of the porridge. Each year the children collect their **coins** from tuck money, some of the children even contributing as much as R12 every week. We are presented with a bag of coins toward the end of the year. This year not only did we receive money from the Gr 6 classes English and Afrikaans but the Gr 7's who also wanted to continue their collections having started last year.

It is wonderful to see children wanting to help others and to know that we have started a culture of giving and sharing.

**So have donors' lives been changed? Undoubtedly.**

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What should be my last story about changed lives? Clearly our project is dedicated to the children so I should be telling a story of a child whose life has been changed. Goodness which child? Which of the many thousand that we have served over almost 10 years?

### **A Child - Lee**

This a is a story of a little girl who lives in Concordia and was so badly malnourished that she had sores all over her chin. Her little chin was raw. We became aware of her through

Nicky, our volunteer at a pre-school in the area, She was asked to chat to Dolores who is a volunteer worker in the area. We visited with Dolores and met Lee and many other children some of whom were HIV+, some had AIDS, some, TB and all **malnourished**. We were asked to provide e'Pap. Dolores started a support group for those children and their Mums and within 2 weeks of Lee eating e'Pap 2x per day her chin had healed and she was on the way to becoming a different child. You should see her now. The little group of chn came down to the LIF to sing to us and say thank you for e'Pap and our support. They were happy children who were experiencing great love and care and I know that they are going to be able to face life on a daily basis so much better. Just look at them on the barrel train. Even the little girl in purple who did not smile once all the time they were with us, has a smile on her face. Do take a look at the posters they held while they were singing. It is heart warming to know how much of a difference e'pap has made to them.

For many, this project enables us to put into practice a desire to witness to our faith - to be Jesus hands and feet in interacting with the children and teachers in the township

For many this project allows us to be worthwhile contributors to building a better community here in the Southern Cape

For all of us who are a part of the e'Pap Children's Feeding Project, we know that we are part of an initiative that is simply making things better - one life at a time.

## **In Conclusion**

2012 has been a good year.

A year where we have :

**Improved the health** of our 4.500 children.

**Built sustainable partnerships** - Donors, volunteers, school staff

**Built bridges** - stronger communities where everybody benefits

And most of all, **changed lives for the better.**

Thank you all for making that possible. You are amazing.

Shelley Godsell  
November 2012