



Look what I got ... a toy car!
- Ahmed



Father Christmas visited ME!
- Lethabo

Thanks for making Christmas special

These pictures of Ahmed and Lethabo opening their gifts from Santa Claus (Johannes Maloma) at last year's Christmas party, tell you better than words can what your kindness means to our children.



attended our concerts.

Having you in the audience, singing and clapping along to the music, meant the world to the children, and to the staff who work so hard to make it all possible.

You put those huge smiles of joy and excitement on their faces. Throughout the year we select gifts and toys received as donations and set them aside so that all of the 300 children and adults at LITTLE EDEN will receive a brightly wrapped gift, hand delivered by Father Christmas.

And even though the gifts were small, there is no disguising the pleasure with which they were received. Thank you so much!

Thank you also to all those who sent Christmas wishes – your cards took pride of place in our reception area all through the festive season – and a thank you to those who

Just to see the children enjoying themselves – even though most cannot walk or talk properly – is a humbling reminder of why we do what we do here at LITTLE EDEN.

Here, it doesn't matter if you don't know the words, if you sing out of tune or bang the drum at the wrong moment.

You don't have to be *perfect* to have fun! And you don't have to be *perfect* to be of value ... to be treated with respect ... to matter.

Above all, we thank you for sharing our belief in these special children.

New Holy Family Chapel complete at last

Wonderful news! The new chapel at Elvira Rota Village, Bapsfontein, is finally complete – and we hope you'll join us for the dedication by Archbishop Emeritus George Daniel on 31 January 2010. (See details on page 2)



Dream comes true

For Domitilla and Danny Hyams, the founders of LITTLE EDEN, seeing the new Holy Family Chapel at Elvira Rota Village taking shape over the past 12 months, has been like seeing a dream gradually coming to life.

The couple has dedicated most of their lives to fulfilling Domitilla's vision of a little paradise for children with intellectual disabilities – a miniature Garden of Eden where they can live in perfect peace, safety and love.

Part of this vision was to have a place of worship and spiritual healing at Elvira Rota Village, Bapsfontein – large enough to accommodate the entire LITTLE EDEN family (and their wheelchairs), staff, parents and members of the local community.

With the incredible support of so many wonderful donors, this vision is now a reality. Special acknowledgement must be made to the professional team who worked pro bono on the project; the Crabbia family for their financial support



in ensuring the completion of this chapel and to everyone who in any way contributed – whether it was by giving time, materials or cash.

But what does it all mean to the residents themselves? They have seen the chapel developing first hand and are very excited.

'Jesus will be closer,' explains Wayne, while Paulus is looking forward to having a place where he can go and pray every day.

'Jesus will be closer' - Wayne

Celebrate with us

Date: Sunday 31 January 2010

Place: LITTLE EDEN Elvira Rota Village, Bapsfontein, Gauteng

Time: 11h30 – Concelebrated Mass of Dedication
13h00 – Lunch

RSVP: Zandile
011 609 7246



Our very own 'Idol'

When Paul arrived in his wheelchair to sing the finale at the Edenvale Christmas concert, an unexpected star was born!

Unable to even hold the microphone in hands made rigid by cerebral palsy, Paul's song touched every single member of the audience, leaving most groping for tissues or swallowing huge lumps in their throats.

If you remember that LITTLE EDEN is a place for those profoundly affected by intellectual disability ... children deemed uneducable – his achievement is even more remarkable.

Even though he may not have fully understood the meaning of the words, Paul sang *I'm Your child* from his heart! He was so proud to have been asked to participate in his unique way. The conviction with which he sang was a shining example of bravery, faith and acceptance.



I'm your child

I'm your child
And you are my God.
I thank you, Father,
For your loving care.
I'm your child
And you are my God.
You've made me special
And you're always there.



Most difficult decision a parent can make

Imagine the heartbreak of a mother who has to place not just one, but all three of her children in a special home. This was the difficult decision faced by Mrs Makaya whose three sons – Tshepo, Pule and Gontse (*pictured above*) – were recently admitted to LITTLE EDEN.

Whilst many of our children have no families of their own, others are blessed with the most loving and caring of parents, who only want to do what is best for their child.

‘As we began to realise Micaela’s limitations, we were hit with our own limitations when it came to caring for her,’ explains one mother.

‘We changed our lifestyle to be with Micaela and care for her. We homeschooled our two older children and took Micaela to ‘early intervention’ therapy. But the bigger she became, the more difficult it was to take care of her.

‘One day we were brought to the understanding that we were equipped to be her parents – but not her physiotherapist, occupational and speech therapist. We needed help.

‘The worst day of our family’s life was when we sent Micaela away to be at her new home. In our heads, we knew it was the correct thing to do. Now if only our hearts could agree ...

‘It wasn’t long before we understood that it was the best thing we could have done. After four years of taking care of Micaela, we could take care of ourselves. We were free to be parents to our other two children.

‘It was also best for Micaela. LITTLE EDEN was where she needed to be. She was with a group of children who also lay on the carpet because they could not walk. She was in a routine that made her thrive.

‘She was ours and that did not change. We did not love her any less’

Don't miss our fête

Saturday 6 March 2010
from 9am at the Edenvale Home
(cnr Wagenaar Rd/Harris Ave, Edenglen)

- bargains
- food
- games
- fun for the whole family



Find out more about us

Download our most recent Annual Report at www.littleeden.org.za.



Taking time to listen and learn

Working with special children requires enormous patience and a willingness to ‘listen’ for hidden messages that cannot be verbally expressed. Our music therapist, Karen de Kock, explains ...

During a recent session, one of our most severely disabled residents seemed distracted by a drawing of a flower on my notice board, repeatedly turning his eyes towards it. It’s difficult to understand his needs, as he is not always able to make sounds and can only lift his thumb up for ‘yes’ or down for ‘no’.

I established that he wanted me to take the picture down so that he could touch it.

With much effort, he put his finger down on the orange part of the flower and kept it there. I asked him if it was his favourite colour and he made a strong sound which I interpreted as yes.

I asked him to pick another favourite colour and this time his finger rested on turquoise. He has a very strong bond with his mother who phones regularly to check on his well-being and who, through much effort in terms of transport, fetches him for home visits during school holidays.

I remembered that his mother’s name is Flora and asked him if the colours and the flower reminded him of her, to which he made another excited sound which I took as yes.

I then asked him if he wanted to send his favourite colours to his mother through sound, and together we hummed Tula Tula. I experienced a spark from him and enjoyment which was very endearing.



NEW FACES AT LITTLE EDEN



Xolani

Born prematurely with cerebral palsy and microcephaly, 5 year old Xolani charms his way into the hearts of visitors and staff alike with his quiet, gentle nature.

Although he was born with one leg shorter than the other, Xolani is able to walk and enjoys 'driving' the pedal car, which helps strengthen his legs.



Bo

Another 5-year old – but with a completely different temperament, Bo is a lively bundle of mischief with a will of her own!

She has epilepsy and hydrocephalus – but that does not stop her from enjoying life! Although her mother loves her dearly, she needed to give Bo the care and intervention that she needs and which she receives daily at LITTLE EDEN.

Residents 'live' by our values

When Elvira Rota Village resident, Daniella, failed to win the prize in a recent raffle, she was most upset and wanted to know why. We explained that the raffle was for staff and she could not win because she had not bought a ticket; Daniella insisted that she had.

Then puzzled staff found out what had happened. One of Daniella's favourite staff members had just returned from maternity leave and when Daniella saw the raffle prize – a food hamper – she was determined to win it for Rosaline. She thought that because Rosaline had a new baby, she would need extra food and milk.

She persuaded one of the group leaders to buy her a ticket – and was convinced she would win.

When we look at our core values: love and care, sanctity of life, and respect, we see that these values are lived at LITTLE EDEN, even by those who cannot read or understand our brand and logo. It shows the amazing capacity of our residents to teach and reinforce the values by which we strive to live.



The 'respect' garden at Elvira Rota Village, showing the cradling hands.



See for yourself

Get a copy of our new DVD and share the LITTLE EDEN story with your church group or office colleagues. Call Nichollette on 011 609 7246.



RESPECT • SANCTITY OF LIFE • LOVE & CARE