



Touching the spirit within

No matter how damaged their intellect, inside every child at LITTLE EDEN is a complete spirit that somehow can be reached. Through play, music, tickles, talking, hugs or movement, we find ways to connect with that spirit and fill it with joy and peace.

But every now and again, we come across a spirit so wounded that it is almost impossible to heal.

Wanda came to LITTLE EDEN as a 3-year old with severe mental disturbance – the tragic result of an acute bout of measles. For more than 20 years, this has been her only home, and our residents and staff her only family.

Like many of our children and adults with dual diagnosis (intellectual disability with mental illness), Wanda had a tendency to self-injury. In all the time she's been with us, we have struggled to find ways to ease the torment that continually drove her to hurt herself by scratching, bumping and hitting herself. All we could do was to keep her calm, comforted, safe and content, to the best of our ability.

Karen, our music therapist, decided to work with Wanda individually. But, more often than not, Wanda seemed far removed from

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Diary Dates

- 6 Aug Ladies' breakfast
- 18 Sept Children's concert at Elvira Rota Village
- 21 & 22 Nov Christmas concert and morning market at the Edenvale Home
- 28 Nov Christmas concert at Elvira Rota Village



Please visit our website for more information on forthcoming events:
www.littleeden.org.za

*Blessed are you who stand beside us as we enter new ventures,
For our failures will be outweighed by times we surprise ourselves and you.*

– Marjorie Chappell

Sonto [right] and Shaun [below] amaze everyone with their progress!



Small steps ... mighty milestones!

As someone closely associated with LITTLE EDEN, you'll already know how proud we are of young Shaun – who took his first steps recently – and how grateful we are to people like you for being part of the miracle.

Your support shows you have faith in our children's abilities and, because of this, they learn to have faith in themselves!

Apart from taking his first small steps this year, Shaun has also made amazing progress in other areas. He is now on a normal diet and finger feeds himself – big milestones for a little boy who for years had to be fed pureed foods.

Although he still cannot talk properly, he recognises people and says, 'Hello.' And his proudest moment was when he played the Star of Bethlehem in our Christmas concert, walking in his walker and lifting himself up.

Sonto, who was born prematurely with cerebral palsy and profound intellectual disability, could not open her clenched hands when she first came to us. But through intensive physio and occupational therapy, she can now hold a cup. She has also learned to sit, crawl, chew and swallow.

Above all, Sonto has learnt how to push herself in her new wheelchair, which was custom made to support her comfortably, giving her a precious taste of independence.

Have a look at the smile on her face in the photograph above ... her absolute delight in her new-found dexterity ... and know that you played a part in making this happiness possible.

For everything you do to help our children, thank you!
Your kindness makes a huge difference.

2 500 nappies, hanging on the line

Every day at LITTLE EDEN, we wash 2 500 nappies. This, together with the rest of the laundry from our two homes, adds up to 3 tons of washing each day!

Some of the residents at Elvira Rota Village enjoy helping out in the laundry or the kitchen. They receive tuck as 'pay' every Thursday, and are very proud of their work and their earnings!



Jade's tree of remembrance

Remember the tree planted at Elvira Rota Village by Jade's grandmother, in celebration of Arbor Day? Jade spent a lot of time talking to 'her' tree and it seems to have grown faster and stronger than all the others.

But perhaps not even Jade's granny realised at the time she bought the tree, how much it would come to mean to her granddaughter.

Because, sadly, Granny passed away recently.

Telling Jade that she would never see her beloved grandmother again was one of the most distressing things we have had to do.

But all her friends at the village comforted her in their own way, and it was Sister who suggested to Jade that she should go and sit under her tree and talk to her granny whenever she feels lonely or sad.

Now she quite often wanders to where the tree is planted and just sits under it, talking quietly to granny. It seems to give her real

comfort. She knows her grandmother is gone, but she has the tree to remind her always, and this helps her cope with her loss.

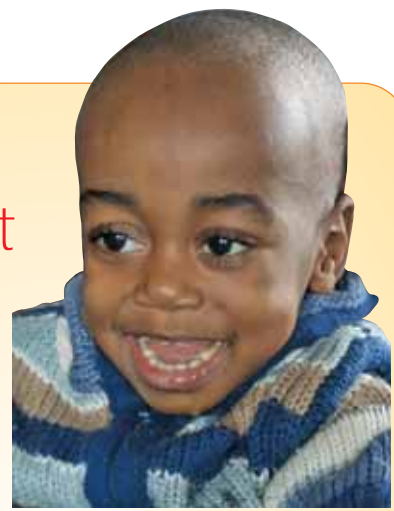
At LITTLE EDEN, we respect the completeness of our children to understand and cope with the experiences of life in

their own way.

Jade's tree will be there for many years to come – giving her the courage to carry on, and serving as a lasting memorial to a very special woman.



Meet the latest additions to our family ...



Big brown eyes and the cutest smile – it didn't take long for Thapelo to find a way into our hearts!

The youngest member of our family, he has cerebral palsy and needs 24 hour care, which his mom can't provide and still work to earn a living.

Our other newcomer is Zinhele [below] who suffers from epilepsy and spastic quadraplegia. She's just 4 years old and has shown potential for improvement, so the time spent with her may bear fruit.

If you would like to sponsor the cost of caring for children like these, please contact us.



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the moment or ended up crying, and Karen felt quite helpless. But their last session together was quite different.

'When the care worker, Pumzile, wheeled her in, I was taken aback at her appearance,' Karen said. Her eyes were red and she had a bandage where she had scratched herself. I was not sure what I could offer her, if anything at all!

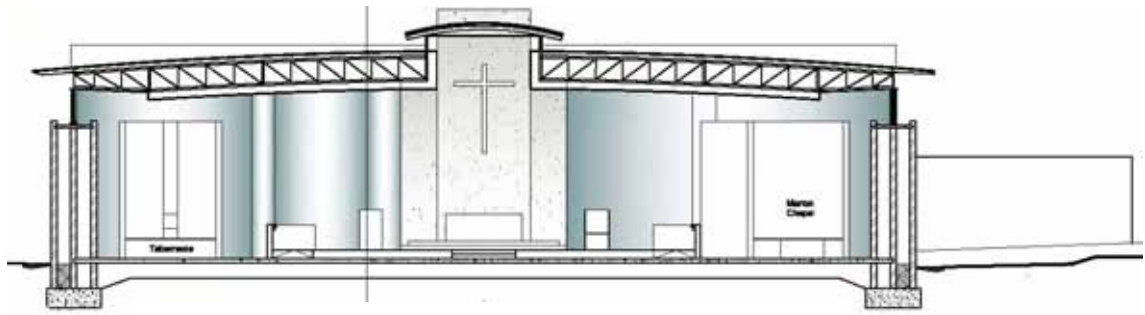
I started to strum on the guitar, singing softly while Pumzile played a

soft beat on the drums. Wanda started sobbing uncontrollably. We just carried on singing and playing, offering our music as healing.

Suddenly Wanda stopped crying and became still. I noticed that her eyes were very blue and her face had softened into an expression of a gentle smile. We stopped our music after a while and just stayed still, embracing the calmness. After this session, I felt an

inner knowledge that Wanda would leave us soon. So I was not surprised to learn that she had died on 4 March – God bless her soul.'

We are not always able to quantify what we give to our residents. Sometimes our caring is all we have to ease their suffering – and we thank you for sharing in the caring with us. Wanda is at peace now, safe in the arms of Jesus.



Planning for the future

Since we began planning to build a chapel at *Elvira Rota Village*, costs have risen significantly. But the wonderful response we've had from companies, family and friends and the local community (to this particular appeal) has given us the faith to carry on with this vital project.

We are very privileged to have acquired the *pro bono* services of a young, professional team of architects, quantity surveyors and engineers. Plans have been drawn and are

almost ready to be submitted to the Municipality for approval.

Despite not having all the necessary funds yet, we are going ahead, trusting in Divine intervention which has always played such a major and mysterious role in LITTLE EDEN's progress.

Above all, we cannot disappoint the children, who ask almost daily when they will have their own church.

If you are able to donate materials, time or cash toward the building, we will be so grateful!

Everybody can paint!

The recent Art Festival and morning market held at Elvira Rota Village in conjunction with the Elandsvlei Conservancy was not just an enjoyable day of interesting stalls, yummy eats and fun on the jumping castle for visitors and residents alike. It was also a great opportunity to showcase our children's artistic talents.

Many of their artworks were on sale, alongside the professional paintings. But there was one picture that was **not** for sale – the one painted by Daniella, which won first prize in her category at last year's Conservancy Day.

At the time, the judge was not aware of Daniella's intellectual disability; she judged the pictures purely on merit. Commenting that Daniella's bright picture of a dragonfly, butterfly, leaping frog, cow and pig was 'art gallery material', she was even more impressed when she found out that Daniella is a LITTLE EDEN resident.

The painting now hangs in pride of place in the Village, so Daniella can look at it whenever she wants and show it to visitors too. She is so proud of it!

At LITTLE EDEN, the children are encouraged to draw and paint as part of their therapy programme. Even those who need help holding the paintbrush enjoy creating bright streaks of colour.

So what if the results aren't perfect? We'll find a way of using the pictures for decorations or in our concerts – and it gives meaning to what the children *can* do!

Would you like to own a piece of our children's art? We have a selection on sale at the Edenvale Home. Please call in or telephone Dot on 011 609 7246.



[Top] Daniella admires the professional paintings on display at the Art Festival, while her own award winning creation [inset] is now on permanent display at Elvira Rota Village.