

in touch



Katlego

Malick

Lebohang

New additions to our family

AREN'T they cute? The little ones pictured above are just three of ten new children recently admitted to LITTLE EDEN and already stealing the hearts of staff and visitors alike.

Katlego and Malick are both 9 years old and Lebohang is 8. Their cheerful smiles have led to them being christened the *Smiley Team* of Blue Wing.

Being able to admit ten newcomers was made possible through the opening of the extension to *Pino's Place* at Elvira Rota Village. Named *Colin's Cottage* in honour of Colin Browne (CEO of SemArch) who has served LITTLE EDEN for many years, the new building provides a quiet and safe environment for residents like Susan, who are affected by mental illness as well as intellectual disability.

As a result of her traumatic childhood, Susan finds it very difficult to trust anyone and shies away from physical contact. One morning Sister greeted her cheerfully and asked for a hug. Susan just smiled. Sister knelt down in front of her and said, 'Where's my hug?' Then, in a

remarkable breakthrough, Susan reached out, grabbed Sister and held her tight for a few seconds.

At LITTLE EDEN, we don't just provide a home for hundreds of children – we strive to understand each individual's needs and respond accordingly.

Because, despite their profound disabilities, each child has something to offer, something to teach us, some special place and purpose in this world.

Thank you for seeing that, and for everything you do to help keep the doors of LITTLE EDEN open.

Caring by numbers

There are now 300 children and adults in our two facilities – 180 at the Edenvale Home and 120 at Elvira Rota Village.

Caring for this extended family are 249 specially trained members of staff, working in shifts to provide a continuous service 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 52 weeks a year!

In our kitchens, 300 meals are prepared five times per day and 2 500 nappies are washed every day in



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Cute and happy teddybear

Toys bring smiles



Ahmed drives his 'car' (above) and a baby doll to love (right)



Christmas at Little Eden ...

There's no better way to get into the spirit of Christmas than to attend the annual concert and carol singing morning at LITTLE EDEN.

Prepare to shed a tear or two as the children – most of whom cannot walk or talk – squeeze every drop of fun and excitement from the occasion. Wearing smiles from ear-to-ear, eyes shining with joy, each one is wheeled or carried in to play his or her part. Here comes Ahmed in his 'car', over there are two teddy bears and watch out for the Chattanooga Choo Choo!

The audience sings and claps along to all the best-loved Christmas carols; there are angels and shepherds, the three kings, Mary and Joseph and baby Jesus in his manger.

And there is love. Not just in the huge red heart attached to Shaun's walker but great waves of it flowing from the audience to the children and back again.

After the fun and excitement of the concert, Christmas cannot be far away. From now on, the children ask every day, 'When is Santa coming?' He doesn't arrive in a sleigh pulled by reindeer, but suddenly appears out of the mielie field riding on a tractor! His bell can be heard ringing through the halls of the Homes, along with excited squeals and children's laughter.

Christmas is a magical time at LITTLE EDEN and we are so grateful to all our special friends whose generous donations make it possible for each child to receive a small gift wrapped in bright paper, as well as delicious treats and cooldrink. Your kindness puts the joy into their lives! Thank you.

If you've made a donation to LITTLE EDEN and not received an acknowledgement, please let us know. We pride ourselves on accurate record-keeping, but sometimes we're unable to identify the source of a direct deposit payment. Apart from wanting to thank you personally for your kindness, we would also like to send you a tax certificate to allow you to reclaim income tax.

Undies SOS



Hundreds of pairs of cotton briefs and panties needed urgently!

Our residents change up to six times a day and need a good supply of underwear. Adult sizes small, medium and large, plus children's age 10 to 16 needed.

Also needed are warm tracksuit type trousers and 'trainer' type shoes in adult size 1-6. Please contact us if you can help. Thank you!



Milestones

After undergoing an operation a while ago, Jabulani can now get up and stand in his walker. Even though his progress has not been as dramatic as we hoped, his joyful smile shows how much this small achievement means to him

Another resident, Paulos, was paralysed after a shooting incident about 6 years ago. At first, he couldn't do anything for himself, but he can now lift his left hand to feed himself. He has also learned to propel his wheelchair, talk and wave.

For most children, milestones like these are quickly and effortlessly reached. But to children with profound intellectual disability, every tiny step forward is a miracle.

In fact the term, *profound intellectual disability* applies to those children whose minds are so badly damaged they are deemed to be uneducable. But what no one can take away from them is their willingness to try, and try again.

Take Leslie, for example. He is so severely spastic that he cannot use his arms or hands at all. But he plays the big drum at every one of our concerts – with his feet – and never misses a beat. Every one of our residents is an inspiration and testament to the power of the human spirit.



Sat 7 March: Annual fete at the Edenvale Home - tons of fun for all from 9am-1pm.

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

Did you know?

Supporting LITTLE EDEN can earn you points on your BEE scorecard. Donations to LITTLE EDEN are tax deductible.



Getting to know you

Amazingly generous, involved, caring, compassionate and supportive – that's what **you** are! Your answers to our recent questionnaire confirmed what we've always known ... that our children are truly blessed to have so many wonderful friends!

A big thank you to all those who took the time to complete and return the survey. It was wonderful to hear that many of you find the time to attend events such as our annual fete and concert or have visited either or both of our homes to meet the children. Your kind comments also really gave us all a lift:

'The professionalism shown in this wonderful organisation is remarkable - well done!'

'I am astonished at how deeply your organisation touches me since I've never felt much affiliation with mentally challenged people.'

'You do incredible work. I am in awe.'

'May Domitilla receive her just reward when eventually God calls her home – we'll be able to add her to our list of saints.'

'You are doing a great job. May you continue to be given the strength wisdom and means.'

Thank you sincerely for your support and encouragement; it is truly appreciated.

Work begins on the new chapel

When you've waited years for a dream to come true, it can be almost unbelievable to see it actually happening. But for Domitilla Rota Hyams, the day has finally arrived – work on the new chapel at the Village has begun!

In mid November the graders moved in and the ground was levelled. Then the foundations were dug and the cement slab for the floor was laid.

We still don't have all the funding necessary to complete the project, but are trusting in Divine intervention – which has always played a big part in the story of LITTLE EDEN – and in the ongoing generosity of our friends and supporters.

Donations of building materials such as cement, reinforcing steel and mesh, Chromadek sheeting, aluminium doors and windows and paint would also be most gratefully received.

If you can help, please contact Dot Fouché on tel. 011 609 7246. Thank you!



The earthmoving equipment made short work of levelling the ground.

WARNING

Please take extra care when posting cheques to LITTLE EDEN – ensure that the envelope is well sealed (use extra glue/Sellotape if necessary) and that the cheque is subsequently cashed for the correct amount.

Alternatively, donations may be made by direct deposit, electronic transfer or online at www.littleeden.org.za



Come share the fun down on the farm

Lavender blooming in the sensory garden ... a tranquil new waterfall ... countless birds and insects to look at – Elvira Rota Village is a great place to be! Just look at the smiles on the faces of our residents alongside during their daily walk down to the wetlands.

They love being out in the fresh air and sunshine and having lunch out on the veranda now that summer's here. Those who are more mobile push their disabled friends' wheelchairs while others, like Jannie who is a father figure to many of the younger children, helps to feed the 'babies'.

We'd love to have you for a visit – but please remember that you'll need to phone first to make an appointment.

