

# Family tree

In celebration of Arbor Day last year, we asked friends to sponsor trees for planting at *Elvira Rota Village*. It so happened that Jade's granny arrived to take her out for the weekend at this time, and Jade begged her to 'buy' a tree.

'When I'm old, I'll be able to sit under my tree in the shade,' she said. If ever we needed confirmation that our children regard LITTLE EDEN as their home and are perfectly happy to spend the rest of their lives here, this was it!

The tree – a sapling Stinkwood – was duly bought and Jade and her granny set off home for the weekend.

They never got there.

Half way home, Jade persuaded her granny to turn back, because she was so worried that the tree had not yet been planted in the ground.

Back at the farm, instead of enjoying a restful Saturday afternoon, Manager: Facilities, Peter Rohrbeck, found himself wielding pick and shovel in the hot sun under Jade's critical eye. Only when the tree was safely in the ground, and she was



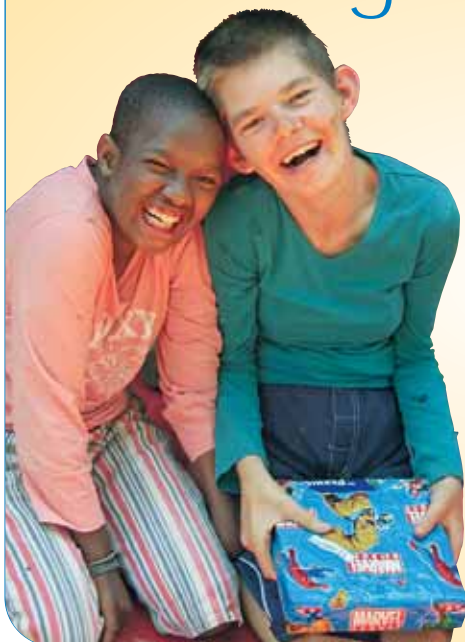
able to water it, was she satisfied.

Since then, Jade has visited 'her' tree almost every day. She talks to it and strokes its leaves. The funny thing is that Peter, who is not one for fanciful imaginings, says that Jade's tree is noticeably bigger and stronger than the other four planted at the same time.

Do trees feel and respond to love and human contact? We don't know – but we hope this little tree grows quickly so Jade can get her wish of sitting under it in the shade!

And to all those who sponsored a tree for the village – thank you. Your generosity will quite literally keep growing for years to come!

## One big happy family



Living at LITTLE EDEN means being part of a big family and – as in any family – there are the occasional squabbles and times when someone just wants to be left alone.

But for the most part, everyone gets along just fine, with many special bonds between individuals. Those who can walk push the wheelchairs of friends who can't; those who can talk 'translate' for others whose speech is difficult to understand.

Despite their limitations, our children could teach many others a thing or two about acceptance, love and caring.



Father Christmas arrives at Elvira Rota Village with presents for all, Shaun is the star of the Christmas concert and Sonto is the cutest angel of them all!



# Joy to the world

Innocence. Excitement. Joy. This is what you see reflected on the faces of our children during the Christmas season.

They may not understand the true meaning of Christmas, but they know it's a time when Santa visits with a present wrapped with love for each one of them ... when Christmas carols are played on the sound system and they are treated to delicious eats from kind sponsors ... when they perform in the nativity concert or sing Carols by Candlelight.

Many of the children are not able to sing or dance, but they can be dressed up as angels or shepherds or baby Jesus! In this way, everyone can participate in the concert and feel a sense of self-worth and belonging.

Watching the children singing their hearts out, shaking a tambourine or beating a drum is an experience that leaves no one untouched. Time and again, when we thank those wider members of the LITTLE EDEN family who are able to join us for the carol singing and concert, we are told: 'It is a privilege for us to be able to celebrate Christmas with the children – their innocence and joy remind us of its true meaning and spirit.'

Grateful thanks to every one of our loyal friends and supporters, who have done so much throughout the last year to help care for the children and adults who live at LITTLE EDEN. And special thanks to all who supported our Christmas campaign to ensure there was a gift for each one, and lots of special goodies to eat.



## Mother Mary watches over Elvira Rota Village

... thanks to this shrine and statue donated by Maurizio Galimberti [a member of the Board of Governors] and his family.

The shrine is situated in a shady, peaceful area where it invites one to stop and say a prayer.





## FAMILY MATTERS

Children who remain close to their families outside LITTLE EDEN – and who enjoy frequent visits from moms, dads, aunts, uncles and siblings – have extra wide smiles and an extra sparkle in their eyes.

Serame [above] is a case in point. No one else at LITTLE EDEN has a bigger smile. And that's because he knows he is dearly loved.

Sadly his mother and her sisters all died within 10 months, leaving his granny [above right] with many grandchildren to care for.

With only her old age pension to get them through the month, there is dire poverty at home and life is a daily battle for survival. Nevertheless, each child knows he or she is loved and valued.

### Frequent visits

It was with regret that Serame's granny brought him to LITTLE EDEN, but she knew she could not give him the special care he needs. She also knows she is welcome to come and visit him any time – and she does, to his great delight!

As much as we encourage families to keep in touch, many children have no blood relatives.

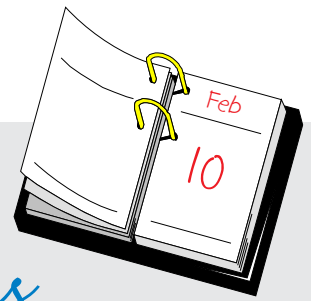
### Special bond

Jabulani, who is blind and autistic, has formed a special bond with Helene, our occupational therapist. When she is in the room, he will shuffle to her side, take her hands and place them, palms against his cheeks on either side of his face, in a tender greeting.

### Visitors

For other children, the sense of belonging to a family comes from having a special visitor come to see them. And this is where we are so grateful to our wider family of volunteers and supporters.

If you would like to visit LITTLE EDEN, please contact us on 011 609 7246.



## Diary Dates

**Sun 10 Feb** Family Reunion for our children's parents and families at Edenvale Home and *Elvira Rota Village*.

**Sat 1 March** Fête at the Edenvale Home

**Sat 19 April** Art Festival and morning market at *Elvira Rota Village*, including sale of paintings by well-known local artists and works of art by the children.

**Sat 17 May** Gala Evening

**Wed 6 Aug** Women's Breakfast

*For more information on upcoming events, please visit our website : [www.littleeden.org.za](http://www.littleeden.org.za)*



## All the fun of the Fête

**S**aturday 1 March is a date to remember. Bring the kids to the LITTLE EDEN fête for a fun day of face-painting, Tombola, jumping castles, toys and sweets, while Mom shops for delicious home-made cakes and produce and Dad browses the books, and gardening stalls.

There'll also be live entertainment, a tea garden, raffles and displays – in fact something for the whole family – with all proceeds going

towards the care of the 290 children and adults in our homes.

Right now we're busy collecting books, handcrafts, sewing and prizes for the fête, so if you have any suitable items to donate, please drop them off at our Edenvale Home or contact Dot Fouché on 011 609 7246 if you would like us to collect.

Together, we can make this our biggest and best fête ever!

# A new life for Papi

The newest addition to our LITTLE EDEN family is an eight-year old boy with cerebral palsy. He is the dearly loved son of caring parents who thought long and hard about bringing him to us. Papi was placed at our Edenvale Home and quickly adjusted to his new surroundings and the

programme in which he received various daily therapies as well as a lot of love and care.

After a couple of weeks, we felt that Papi would fit in better at our second Home in Bapsfontein, *Elvira Rota Village*. Papi would be able to appreciate and enjoy the outdoor life as well as the social interaction of that particular group.

His parents were apprehensive at first, as they were very happy with the care which Papi received in Edenvale and could not imagine a second centre that would meet their child's specific needs.

So our CEO, Lucy Slaviero, arranged to take the whole family out to visit our second centre *Elvira Rota Village*. Their astonishment grew as they toured the facilities, the farmyard, the wetlands and labyrinth. "This is where Papi must live," his father said.

Papi has since settled in at the village and his parents know that they've made the right decision for their beloved son. They have visited him in his new Home and could see that Papi is content and happy where he is.

In time, Papi will do horse riding with assistance and continue to be involved in the daily activities at the farm. He loves to look at and touch the beautiful flowers in the gardens!

Papi's parents will visit him as often as they can, but they are at peace knowing that he is loved and cared for every hour of every day.



Lots to do on the Farm: horseriding, playing in the labyrinth and helping in the kitchen.

## New Boitumelo wing opened at LITTLE EDEN

Manager: Care Centres Mary Hyams cuts the ribbon at the extended Boitumelo ('happiness') wing which accommodates 40 older residents

