

APRIL 2020



1ST QUARTER
NEWS

ITHEMBA TRUST'S QUARTERLY
NEWSLETTER

AUTUMN 2020

"Hope sees the invisible,
feels the intangible, and
achieves the impossible."

"The Lord bless you, and keep you,
make His face shine upon you,
and be gracious to you.
The Lord turn His face toward you
and give you peace. Amen."

"The Blessing"

Karl Jobe, Cody Carnes and Elevation Worship
Numbers 6:24-26





ITHEMBA NEWS.

ITHEMBA TRUST

A NOTE FROM KITTY

Kitty Phillips, Founder, Ithemba Trust

School opened with great excitement and expectation at the beginning of January. A new year, a new start — another year to proclaim the goodness of God. The staff were set up and ready for students new and old, and filled with expectation for all that God had in store for 2020.

The rain has finally arrived, giving new life to everything around us. What was dead has come to life. Makes me so aware of the fitting comparison to some of our less fortunate students -- having lived in a "drought" at home in the long summer holiday, and then coming back to Orange Grove. Water, new growth, shelter and security; love and food, a warm bed and an abundance of hugs and friends. The river runs full and overflows. So is our joy of abundance and blessing at Orange Grove.

Our explorer head, Mr Ted Greenland has got engaged to Beth du Toit. They are to be married in May, and happier than ever. They are an incredible couple who we know will impact many lives together. We wish them all the best, and pray God's richest blessing on their future together.

Speaking of weddings, our 2013 graduate Brittany Phillips married Wik Coetzee on his home farm in February. It was a beautiful day - filled with blessing and goodness. My cup overflowed as I marveled at the goodness of God, watching my daughter walk down the aisle. We are so proud of all our graduates who are going on to make a significant impact in their worlds.

The vegetable garden has over 1000 cabbages growing in the beautiful dark OG soil, ready to sell when school re-opens. The rain came just at the right time to inject life into the small plants.

Our bees have really taken a knock in the drought, but Clyde managed to harvest 12 bottles of honey, leaving the rest for the struggling hives to eat themselves for food.

We had one week left before school was due to close for the Easter break, when Covid-19 hit the scene. As I'm sure many of you can relate, we never saw it coming. And it came quickly. But God knew. We are so aware of His sovereignty and feel His steadfast peace deeply in the midst of the chaos. Our teachers were amazing and had most things wrapped up before we all said goodbye to our safe haven for a little while.

We ended our last hour together worshipping out in the garden, led by Marchelle and our senior students. We sang "The Blessing" and declared the truth of Scripture over our land. Our hearts united - a fitting close to an uncertain end.

Duncan shared a message about throwing our burdens on to Jesus and we all went to fetch a big, heavy rock — our 'burdened hearts' — and threw it onto the big stone heart in the middle of the school ground. We left our burdens with Jesus, and went into isolation light and ready for what may lie ahead.



@nanetskeadphoto



OGSNEWS.

ORANGE GROVE SCHOOLS

A NOTE FROM CATHY

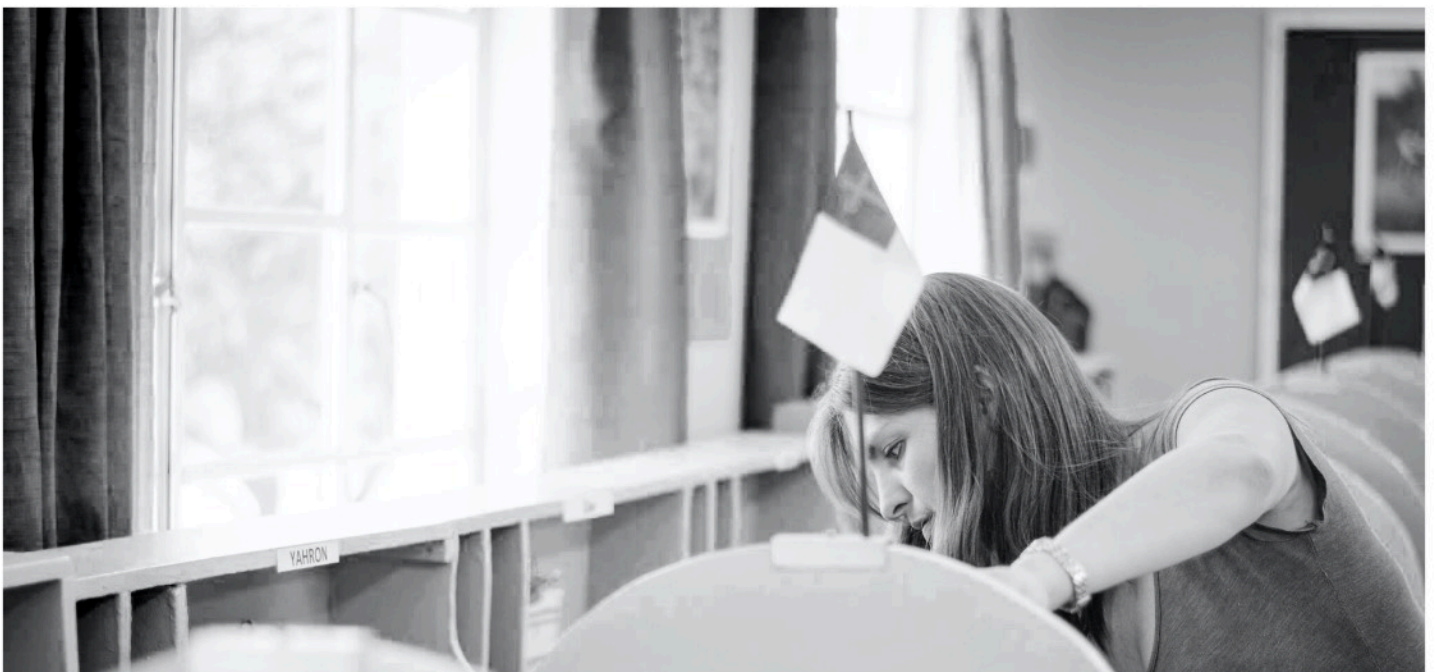
Cathy Hood, Principal, Orange Grove Schools

From an academic perspective, the first term of 2020 has been both exciting and challenging. In fact, it may have been one of the most eventful first terms we have ever experienced!

We started the year with our first ever online high school student. Ethan began his Grade 9 year through Hatfield Online School. He has enjoyed the independence of working online, and has found the work to be fun, as well as challenging, and the specialist subject teachers to be both supportive, and inspiring. We are looking forward to more of our academically inclined students taking on the challenge of online studies for high school, while still being able to be a part of our Orange Grove Community. This change seems particularly relevant as so much of the world is reassessing online schooling in light of the Novel Coronavirus, and the effect the pandemic has had worldwide.

Some of our other high school age students are focussing on completing the work required to take the GED exams, and, as part of our Skills Development Program, Liya has been supplementing this with his own online studies! He has completed courses this term on Pet Care and Pet Sitting, managing a Boarding Kennels as a business, and Raising Chickens for Profit, through Udemty. We hope to equip him, and other students like him, to be able to create their own businesses when they have completed their schooling.

As our first term came to a close, along with the rest of the world, we were faced with the reality of Covid-19. South Africa is currently on a three week Lock-Down period. We continue to trust our God in this time of uncertainty, and are grateful that much of the disruption to schools has so far taken place during our school holidays. Our teachers are doing what we can to stay in touch with our students and their families. If schools are to remain closed after the initial Lock-Down, we will be looking at creative solutions to support our students, and doing our best to help them to continue to learn. Thankfully, the ACE curriculum is driven mainly on individual students taking responsibility for their own work and goals - this type of learning is incredibly helpful during a crisis time such as this, as it will allow students, on some level, to be able to work independently. This being said, we are also aware that many homes in our community do not have access to computers or internet for online and independent learning at home - this is one of the very unfortunate circumstances we face as a country. We are praying fervently that God will guide us, and give us wisdom as we walk this road together.





FAREWELL, DEAR FRIENDS

We said goodbye to dear friends this year, Josh Bonner & Marchelle Peters



A FEW WORDS

From Josh Bonner

God is so cool. Five years ago, I never would have imagined that I would have a home away from home, in the rural town of Tarkastad, South Africa. It was divine providence that allowed me to visit Orange Grove Schools in 2015, and initially, making the choice to move there as a sports coach and mentor, was a difficult one. I had other plans. Don't we all start out adulthood with our life mapped out, but then events steer us in a different direction? Coming to stay for two and a half years to serve at OGS, ended up becoming one of the greatest decisions of my life.

Before God called me into missionary work, I had worked as a primary school sports coach for 9 years in the Tampa, Florida area. Honestly, it came easy to me, I'm a sports junkie, that God gifted with patience to work with children. But now, wickets and rugby balls? Scrum half? I'm getting served pap and maas for breakfast, what's that? "Athletics"? Don't you mean "track & field"? I felt like a fish out of water my first few months in South Africa. I remember my first night on campus was in late September of 2017. I had just finished a three-day journey to get to OGS, and I was exhausted. I had arrived on campus during school holiday and I figured I'd be waking up to a quiet school. Around 8:00am, I heard yelling outside my door in a foreign language. (Xhosa, which I obviously couldn't understand) I thought, "Oh my gosh, the school is under attack? What do I do?" It turned out to be the ground staff asking each other about the lawnmower. I can honestly say 3 years later, as I write this from Florida, that I feel as much a South African, as I do an American. I've caught myself twice this week messaging friends and typing "boet", before having to erase it. It's the phrase for brotherly friend.

I treasure the school, not because it's a beautiful campus, and it is. I won't miss the rugby that much, because American football is obviously superior. I will miss the people. Wow, there's some amazing people at Orange Grove! I could tell so many stories that I don't have the space for. You see, I had never lived among my students at a hostel before. At OGS, I lived in the cabin next to the boy's hostel and served as an assistant house parent. My mornings were filled with room inspections and devotions, before starting the day as a coach. Then my evenings were, dinner with the kids and a lot of great conversations about life. They loved trying to teach me how to dance! One of the older kids would demonstrate a move, then they'd all watch as I tried... And failed; To a roar of laughter I might add. (If you can't laugh at yourself, I guess you can't be a missionary?) I remember the first time one of the kids, Olwam, called me "tata". I went to Clyde, the house parent, and asked what it meant. He said it's the Xhosa word for "dad". I was floored, I'd never had a student call me dad.

Wherever this little letter finds you in life, and we're all living in strange times; I'm here to say that taking risks and loving well are the two keys to living a good story. I hope my time at OGS, helped kids get healthier. I hope that I was able to show a few people the love of Jesus, because there's nothing like Him. At the end of the day, I was the most impacted by my time in Tarkastad. I'm changed.... May we all finish this Coronavirus season with a renewed passion for people. It was, and is, the people of Orange Grove Schools, that make it special

A FEW WORDS

from Marchelle Peters

My experience at O.G.S as a Teacher/Monitor will always be one of my favorite memories ever. I've learned so much from my fellow educators while I was working at the school. I'm mostly grateful for getting to know my Lord and Savior Jesus, through the school and the wonderful people there. I will forever be grateful for the school committee for giving me the opportunity to be part of their lives and the children. To move on was one of the saddest moments in my life, just thinking about how much I will be missing the children and their beautiful hearts. I will forever be part of the O.G.S family and will definitely come and visit the school in the future.



MAMMA HEIDI FINDS A NEW HOME

OGS Pre-School teacher and dear sister, Heidi Ferrar is moving to St. Francis Bay

Our sister and wonderful Pre-school teacher, Mrs Heidi Ferrar, is leaving us for St Francis bay at the end of term. She has served the school and community well and her kind, gentle, caring manner will be missed by all. The children that lined up each morning with a sore throat, sore head, sprained ankle or some ailment that needed a hug and a love, will miss her the most. We wish Heidi all the best in the new season of her life.

"In January 2014 I arrived at Orange Grove Schools for the first time to teach in the Preschool and run the sick bay. As I reflect on the past 5 years all that comes to mind is blessings, love, friendships, open heavens, nurturing, embracing and new beginnings. I never thought that I would ever have the privilege of teaching and loving little souls in this way. Wiping away tears and snotty noses, sitting on the floor playing with Lego and building blocks, having a lap big enough for children to sit in to hear a bible story, learning nursery rhymes all over again. My life was changed in this beautiful environment. The friendships that I have been blessed with, will forever stay strong no matter the distance between us. My morning sick bay was often a place to pray and hug an ill child. I loved every day and embraced the challenges as they grew me and made my faith stronger, knowing how we can influence lives in such a peaceful environment. As I say goodbye, I want to thank the Board for the privilege of working at Orange Grove. Thank you also to the parents for allowing me the privilege to love and teach your precious children."

Auf Wiedersehen

Which means until we meet again.



WELCOME MIA!

Maritia Louw, OGS's new pre-school teacher

In other news, the little ones in Pre-school said “Hello” to their new teacher. Welcome Miss Mia Louw. Your energy and enthusiasm has ignited our first term at OGS! Mia not only teaches the Grade R class, but she also now heads up our sport program, and does horse riding lessons after her busy school day.


Mia has been welcomed with open arms by the entire Orange Grove family, especially her little pre-schoolers. We feel blessed to have her a part of the team and family, and so look forward to seeing how God moves through her during her season here with us. Mia wrote a few thoughts of her own, regarding her new position on the farm. This is what she said:

After receiving an email from Kitty, congratulating me on getting the job, my first and only thoughts were: “Tarkastad? Really Lord?” Orange Grove School has absolutely blown away any past expectations that I ever had. The school staff and children have made me feel at home, and tremendously loved. Since my first day, it felt like I had known everybody for years. Orange Grove School has never felt like a workplace to me, but instead, a home. I am so committed and invested in Orange Grove just like they have invested in me. Thank you Orange Grove for not only making me feel loved and at home but for helping me blend into the Tarkastad community with the blink of an eye. “For I know the plans I have for you declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you hope and a future” (Jeremiah 29: 11).



OUTDOORNEWS.

ORANGE GROVE OUTDOOR CENTRE



CHECK OUT
WWW.ITHEMBAOUTDOOR.ORG
FOR MORE OUTDOOR NEWS AND UPDATES

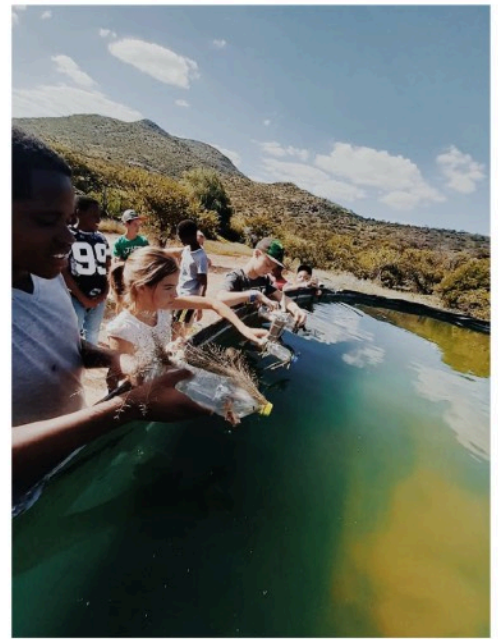
@HeartBeatPD

BACK2NATURE

Near the end of summer is always a fun time to get out and about, especially after the rains, as the veld comes to life! The sun is not nearly as harsh, but the air is warm and fresh and seems to invite you to spend more time outdoors. This term we caught insects for our collection and studied basic insect anatomy and how they sense the world around them and breath. Do you know how insects breath? We went birding and got our own birding diaries. We did a treasure hunt where we had to use our biological terminology to find all kinds of interesting things in the bush. We also studied soil, some of the forces in nature and discussed fire and how our cells burn food just like fire burns fuel. And then we did a dreaded test to see how much of it had all gone in.

OUTDOOR CENTRE

This term the Outdoor Centre hosted all the learning centre camps which our students just love. Sleeping out and sitting around a fire at night, are a huge treat for them. We almost got washed away during the Grade R camp when the heavens opened and the river came down in flood. One of our parents and all the Explorers who were still on the property were unable to get home and spent the night with us at the Outdoor Centre. We also hosted a 3 night Adventure Camp where 8 intrepid campers got to sleep out under shelters of their own making, cook on a fire, play paintball, fight each other on a raft and do a challenging adventure race. Many thanks to the amazing Mzuri Wildlife Foundation for helping four of our campers to be a part of the camp through their generous grant.



#outdoorcentre



SPORTINGNEWS.

NEWS FROM THE SPORTS FIELD



ARCHERY

We feel extremely blessed to have been signed up for a development program under the South African National Archery Association. The program is aimed at developing recurve archers and identifying archers that might one day represent South Africa in Olympic Archery. We were given ten sets of beginner bows, arrows, quivers and arm guards as well as lent two huge new butts and a fancy recurve bow. A trainer comes up once a month to give us some coaching and we are working through the 'Feathers and Arrows' program which teaches us all about good technique in archery from the most basic principles up to some of the finer points of good form.

ATHLETICS

On Thursday, 13 February 2020 the Orange Grove Junior Athletics team participated in the Cradock Primary annual athletics meeting. We took 14 athletes and they all participated in the 60m and 80m events. Orange Grove School, being one of the smallest schools at the event did not stop us from achieving top results. The athletes ran in heats (each age group having at least 8 heats), then finals. Our top athletes were, Amo Smouse (left), Ahlumile Cimilanga (middle) and Khaya Willemse (right), running in the finals and keeping the Orange Grove name high. Well done to all our athletes who participated.

HORSE RIDING

The Orange Grove Riding School kick-started in the beginning of term 1, 2020 with the guidance of our new Pre-School teacher Mia Louw and her two wonderful assistants Lexi and Justine Mac Taggard. Mia has been a horse lover her whole life, participating in endurance during her high school career. Firstly we would like to say welcome to all the new brave little horse lovers who have shown interest in the horses and fallen in love them. In the riding lessons, learners are taught how to groom and feed the horses, how to tack up and basic horse riding skills. The horses have been fantastic this term and have taught many of the learners to trot, canter and steer through obstacle courses. I am so proud of all the achievements my riding students made this term and I can't wait for a fun filled Term 2!

BLANCO FUN DAY

We had our annual fun water day at Blanco in February 2020. This day consists of fun water activities in and out of the water, relays and free swimming time. Thank you Blanco Guest Lodge for hosting us every year – it's a fun filled day and a lovely change in scenery for the learners.





#orangegroveschools

THANK YOU FOR READING OUR STORY

#ithembatrust



@ithemba_trust
@orangegrove_schools
@thestorycoffee



KITTY PHILLIPS
FOUNDER



ANGELA PRICE
CO-FOUNDER



ORANGE GROVE
SCHOOLS



the Story
Coffee, Tea & Country Store



iTHEMBA
TRUST

www.ithemba4hope.org
www.orangegrove.org.za