



ITHEMBA
TRUST

AUGUST 2020

2ND QUARTER NEWS

ITHEMBA TRUST'S QUARTERLY
NEWSLETTER



WINTER 2020

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



ITHEMBA NEWS.

ITHEMBA TRUST

the Story



A NOTE FROM KITTY

Kitty Phillips, Founder, Ithemba Trust

"If ever we had to hold onto the promises of God for the vision - for our personal lives and for the nations, it's in such a time as this. Hope is the anchor for our souls. We have hope in Him and He is the only sure foundation that we can build on.

In the midst of COVID-19 our children were able to continue with their work. Our team stepped up and supported not only with distanced learning during the lockdown period, but also emotionally and spiritually. What a team we have serving in this "vessel" called iThemba Trust and Orange Grove Schools.

It is amazing that our children can adapt to an ever changing environment ... the mask, social distancing, temperatures taken etc which has become the new normal. The wonderful advantage of our schooling system, is that it allows our learners to continue working at home and picking up back at school where they left off as it is self-paced.

The school grounds are a buzz with children's laughter and the joy of just being together. This brings delight in the midst of a frightening pandemic. The monkeys are having a field day in our cabbage land, with the absence of the staff around. The crops are ready for picking and we managed to provide our feeding scheme with 20 cabbages per week."

A VERY BIG THANK YOU

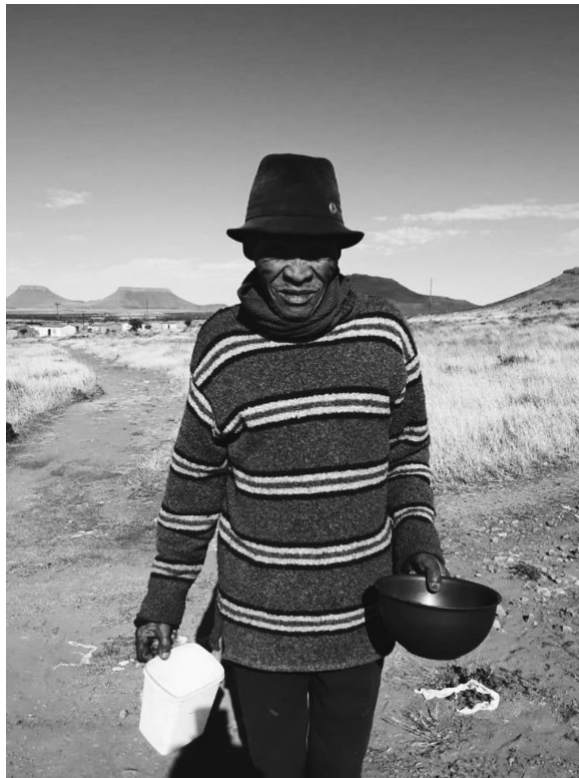
To our visitors, donors, sponsors and friends!

Unfortunately, Covid-19 restricted visitors to Orange Grove this year. Fortunately Scott and Stormie Williams from Wyoming along with Scott's sister, Jill from Texas, managed to squeeze in a visit while on their safari. They were among the lucky ones to be able to travel before the country went into lockdown. They thoroughly enjoyed the happy faces and the singing and joy of the children at school while life was still normal!

Speaking of visitors and friends of iThemba, we wanted to take this opportunity to extend a very big and heartfelt 'thank you' to all of our sponsors and donors who continued to support the children and the vision through this very tough and financially trying time. It is your support that has enabled us to keep the doors of Orange Grove Schools open, and to allow it to flourish amidst the chaos. We so appreciate your commitment and faithfulness in responding to a call from God to be a part of His vision in this little part of South Africa where children continue to grow and be nourished. Please know that we recognize your continuous generosity and support, and do not take it for granted. We are excited to continue to walk this journey together, as we bring hope and change through powerful, intentional and impactful education.

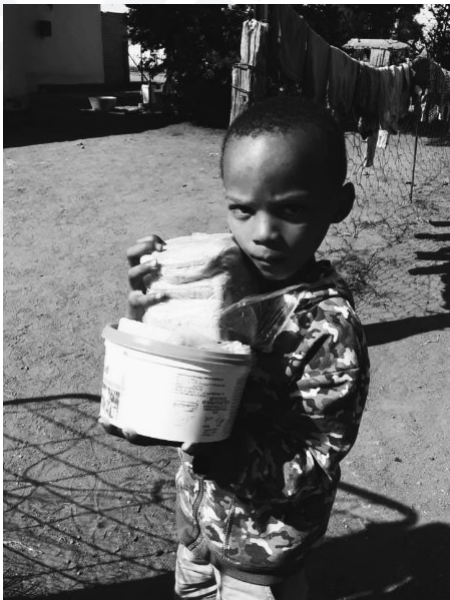


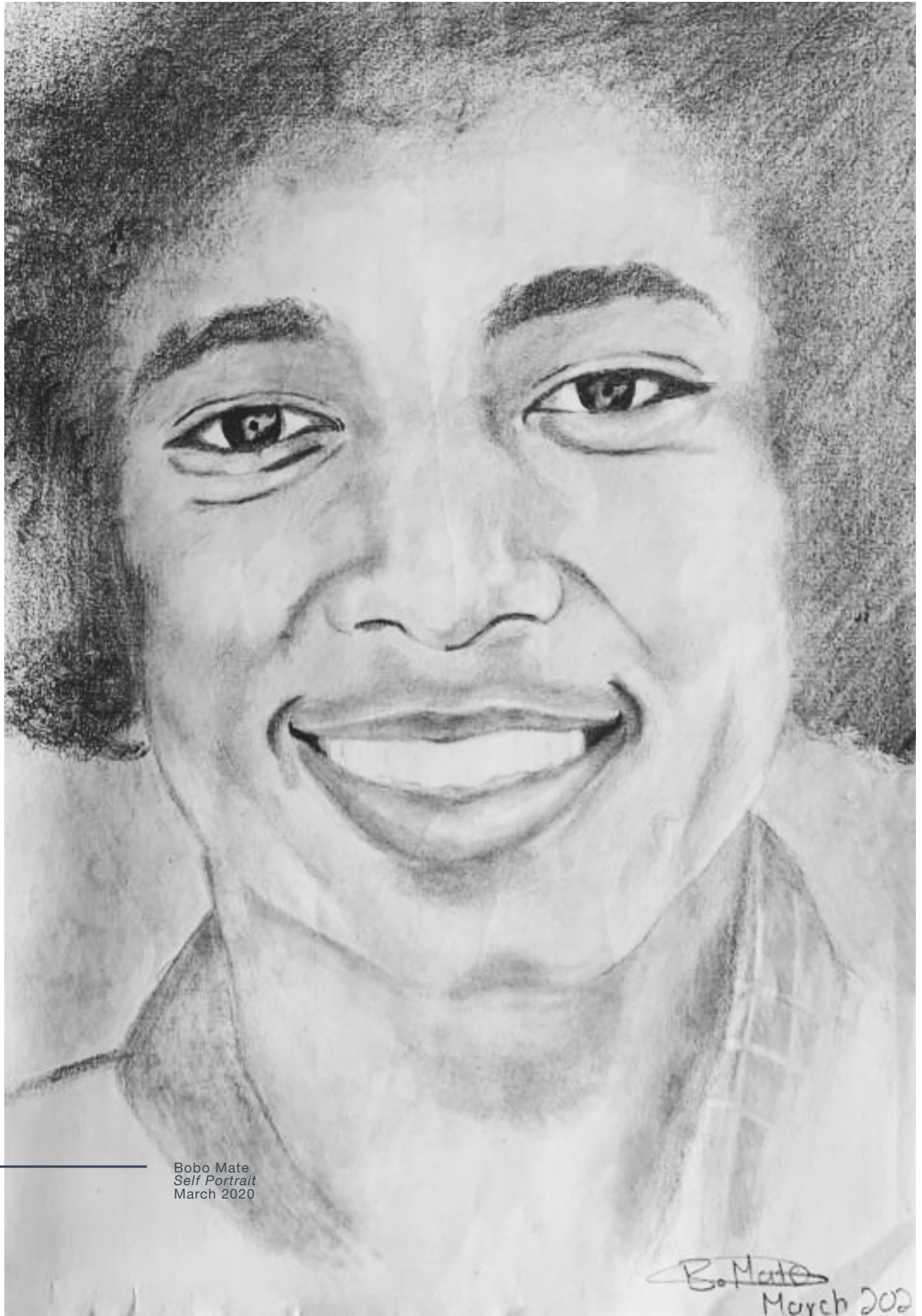
A worldwide pandemic comes with chaos, uncertainty and desperate need, especially in rural communities. Kitty, could not sit idle at home and came up with the idea to change the Story coffee shop into a soup kitchen to feed the hungry in and around our community. Soon the people of our town jumped on board and we managed to raise enough money to feed many families and children for about 6 weeks consecutively. The team would buy the groceries through donations and cook a nutritious meal each day. Every day the food would be taken from house to house, after identifying those in need. What a delight to meet the smiling, grateful faces waiting each day.



A COMMUNITY
IN NEED

I found sweet little “Tomatie” a 4 year old who stole our hearts, each day waiting for her bread and soup. She was kitted out with warm clothes, mittens and knitted beanie to shield her from the winter cold. I lay in my warm bed at night thinking about all the families that got a hot meal that day but my heart ached for the children. Was there no way they could be in our school, be housed in our beautiful facilities at Orange Grove? We are back at school and my mind continues to try work a plan of securing those children to a better future. My mind wanders to the 16 year old boy whose parents both died. He lives alone, unable to go to school because of the lack of finance. He lives in a shack with a broken bed and a gas primus. Could he come to OGS and be part of a new family? Could he perhaps work in our gardens or even pick up on his school work where he left off? So we continue to pray, plan and dream of a brighter future, a better tomorrow for those around us.





Bobo Mate
Self Portrait
March 2020

Bobo Mate
March 2020

NEWS FROM ALUMNI

Our graduates are taking on the world, and we want to share their news with you!

POLOLO VUSANI, 2013

"I grew up playing dolls and sketching clothes for my them. My aunt, who is my dad's only sister used to be the seamstress of the village. I would steal and use her scraps to make clothing for my dolls. She didn't want me to use the scraps because she believed if they landed in the wrong place they'd be used in witchcraft by people who supposedly were jealous of her and she'd lose her gift. she always burned the leftover scraps and I'd wait for her to leave the dump site and try to put the fire out and pick out whatever little didn't burn.

I didn't know it then that it could be a career, but I knew it was something that I enjoyed doing. It was during my teens when I realized that it was a passion of mine, even though I still didn't do much about it back then.



Fast forward to today. Every time I turn on the sewing machine, my blood rushes through my veins, and the pulsating beat of my heart's excitement breaks the silence surrounding me. Sewing is so therapeutic and so addictive, I have decided to take on my hobby as a business venture. The best thing anyone can do is to try something good and even better things will always come from trying. My new business will be called CPV clothing using my initials.

I am grateful for the spirit of hard work, dedication, and honesty that was instilled in me at Orange Grove during my time there. This enabled me to be dedicated in learning the craft and I will be starting with selling the articles I make soon. I look forward to keeping everyone at bay with my progressing journey in the world of sewing as I seek to break boundaries and barriers."



OGSNEWS.
ORANGE GROVE SCHOOLS

NEWS FROM THE CLASSROOM

COVID-19 is here to stay, and we're adjusting our academics accordingly.



At the end of our first term, on the 18 March 2020, as the COVID-19 Pandemic reached South Africa, we went into a hard and fast, three-week Lock Down, and all our schools were closed. When the Lockdown was extended, we began to implement distance learning to support all our students.

In a poor community, with many of our children living in small rural towns and on farms, this was an interesting challenge! Some students had family who were able to assist them with their school work, and we were able to send books home with them to continue learning. We also had success with sending out revision activities via WhatsApp messages. The students particularly enjoyed the social interaction they had via their class WhatsApp groups, and those who had access to WIFI, set up the occasional video call as well. Several families have chosen to home school their children with academic support from our teachers, for the remainder of this year.

During this time, our focus was on encouraging our students to do what they could academically, with a lot of concept revision and creative exercises to keep them motivated. Children were also encouraged to get involved and help at home. Some planted gardens, others helped to cook and others helped tend to the animals while some continued to develop their incredible artistic talents. We did everything possible to stay in touch with every student and make sure that they and their families were coping with the social challenges of COVID-19 in their communities. A few of our students' families were directly affected by the virus, but we are grateful that, despite a growing infection rate in our country, all of our students are still healthy.

On the 1 June 2020, we were able to reopen our school, with a whole new set of Health and Safety Procedures to follow! Fortunately, being a small school, with lots of space on the Orange Grove Farm, it was possible for us to introduce social distancing measures fairly easily. Our ACE offices, which already have screens around each child's work space, are perfect for reducing direct contact and allowing our students to continue working in a familiar environment. We have been so impressed with how the children have adjusted to wearing masks and how they have adapted to all the other new procedures.

At break time they have continued to run the 1km loop on the Orange Grove grounds, and to play tennis, all while maintaining social distancing. The younger students play "shadow tag", chasing each other and catching their friends by standing on their shadow. We have noticed how they have come together as a group, and are caring for each other well.

As the infection rate continued to grow in South Africa, we faced a significant, yet expected peak between August and September. Our government schools faced many challenges, and as a result, the South African Government decided to close schools again for a 4 week period in July. We chose to send work home with our students for the first two weeks of this period we were able to assist them and score their work via email and WhatsApp. We decided to end our term on August 7, followed by a much needed two week break. We are so thankful for the flexibility and patience we have seen in our staff, students and even parents during this trying time.

NEWS FROM THE (GRADE-R) CLASSROOM

COVID-19 is here to stay, and we're adjusting our academics accordingly.



On the 3rd of June 2020 Orange Grove School re opened for Grade R. The Orange Grove staff made all the learners feel at home by giving them a warm welcome and elbow shake. Even though we could see the fear in some eyes, mask irritations and the need for some tender, love and care, our younger learners adjusted swiftly.

With the blink of an eye, the learners adapted to wearing masks, social distancing and washing and sanitizing hands on a regular basis . Although only a small percentage of our learners returned back to school, parents had the option to keep their children at home and continue with the "Orange Grove Remote Learning" system in which learners are fully supported online. Well done to all the teachers and learners on an unusual yet very blessed second and third term.



APRIL - AUGUST, 2020



Seen above: Nolinki helping with academics at home. Adjusting, adapting, staying patient and growing - we all know how it goes.

This year didn't turn out like any of us expected, but we are grateful for the growth, the strength and the character that we have seen displayed in all of our Orange Grove family, especially the students. Their resilience to keep learning is noteworthy, and our staff have been relentlessly going above and beyond to fight for some level of structured consistency.

Things are looking up, however, as government-implemented restrictions are lifting, and students are returning to Orange Grove. We are desperately searching for a new normal, and a more sustainable routine amidst uncertainty (aren't we all?), but at the same time, our Hope is unending, and it is hope that keeps us focused and filled with purpose.



OUTDOORNEWS.

ORANGE GROVE OUTDOOR CENTRE

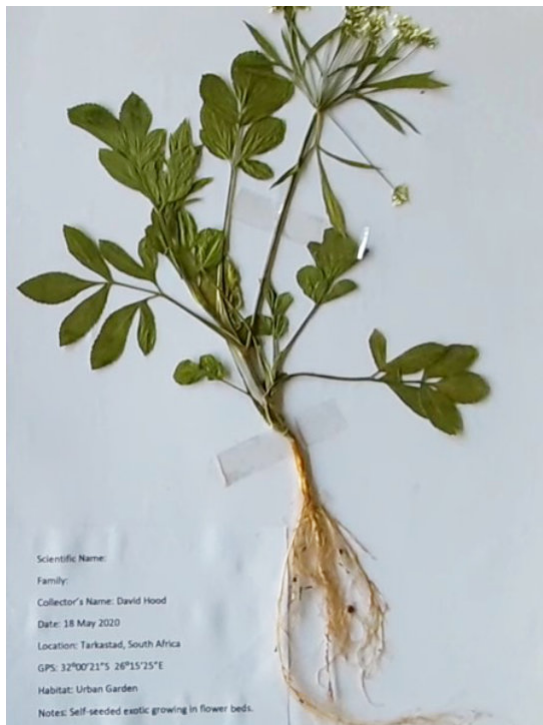
STRAIGHT FROM THE GROUNDS

The gift of time, some much-needed renovating and adjusting to Back2Nature online

The onset of COVID-19 and the subsequent lockdown brought about an opportunity to do some much needed building, maintenance and repairs to the buildings and farm infrastructure. The water pipes to the new staff housing area have been completed. Duncan (our operations manager) and his family cleared the first plot allocated to building the first home on Orange Grove. This has been a long-time dream of the iThemba team to start establishing families on the property. Orange Grove is blessed to have a consistent flow of spring water. It is truly an oasis in the desert.

Duncan is also involved in maintenance projects in town and on the surrounding farms. The external work helps to supplement salaries during this lean time and is an opportunity to extend the reach of iThemba to the extended community.

Cabbages and spinach were planted, just before the cold of winter set in, and are now being harvested. A portion of the crop is being donated to one of the feeding schemes being spearheaded by our local church. It has been such a blessing to be able to support the community with fresh produce during this very difficult time. The fallow lands are now being prepared for the next batch of cabbages, potatoes and beetroot.



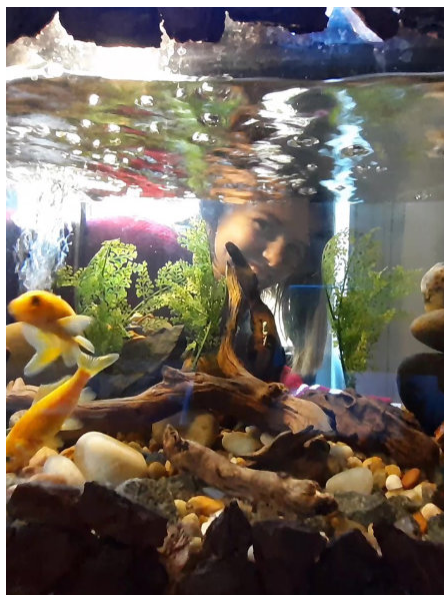
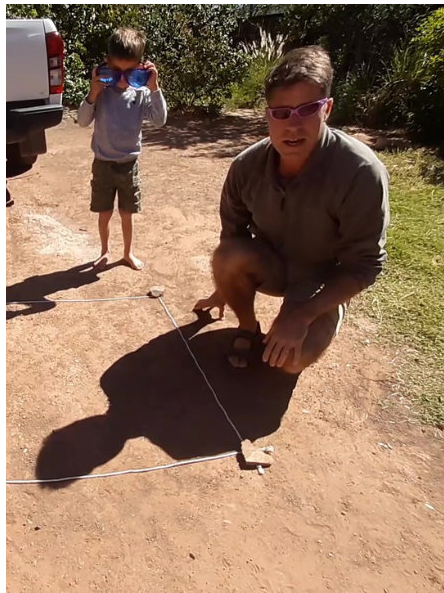
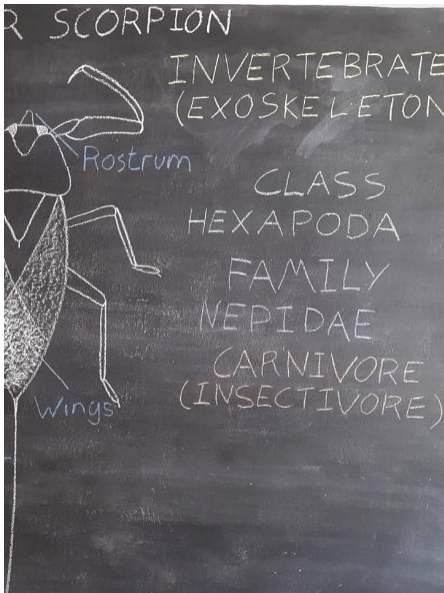
Term 2 started with much uncertainty surrounding what was going to happen with school, so Back to Nature went online. In fact we started making little home videos during the holidays because it's always fun to learn about nature. We explored the effects of centrifugal force, learned about blood and how chameleons change colour. We had a good look at a water scorpion and watched it catch a dragonfly nymph. We watched Joanna make a raised bed vegetable garden as a lockdown project and learned about how bats can carry viruses but actually fill really significant and valuable ecological roles and do very little harm to people. We learned about herbariums and how to press plants.

Finally we went back to school where we could do a bit of tracking, go for a bush walk and also study the human body. We learned about how our weight would be different in space or on another planet and we did a dreaded test. And then school closed AGAIN! Since then we've looked at an antelope skin and learned about the role this plays, our largest organ as well as had a close-up investigation of muscles which is what we eat every time we sit down to a juicy steak.

BACK2NATURE



#ORANGEGROVE #OUTDOORCENTRE



THANK YOU FOR READING OUR STORY

#ithembatrust



@ithemba_trust
@orangegroveschools
@thestorycoffee



KITTY PHILLIPS
FOUNDER



ANGELA PRICE
CO-FOUNDER



iTHEMBA
TRUST

www.ithemba4hope.org
www.orangegroveschools.org.za