

MARCH 2022



1ST QUARTER NEWS

I T H E M B A T R U S T ' S Q U A R T E R L Y

NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2022

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





AN INTRODUCTORY WORD

A note from Kitty Phillips

A new year at Orange Grove always seems to bring with it excitement and trepidation, as we anticipate with hope and wonder as to what the year will hold.

To think that such heavy global events like the Covid-19 pandemic, devastating war, media and political upheaval and even crazy weather patterns are affecting our small space in the middle of the mountains is unprecedented.

But God. He remains our Rock, our Fortress and the One we can depend on, in every circumstance. As everything that can be shaken is shaking, He remains unshakable and stable.

I often ask God to speak to me in seasons - to give me an overview or something to hold on to for the coming days. The word He gave me for 2022 was 'overflow'. We are only four months into this year, and already witnessing His faithfulness through this promise.

The rain has come and come again, more than normal, causing our rivers and dams to overflow. Orange Grove farm is looking lush and green - thriving in every way.

This is not unlike the school, either. We have new young faces and new staff - all changes which add to the excitement of the new term.

Slowly but surely we have had old friends return from the USA, coming on safari with Ezulu Adventures and visiting our school. The continuous *overflow* of generous donors and sponsors towards the Ithemba vision has been deeply moving.

We are so blessed, and would like to express our sincerest thanks to each of you. It is through our sponsors that we are able to carry on and "change our world, one child at a time".

The solar system which was generously donated by the Holt family, is all set up and ready to go. The skills team had their hands full as they were tasked with lifting the panels onto the roof of the school building. Soon OGS in its entirety will be off the grid and we will be generating our own electricity. We are so grateful to those who made this possible.

Enjoy your sponsored students reports and letter, and thank you for making a difference in their lives, giving them a hope and a future!





ITHEMBA NEWS.

ITHEMBA TRUST

VISITORS

One of the highlights of this past term was a visit from *Josie Slaughter*. Josie is from Alabama and volunteered at the school 7 years ago when she was just 18 years old. She was in South Africa with her parents who were visiting various properties that they represent through their safari agency. It was a beautiful, nostalgic morning spent reflecting on fond memories. We are deeply thankful for our ongoing relationships with special friends from all around the world. *Jay Small and Lisa Hennessy* also visited us from Colorado on their safari with Ezulu Adventures, as well as the *Sjostrom* family from Montana. It was lovely to have three generations of family travel and visit us. We would also like to take this opportunity to welcome *Kathy Sjostrom* to the Ithemba Family as she joins our sponsorship program.



Jay Small & Lisa Hennessy



Josie Slaughter with the Hood family



The Sjostrom family





OGSNEWS.

ORANGE GROVE SCHOOLS



GRADUATES

We wanted to give special mention to three of iThemba's alumni who graduated at the end of last year, all with University passes. *Teddy* is currently enrolled at Nelson Mandela University studying a Bachelor of Education in the Senior Phase. *Nolinki* is attending the Victory Gap year program which is an exciting gap year with a heart to equip, empower and send this generation to advance God's Kingdom. She has also joined the worship team. *Kholowethu* is also taking a gap year and working alongside a local social worker to gain some knowledge of this field that she will apply to study in next year. We wish them all the best as they embark on the next chapter of their lives.

NEWS FROM THE CLASSROOMS

The first term has had some exciting firsts on the academic side of school life on the farm. Our Grade 4 students have all started Maths on the Comprehend Africa online curriculum. Even though some have found it challenging to learn the skills required for studying on a computer, overall, they are thriving in the new system. Grade 5 to 7 students are all doing most of their core subjects through the Comprehend Africa curriculum as well, and are particularly enjoying all the extra practical activities and sessions in the lab.

We now have a class of six Grade 8's studying through the Online School through the IEB (Independent Examination Board) curriculum. As teachers, it is both encouraging and exciting to see them take up this new challenge. Each one of them is taking it in their own stride, and we are simply watching with pride.

In March, four of our Grade 8 students, namely *Lara Hood*, *Sabelo Mabece*, *Okhanyo Ndzala* and *Mesuli Skomolo*, entered the Old Mutual South African Maths Olympiad, a first for Orange Grove Schools! Congratulations to Lara, who achieved 70%, and qualified for the Second Round to be written on the 12 May.

NEWS FROM THE PRE-SCHOOL

Term 1 has been filled with excitement as the students adjust to their new grades. The Grade R classes started strong with an introduction to the computer lab, Back to Nature classes and sport. They have been hard at work in their Paces and have been soaking up all there is to learn. They had the privilege of attending their B2N camp which sparked much excitement. For most of our learners, this was the first-time camping in a tent, as well as going on a night walk. Many fears were faced and overcome by the young, brave boys and girls. Our Grade RR class has welcomed many new faces this year, which is always so exciting and rewarding.







SPORTINGNEWS.

NEWS FROM THE SPORTS FIELD

ATHLETICS DAY

Earlier this year in February we were able to take ten of our Junior athletes to a local school in Cradock to participate in the school's annual athletics meeting. All of our learners did very well, running in both 60m and 80m sprints. Three of our boys came in the Top 4 within their heats, *Bastie Bryant* being the only boy to go into the U7 boys 60m final where he came 4th overall. We are so proud of all of our runners for competing against some of the best, local schools in our area.

FUN IN THE SUN

We had our highly anticipated fun day at Blanco during this last term. This event is always special in that it includes all of our scholars, from preschool right through to our high school online learners. A perfect summer's day made for ideal conditions for fun and games, laughter and team building. A few of the crowd favourites included water balloon catch, egg races, sack races and relays. A bit of healthy competition is always a must, so we decided to follow the fun with some more serious races in the swimming pool - kick-board, freestyle races in their various age groups, to name a few. School house spirits were high as students flew through the water, racing for the winning title. When all was said and done, Kudu won the Swimming day with 197 points, followed closely by Gemsbuck with 172 points. We are so aware that the importance of connection for the students outside of the school environment is vital, which always makes us walk away from days like these with full hearts. This event would not have been possible without the generosity of Blanco Guest Farm. Thank you for hosting us, Blanco!

ARCHERY

Our archery team has expanded as we have welcomed new learners, each well on their way past the beginner stage. As they have been taking in the fundamentals, our older archers are continuing with the '*Feathers and Arrows*' program. Practically, the program has been so helpful in creating obvious, reachable goals for our archers. It allows them to gain a series of awards by demonstrating good technique and attaining a minimum score on a target that increases in distance for each award. In other exciting news, we have also been given our very own 'armory' where we can store our ever-increasing equipment. Progress is undeniably evident as we make space for this sport to grow and develop. Watch this space - more updates to come!





OUTDOORNEWS.

NEWS FROM ADVENTURES BACK TO NATURE



GRADE R / 1 CAMP

During this term we had an adventurous camp at our outdoor centre. We arrived at camp on Thursday at 14:00. The learners were so excited and headed off to set up their beds in their tents. Uncle Dave then taught them how to start a fire with limited resources and we were then off to the river for an evening braai. The learners loved every moment and had so much fun playing games, doing obstacle courses and swimming in the river.

CLASS CAMPS

After two years of not being able to use our outdoor centre very much, we were finally able to get our students out on their annual class camps once again. This time, we took the younger classes on a marshmallow trail to a destination in the veld where we made a fire and cooked sausages over the coals for dinner. The walk back at night was the scariest part of the camp for many of our young campers. The older students got to climb the climbing wall and use their wits to try to get their team across a series of boulders in a limited time. We also challenged our students to work together as a team and overcome their fear of heights and muddy water on an obstacle course. There were lots of games, some tasty snacks and best of all, time to run around outside and have fun with friends in the outdoors.

BACK 2 NATURE

This term's *Back 2 Nature* schedule was filled with exciting discoveries. All of our *B2N* students got to look at slides and pond slime through microscopes. In addition to this, they were given the opportunity to do some birding and learned how to use indexes and keys to find and identify plants and animals in field guides. Last year we converted our classroom to make it suitable for watching movies on a big screen via a projector, and this term we watched the first episode in a documentary series called 'Our Planet'. We also found some interesting aquatic creatures in a river that has not been flowing for a very long time on Orange Grove, but now, with all the magnificent rain, has become a habitat for frogs and a variety of insects.

NURSERY

Our nursery is thriving and overflowing with abundant life. You can almost hear the plants thanking the sky for the sufficient rainfall, helping them to flourish. They are not the only ones grateful for the rain, as we too have been able to reap its rewards, now able to grow and sell more plants to the local community. On a practical note, we have germinated many indigenous trees and are waiting patiently to see them grow into healthy saplings. We have also planted two trees with the help of two of our learning centers, the idea being that the tree is 'their' tree and one day, when they leave the school, they will be able to say that they helped plant that tree. Longevity seeps deep through the roots of our purpose as a school. The Grade 1's planted a Sweet Chestnut and the Grade 2's & 3's planted a White Stinkwood. We have also started a little 'Bonsai Club' and will begin learning how to prune, shape and look after little bonsais.

DEVELOPMENTS ON THE GROUND

The first term came and went with such speed that we wonder if the earth is not maybe spinning faster. The Mac Taggart's house had to take a back seat while the solar system was installed. However building on the house has once again begun in earnest with the manufacturing of the frames. The garden yielded a bumper crop of potatoes. The veggie garden has suffered many setbacks over the years, from baboons eating crops to hail storms, however this season was truly a problem-free blessing. The winter crop of cabbages has been planted and we look forward to another flourishing harvest coming later this year in Spring.





THANK YOU FOR READING OUR STORY.

IF YOU HAVE ANY INTEREST IN JOINING THE
ITHEMBA SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM, PLEASE CONTACT
ANGELA AT ITHEMBATRUST@GMAIL.COM - WE HAVE
A NUMBER OF CHILDREN ON OUR WAITING LIST
AVAILABLE FOR SPONSORSHIP AND SUPPORT.

ALTERNATIVELY, VISIT **WWW.ITHEMBA4HOPE.ORG** FOR MORE INFORMATION



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KITTY PHILLIPS
FOUNDER & TRUSTEE



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CO-FOUNDER & TRUSTEE



TANYA JERNIGAN
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