

Bakhita Charities for Southern Africa

www.bakhitacharities.org

Supporting orphans and vulnerable children

March 2017



Dear Friends,

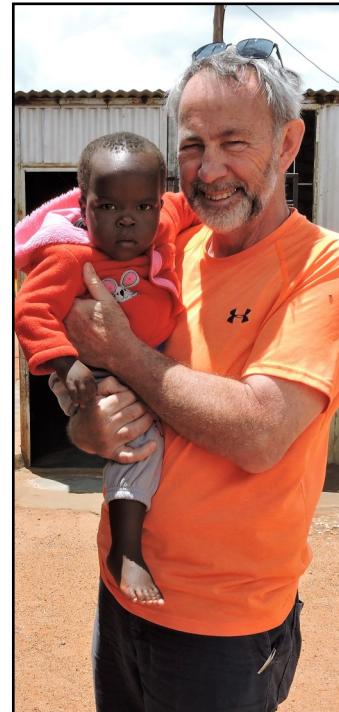
We just returned from spending a challenging and joyful six weeks at Bakhita Village and St. Brendan's School. During our annual visit, we are always inspired by the progress made by some of the girls and awakened to the challenges faced each day by these girls, their caregivers and the sisters in charge.

Our visit is an opportunity for us to get to know each girl better as well as a chance for them to learn about all the people in the United States who love and support them. It is also an occasion for us to meet with school administrators, teachers, government personnel, bus drivers, and many others who are there on the ground making daily life better for each of these girls.

It is a great blessing to witness the love and happiness at Bakhita Village. Since its opening in 2002, more than 150 young girls have received food, clothing, shelter, health care, education and love. Best of all, they are given hope for a life free from crushing poverty.

We are sending you this newsletter to give you an update on the work of Bakhita Charities and to thank you for your kind support of these young people who count on us to help them survive and thrive.

Maggie & John Williams



Education is the Key



Seventeen years ago, while working as volunteers in Africa, we came to realize that education is the key to lifting young people out of poverty. The poverty continues today in many parts of South Africa but education has changed the trajectory of the lives of so many young people who have been given the opportunity to learn.

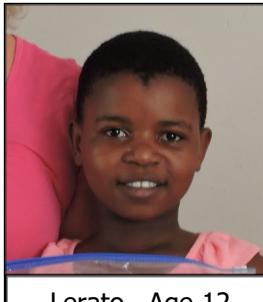
So today, Bakhita Charities continues to support education at many levels. In addition to supporting the elementary school girls living at Bakhita Village, we are also able to help a pre-school in the nearby village of Ga Phasha.

This year, thanks to your generous donations, we were able to award ten scholarships to girls who were formerly living at Bakhita Village and have now progressed to St. Brendan's Boarding High School.

Finally, we are also supporting two girls in university programs, giving them the opportunity to acquire good career skills for the future.



Meet Two of the Girls That You've Helped



Lerato—Age 12

We first met Lerato in 2010 when she was five years old. Although she was quite shy when she came to Bakhita Village, there was always a sparkle in her eyes that was endearing to one and all.

Lerato's name, in her native language of Sepedi, means "love" and it seems to be the perfect name for her.

She's a caring leader of her Bakhita sisters. Whether the girls are playing, eating or getting ready for school, the name Lerato is heard continuously. The girls count on her to help them and lead them and she never lets them down.

Lerato's gift bag in 2016 contained the book, "The Giving Tree", and we all read the book together. This year one of the things that the girls wanted to do was to again read Lerato's book and discuss it. She was very proud to retrieve it from her small storage box and share the story once again with her sisters.



We have known Mahlodi for many years. She was a young girl when she first moved into Bakhita Village and she is now in grade 8 at St. Brendan's High School.

Mahlodi is repeating grade 8 this year because she did not do well in school last year. Some of the issues that she faced were difficulties with her vision and difficulties living in the boarding school environment.



Mahlodi—Age 14

We sorted out some of the problems while we were with her, including getting new glasses and organizing a meeting with school administrators.

Here are a few lines from a letter she wrote: "I am happy to write this letter to you. Thank you for the many things that you have done for me. I promise you that I will work hard in my school in all the terms and I will pass. I want you to be proud of me and I will keep studying. I will pray for you and for all the people that help me and you will all be blessed by the holy spirit."



Thanks for Your Donations

Our work in Africa is made possible by the kind donations of our family and friends. We are grateful for each and every donation—from the few coins of a raided piggy bank to the \$2,500 that pays a full scholarship to St. Brendan's Boarding School. We are especially humbled by many who give on a regular monthly basis. We pay all our own expenses so 100% of your donations go directly to the girls.

Bakhita Charities is the 501(c)(3) charity that we initiated for supporters in the United States to make tax-deductible donations in US dollars. You can donate by check, credit card, or PayPal through the mail or the website. It's guaranteed to bring some great smiles.

