

Bakhita Charities for Southern Africa

www.bakhitacharities.org

Supporting orphans and vulnerable children

March 2018

Dear Friends,

Greetings from Bakhita Charities. We just returned from our five-week joyful but challenging trip to South Africa. During our annual visit, we are always inspired by the resilience and tenacity of the people — especially the children, who expect so little. While in South Africa, we kept very busy with several projects:



- *Visiting all the girls who were residents at Bakhita Village when it closed last year*
- *Paying scholarships for the girls at St. Brendan's High School*
- *Meeting with the girls whom we help support at universities*
- *Supporting the preschool in the neighboring village of Ga Phasha*

More info and photos are included in the blog posts on our website.

Each time we visit, we are reminded of the needs that still exists and we return home with an energized commitment to continue our work to help where those needs are greatest. As always, we thank all our kind and generous donors and supporters who make this work possible. God bless you.

Maggie & John Williams

Changes at Bakhita Village — Update

As we reported in our newsletter last November, the Bakhita Village home for orphaned and vulnerable girls closed in December 2017 because the Sisters who oversaw the home, could no longer staff it. The girls who were in residence at that time went to live with various relatives or guardians.

We enlisted the help of some OLSH Sisters and former Bakhita Village caregivers and formed a Bakhita Outreach Team. As a team, we visited each of the girls in their villages and presented them with their gift bag brought from the United States. We gave them a large food parcel, checked to see if they are attending school and assessed other immediate needs. No matter what the living environment was, the girls were thrilled one and all to receive their gift bag and to know that people care deeply for them.

We found that a few of the girls have good living conditions. They are being cared for by a responsible adult and they have all they need to get along. Others were found to be living with few material items, but in a safe situation with an adult as head of household.



Unfortunately, there were a few girls who were not in a safe or healthy environment. We worked with the team and began to make arrangements to improve those situations as quickly as possible.

The team will visit the girls frequently and provide food and other necessities while working to find better homes for those living in very unsatisfactory or unsafe environments. Several of the girls are now in grade seven and will join their Bakhita sisters at St. Brendan's next January.

Bakhita Charities will help fund the Bakhita Outreach Team and provide the support and encouragement needed to continue caring for the girls.

St. Brendan's High School

There are currently nine girls attending St. Brendan's Boarding School on full scholarships provided by Bakhita Charities. These girls all lived at Bakhita Village and are now receiving a quality high school education giving them the best possible chance for a bright future.

This year, we have one senior who will graduate in December. And there are six more Bakhita girls who will enter next year.

We have found that the girls are doing well and maturing nicely. They were delighted to receive gifts from the United States and are grateful to all of the donors who make their scholarships possible.



Tshilidzi (Junior) Mukoma

For many years, Silence Mukoma has worked at St. Brendan's in a variety of positions. As busy as he is, Silence has always taken the time to help at Bakhita Village and continues to guide our St. Brendan's girls when necessary. And he always helps with a smile, a kind word, and a perpetually-optimistic attitude.

Silence and his wife, Sinah, have three children and one child, Junior, was born with cerebral palsy. Life is tough in the poor rural parts of South Africa under any circumstances, but to have a child with an extreme disability is an overwhelming challenge.

We learned that Junior desperately needs a wheelchair that will hold his head and body in place and allow his parents an option other than holding him or carrying him. We decided that this chair was a worthy cause for Bakhita Charities.

We found a "buggy" designed especially for children with his condition that will allow Junior to sit up in a secure, comfortable way. We learned just as we were leaving, that the chair was finally ordered to specifications and would be delivered in a few weeks. Silence and Sinah were reassured that this "miracle" will come to pass for Junior and for them.



You're Invited!

Our annual Bakhita Charities Awareness and Appreciation Gathering will be held on April 9 at 7:00 pm at:

Christ the Redeemer Church
2700 Waldon Road
Lake Orion

We'll share information on our recent visit to South Africa, show photos, tell stories and discuss your questions and comments.

Light snacks will be served.
All are welcome.

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 donation. Every dollar helps. \$2,500 pays a full scholarship to St. Brendan's Boarding School. We personally pay all expenses so 100% of your donations go directly to the children.

Bakhita Charities is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization and all donations are fully tax-deductible. You can donate by check, credit card, or PayPal through the mail or the website.



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