

Bakhita Charities for Southern Africa

www.bakhitacharities.org

Supporting orphans and vulnerable children

April 2016



Dear Family and Friends,

We just returned from spending a challenging and joyful month at Bakhita Village. While there, we were touched every day by the sad stories of difficult experiences but we were also blessed to witness tremendous progress, growth and happiness at Bakhita Village.

In 2001, while working as volunteers in South Africa, we were deeply touched by the poverty and struggles of the people, especially the children who were orphaned and living on their own. We worked with the Sisters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart to open this small home named Bakhita Village. Since then, more than 125 young girls have received food, clothing, shelter, education and best of all love, hope and opportunity for a better life.

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

Maggie and John Williams

Announcing Bakhita Charities Board Members

As Bakhita Charities has grown, we decided to establish a board to help with activities development and financial oversight. We invited six people to sit on the board and all accepted.

The board members are:

Dianne Healy-Clauss,
Mike and Karen Maloney,
Don and Ann Stone, and
Carleen Ward.

These compassionate individuals bring a wealth of experience from previous leadership roles and from serving on boards of other nonprofit organizations. Don and Ann have visited Bakhita Village.

It's an exciting time of growth for Bakhita Charities; growth that will provide many girls a safe, loving environment and an opportunity for an education that will sustain them through their lifetime.



Sorrow and Joy: Three Sisters

We helped welcome three sisters into Bakhita Village this year. Sister Nancy, the Director of Bakhita Village, was made aware of three young girls in a situation of extreme poverty and hopelessness. They were living on their own in a nearby village with the oldest of the sisters, eight-year-old Pauline, acting as mother for her two younger siblings.

They arrived at Bakhita Village on January 14 and when we met them in early February, they were still a little overwhelmed and unsure of how to live in this new environment.

As our time with the girls went on, we saw them becoming more comfortable and adjusting as well as any child could be expected to adjust.

Maphala Maggie, five years old, is flourishing as the older girls take her under their wings and give her guidance and love and help her with the Bakhita Village routine. She loves loading up her



backpack and going to school every day. She joyfully and willingly participates in prayer time and sings her heart out when song and dance time begins. Six-year-old Maria is also adjusting well and learning the ropes at her new home.

Pauline is having a harder time adjusting, but she also progressed in the month that we were there and is gaining confidence in her role as a member of a large group of siblings. She appreciates that she is no longer responsible for keeping her sisters alive. It truly was a joy to witness their transformation.

Thanks to You, Seven Girls Have Started High School



First Day of High School—A Little Overwhelming

Last year we asked for your help to pay the school fees for girls at Bakhita so that they could attend St. Brendan's Boarding School beginning with grade 8. Not only is St. Brendan's a great school which can prepare the girls for a better future, having the grade 8 girls move to a boarding school also made space available for new girls, who were in desperate need, to enter Bakhita Village.

You came through with kindness and generosity. School fees for all seven girls have been paid for a good part of the year.

All seven Bakhita girls started grade 8 in January and thanks to you they received new uniforms, book bags, shoes, some clothing for weekends and most notably, we were able to purchase one computer that they will all share. The computer is kept with Sr. Nancy at Bakhita Village and the grade 8 girls are able to use it during some study time and on weekends. It will enable them to catch up to peers who have had so many more learning opportunities. Thank you so very much.



New School Uniforms

Simple Necessities of Life: A New Stove

Upon arriving at Bakhita Village in February, we sat down with Sr. Nancy and Sr. Helene and made a list of needs from most urgent to wishful. Some of the items that were fairly high on the list were a gas cooker that holds very large pots — cooking for 27 is a challenge — as well as plates and eating utensils for the girls.

A local group of men who call themselves the ROMEO's (Retired Old Men Eating Out) made a donation to Bakhita Village and we decided that since they are all about eating — along with being generous — it would be appropriate to use their donation to purchase a new cook-stove. It took a bit of searching but we managed to find a sturdy, welded-iron stove with three large gas burners — it hooks up with a hose to a gas cylinder that sits outside a window of the Bakhita Village kitchen. It's perfect and about as simple as an appliance can be.

We also took Sr. Nancy to town and had her pick out flatware as well plastic plates and cups along with some new colorful aprons for the housemothers who do the cooking. It was a fun, joyful time and we thank those senior men for making it easier for these little girls to eat.



Donations

You can make your tax-deductible donation by check, credit card, or PayPal through the mail or the website. It's also straightforward to set up a regular monthly donation. We pay all our own expenses and we pay all administrative costs so 100% of your donations go directly to helping these girls. We deeply appreciate the donations received from family, friends, and churches. We assure you that the need is great, the cause is worthwhile, and your donations are stretched as far as possible.

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