



HEIFER NEWS



In partnership, striving to end hunger and poverty in South Africa

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Programme Coordinator

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Special Thanks

*Let there be heifers
everywhere.....passing on the spirit,
the goodwill and the gift.....*

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Yesterday. Tomorrow. Today

By Marisia Geraci, Executive Director

*Yesterday is history. Tomorrow is a mystery.
And today? Today is a gift. That's why we
call it the present. ~Babatunde Olatunji*

This edition of the newsletter is a chance to reflect our achievements over the past year, to share plans for the coming year and to give thanks for our present.

Yesterday....reflecting over the past year

Close to a year ago, I welcomed the opportunity to lead the organisation as Executive Director. It has been a year of stabilising the organisation, gaining a deeper understanding of our operations, and thinking about the future and how to help even more communities in need.

Every year, we review our progress towards the organisational strategic goals. This year was the final year in our three-year strategic plan dating 2007 - 2010. As we conducted our review in March with our management team, we determined that it was necessary to extend our current plan for an additional 12 months in order to complete some of the objectives we had laid out. Our strategic priorities for this past year were 1) Programme Strengthening and Sustainability 2) Partnership Building 3) Staff Development 4) Increasing Resources and Brand Awareness and 5) Governance. We made steady progress in all five areas.

Tomorrow...sharing our dreams for the coming year

We welcome the coming year as one for new endeavours and growth. A new five-year strategic plan will be developed early in 2011. We want to continue to grow our resources and increase brand recognition nationally, so that we can ensure more communities no longer face poverty. With the growing funding that we hope to secure, we will begin work with 12 new communities that have been waiting to work with us since developing a proposal in 2008. In the area of governance, we look forward to welcoming our three new board members who joined Heifer

International South Africa, this year.

Present....giving thanks for today

During this holiday season, we have much to give thanks for. We have concluded our 11th year of helping communities in South Africa. This is a great achievement given the continued bleak economic situation, which has resulted in many NGOs closing their doors while poverty continues to reach astonishing levels.

But we remain, here in the present, and stronger than ever. And we continue to help thousands of families defeat poverty. They now have hope of a brighter future because of their tireless dedication. And they are not only helping themselves but they are helping their neighbours through Passing on the Gift. We thank them for their tremendous determination which ensures our projects and their efforts reach full fruition.

We give thanks to our talented and committed staff. We give thanks to our Board of Directors for their leadership. Both the staff and board are incredibly special groups of people who have hearts for helping others. They truly are the unsung heroes working diligently behind the scenes.

We thank you, our supporters, for giving your time, your talents and your treasures to us so that we can enable even more communities in need. You have helped us achieve the gifts we have today, which is our present.

May you have a blessed holiday season. Wishing you peace, happiness and prosperity in 2011.



Marisia Geraci on a field visit

PROGRAMME MANAGERS' REFLECTIONS OF 2010

In South Africa, 2010 will forever be associated with football. But as our Programme Managers reflect on the year, their thoughts are on our work and the impact it has made. Space limitations have meant that many highlights had to be excluded from this newsletter, but what follows is a reflection of the year from each province.

Vusi Mpokeli, Eastern Cape Programme Manager:

"2010 has been such a busy year for us! It is with great pride that I reflect on the fact that:

- We support projects for a defined length of time and this year **nine** of our 18 projects have been completed. The members of those projects have thanked us and told us they are now ready to carry on as self-sustaining groups!
- **81**, yes 81 families have received the benefit of Passing on the Gift
- The Passing on the Gift process has been accelerated as **57 of our original families** have received an additional goat
- **External partners** have fulfilled their obligations and donated 36 boer goats to our Mavathulana Mzamomhle Project.
- **The value of our training** has been recognised. Our Masilimani Workshop was extremely successful and has inspired many to start food gardens and the Department of Social Development has requested that we conduct training for them!"

Many of our projects have been completed; our help is no longer needed as the project members can now walk alone. We have started many on the route to self-sustainability and the value of our training has been acknowledged. The ripple of benefit to our rural communities (who once had little hope) is gathering momentum and that's fantastic".

Sthembiso Gasa, KwaZulu Natal Programme Coordinator:

"We have exited two projects this year and 20 goats and 160 chickens have been passed on to other impoverished families. But, poverty isn't only about resources. It's about the inability to access information, the downcast eye, a feeling of worthlessness, which creates communities who are unable to help themselves. Some of our communities found it difficult to access information which would help



Vusi Mpokeli with the Mayor, Mr Ntontela, at a recent POG Ceremony

them. But looking back at the progress that has been made this year, I am both inspired and humbled by what our project members have achieved:

- **Women now take their rightful place as equals.** They are keepers of goats and successfully care for their growing herds. And because of this;
- **Women are now consulted.** Women view the ownership of animals as a way of improving the community's life and not only as a status symbol and their carefully tended herds do just that - Improve their families' lives.
- **Communities stand together as one.** Before Heifer, it was often thought that membership of a project correlated with membership of a group – a church perhaps. We exited the Senzokuhle and Kervelar projects this year. Their thinking has changed. It is no longer a question of whether you belong to a particular congregation. Membership is open to anyone who has the need and the desire to become self-sufficient.
- **Communities are now able to help themselves.** Everyone now pulls together to do his or her "bit". They are able to access information and they work together to help themselves.

When I reflect on the year and the progress that has been made, I feel proud to have been part of the process which has made it all possible".

Elizabeth Lefoka, Limpopo Programme Manager:

"We have achieved much this year. More than 78 families have benefited from our cornerstone concept of Passing on of the Gift, our partnerships with external agencies have gone from strength to strength, but for me the highlight has to be that several of our project members have had their efforts recognised:

- Four members of our Hereford project received certificates and awards from the Department of

Agriculture recognising them as the **best subsistence producers of livestock.**

- Members of our Moretsele Project were recognised as women who have achieved **excellence in a micro-enterprise.**
- A participant of our Arise and Shine Project was recognised as being the **best female farmer** in a small scale category!
- There have been many instances where our project participants' efforts were rewarded as they attained their personal goals and dreams. To mention just one, a member of our Tshiombo Goat Project was able to send her daughter on a course and pay for her to sit her driver's licence, and her daughter passed!

I look back on this year with pride. I am proud of our participants and share their joy that their hard work has paid off and they have been recognised as achievers!"

OUR SPECIAL THANKS GO TO:

Mr Archie Vermeulen who is one of our kind regular givers. We asked Mr Vermeulen how he heard about us and he said: "I saw an article about Heifer and I thought, I wonder what these people are about? So I went onto your website and read as much as I could. I thought they are doing it right, this makes sense to me. You are teaching people how to look after themselves. Too many people just give something and when it is gone that's it. You don't do that. You train, you give, people learn and when you leave a project the people themselves are in a position where they can give to others. This is a giving pattern that makes sense to me. I consider myself fortunate in that I can give monthly. It's the right thing to do."

The A M Moolla Charity Trust have generously supported our work with a donation of R1,500 towards our Read to Feed initiative.

Jamie Tyler – Our American Volunteer who helped in our offices with such enthusiasm and has now returned to the States.

Nokwazi Ngcongo – our Resource Development Officer. Nokwazi leaves us after four years of dedicated service to further her career in Johannesburg. We wish Nokwazi everything of the best.

Space, cost and data protection prevents us from listing all of our kind donors by name, but we would like you all to know that your support of our work has been fantastic and we send our thanks to each and every one of our donors.