



MATJANA PRESCHOOL NEWLETTER

WRITTEN AND COMPILED BY LONDIWE DLAMINI AND MICHELLE BREAR

LOOKING BACK AT A CHALLENGING 2019 AND FORWARD TO A PROSPEROUS 2020

Matjana preschool teachers Londiwe Dlamini and Qiniso Vilakati are looking forward to a prosperous 2020 and hoping for a few less challenges than last year. In 2019 the teachers managed to keep school meals on the tables, smiles on little faces and put the roof back on the kitchen. To do so they even went without being paid their stipends for many months! Here's what they had to say about their experiences in the last and vision for the year ahead.

"2019 was a hard year for us," Londiwe said. "Our kitchen roof was blown off by strong winds midway through last year. The parents who help prepare the meals had to

cook and dish in an open area. During rain we had to dish the food inside the classroom. It was already crowded because we were forced to store all the equipment from the kitchen in the classroom."

"The kids' playing equipment was also destroyed," Qiniso said. "During the storm the wind was so strong that the wooden swings, which were planted into the ground, were turned upside down."

"It was really disappointing to see our preschool students having to wait in a long queue in order to play since they were sharing one swing. The slides were also broken."

Matjana Preschool was already struggling with fundraising efforts, due to temporary lack of resources for putting together this newsletter, which is the main way we communicate with our financial supporters. The government still provides no funding for preschools. We rely on volunteers to make the newsletter and do fundraising. Already in a bad financial position, the preschool fell further behind in paying the teachers and security guards.

Despite being owed several months of stipend payments, everyone kept coming to work. Londiwe continued leading the effort to get funding through Microprojects to roof the sec-

THIS ISSUE

LOOKING BACK TO 2019 AND FORWARD TO 2020 1

MEET THE MATJANA KIDS 1

FINANCES UPDATE 2

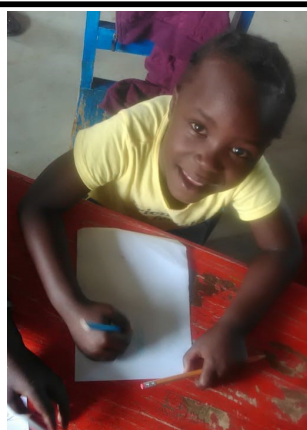
ond classroom. It was a process former head teacher Ncobile Mbonane started before her departure in 2017.

Each year, following up on the promise of funding made in 2016, has involved numerous bus trip to Nhlanguano, for Londiwe and four members of the school committee, all volunteers. Each trip cost about E500/USD30 bus fares, so this repeated travelling not only consumed lots of time, but also precious financial resources. Many might have lost patience and given up.

MEET THE



MATJANA KIDS



NAME:	Lungelo Msibi	Busiswa Vilakati	Sandziswa Dlamini
MEANING:	Right	Blessed	Multiple
FAVOURITES AT SCHOOL:	Writing letters	Colouring	Playing on the see-saw
FAVOURITE FOOD:	Porridge and beans	Rice and meat	Buns and apples
WANTS TO BE A:	Soldier	Nurse	Policeman
TEACHERS SAY:	Very shy but always asks if he doesn't understand something	Very cheeky with a kind heart	Shortest of them all and has a brilliant mind

LOOKING BACK AT A CHALLENGING 2019 AND FORWARD TO 2020

We're pleased Londiwe and the school committee members didn't give up. Their efforts were rewarded when Microprojects finally provided the building materials and money to pay a builder to roof the second classroom, in November 2019. About 10 community members came each day to assist the builder with labour, as the Microprojects funding did not provide for paying builder's labourers.

The builder was apparently impressed with, and inspired by, the community members' efforts. So much so that he offered to repair the kitchen roof for free, if the school could purchase the building materials while he was in the community. The school had received some Christmas donations, but was months behind in paying teacher and security stipends. We were able to re-roof the kitchen because these greatly dedicated workers decided to purchase the building materials first and receive just a bit of the money owed to them at Christmas time. They're still owed stipends but have since used money contributed by parents, to repair the swings and slides. The 2020 Matjana Preschool kids have plenty to play with!

"We are so excited that we have our kitchen fixed and that our best dream, which is to finish our new beautiful classroom, is about to come true. We need furniture, paint and learning materials to finish the new classroom and get ready to enrol some four year olds at Matjana Preschool. We're confident we'll get the

support we need to purchase them some-time this year. We're ready to open as soon as funding allows," Londiwe said.

"For now we are just enjoying being back at school with 15 new girls and 12 new boys, learning about body parts, our theme for first term."



FUNDRAISING UPDATE

With donations from Friends of Matjana Preschool in Australia in early 2020, we've managed to pay the teachers' and security guards' stipends up to the end of December 2019. We need about another E4000 (about USD250 or AUD400) per month to cover our current operating expenses in 2020. We're hoping to raise an additional E10,000 to furnish and equip our new classroom and an additional E2000 per month to cover the costs of increasing our teachers' fairly meagre stipends and recruiting a third teacher so that we can open the second classroom and enrol more four year old students. If you can make a once-off or regular donation, please contribute to our Swazi or Australian bank account.

	Swaziland	Australia
Bank	Standard Bank	The Community Mutual Group
Account Name:	Matjana Preschool	Friends of Matjana Preschool
Account Number:	9110001038268	(000)719585
Bank SWIFT code:	SBICSZMX	N/A
BSB Number:	66056441	932000

Find us at: <http://www.mps-swaziland.org/> or email mbrear@matjanapreschool.org to subscribe to our email list