



# MATJANA PRESCHOOL NEWSLETTER

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## WELCOME TO KHETSIWE MATSEBULA, MATJANA'S NEW TEACHER

We are pleased to welcome a new teacher, Khetsiwe Matsebula, who will join the Matjana team from the beginning of 2022. While we're happy to welcome Khetiswe, we're also sad about the reason that we need a new teacher. Qiniso Vilakati, who joined the Matjana team in 2018, has left the preschool, as part of a move to town.

Matjana Preschool has always tried to provide training opportunities that prepare our teachers for other work and better opportunities. However, it is never easy when a teacher actually leaves.

"It is so heartbreaking when someone you are used to having around leaves", those were teacher Londi's words.

"Ncobile and Swane, they both left me and moved away. Now it's Qiniso, who has moved to town and found a job working in a factory which produces oil. It's sad. He was a good asset to the preschool."

When Qiniso submitted his resignation, schools were closed. We were not sure when the government would announce the re-opening of schools, but decided to immediately advertise for a new teacher.

The school committee and parents decided to look for a new teacher who lived in the community and had vaccinated to protect against COVID-19. They also wanted a teacher who would be eligible to apply to enrol in Diploma of Early Childhood Education studies, so that we could continue the tradition

of supporting our teacher by providing formal training opportunities. The training centre that provides the Diploma only accepts applications from prospective students who have received three or more credits in their high school results.

Once the selection criteria had been determined, we placed an advertise-

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ment at the local shop and maize mill. We asked parents and members of the school committee to spread the word that we were looking for a new teacher. Six young members of the community sub-





## WELCOME KHETSIWE, MATJANA'S NEWEST TEACHER (CONT)

mitted applications

School committee members and teacher Londi interviewed the applicants asking them questions about (amongst other things) how they would work in the classroom and deal with COVID-19. They decided on Ms Khetsiwe Matsebula as Matjana's new teacher.

Khetsiwe is 23 years old and has grown up in the Matjana community.

She received four credits in her high school certificate and has already submitted her application to enrol in Diploma of Early Childhood Care, Development and Education studies at the Free Evangelical Association Training Centre. It's the same place former teachers Ncobile, Swane and Fortunate got their qualifications. Khetsiwe will study part time, so that she can apply the learning from her Diploma in the preschool classroom and vice versa.

Khetsiwe will start teaching the Matjana kids from the beginning of 2022 (when we are hoping the school year will return to normal!). We are so much happy to have her joining our team and she's also happy to find a job in her community, at a time when unemployment is worse than ever in Eswatini. "I finished school and got four credits, I love kids and am happy to be one of your team ", Khetsiwe said.

## 2021 WRAP UP- WE'RE GLAD THIS YEAR'S OVER!

2021 was a year (not) to be remembered! We started the year badly, with schools closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Unfortunately, schools have remained closed throughout Eswatini for most of the year, due to COVID-19 and political unrest. All up, Matjana's class of 2021 has spent just two months in the classroom, and have missed out on a number of experiences that were a feature of the preschool year in pre-COVID-19 times.

We were pleased when the government announced (on Saturday 27 November) that all schools in Eswatini were to re-open on Monday 29

November. Teacher Swane, who had just started leave from her other teaching job, came back to help at Matjana three days a week as a volunteer. However, as the government didn't announce how long schools would be open for, we didn't really know how to plan the end of year. As it turned out the government announced (on Tuesday 7 December ) that schools would close again on Friday 10 December. just two weeks after reopening.

There was no time to prepare a trip or graduation ceremony, which usually marks the end of the Matjana school year. Teacher Londi quickly organised an end of year games day, to make

sure her 2021 kids had a special day to mark the end of the year. However, the weather did not cooperate- on Friday 10 December, the scheduled day for the games, heavy rain and thunder storms kept all but one of the children at home.

COVID-19 pandemic has been so destructive to the Matjana kids since they didn't have enough time to learn due to the closing and opening of schools. It also presented lots of challenges for teachers and parents. While we're pleased to have had a couple of months in the classroom in 2021, we're hoping to return to a normal school calendar in 2022!

## FUNDRAISING UPDATE

Our supporters from around the world have been a bright light in an otherwise gloomy year of school closures and challenges. We're pleased to finish the 2021 with a little bit of money in the bank and hope that with your continued support and less government restrictions, we'll be able to open our doors to 4 year old students sometime in 2022. Please consider supporting us in this festive season. Contributions can be made to one of our bank accounts



	Swaziland	Australia
Bank	Standard Bank	The Community Mutual Group
Account Name:	Matjana Preschool	Friends of Matjana Preschool
Account Number:	9110001038268	719585
Bank SWIFT code:	SBICSZMX	-
BSB Number:	66056441	932000