

KGOSI NEIGHBOURHOOD  
FOUNDATION 2008 -2009  
Annual Report

*The Kqosi Neighbourhood Foundation was founded in 2004 with a mission to bring educational light into the lives of vulnerable children in the Jeppestown/ Belgravia neighbourhood and its surrounding communities.*

*Its first initiative, the Wings of Hope pre-school, provided members of the local community with excellent pre-school education to ensure school readiness, and academic success in the years that followed. The Foundation has now assisted over 250 students and their parents, providing education, advocacy and compassionate care to those in need.*





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"For all that has been, we give thanks. For all that is, we ask for courage. For all that will be, we have faith and trust.

You give us wings of hope."

—Sr. Natalie Kuhn, O.P., Executive Director



## serving our neighbourhood

When we started out with our Foundation, the notion of **neighbourhood** and answering the needs of the people was so clear. We responded by opening our school and giving talks to the parents. That all sounded so definitive.

Now, as I reflect on the energy we have channelled into the neighbourhood, the picture changes somewhat especially as I reflect on 2009. Basically, the child is the central focus of the Neighbourhood but experience has taught us so much more.

The components of the school and all who work with, for and in the school remains but, what has changed, is the ever-broadening vision that arises from these children and the needs of their families. I have thought about where we are now and the same call is present but, oh, so differently answered.

We are much more “at one” with the families in our neighbourhood. After providing courses for some of the families, we know that the lives of these children have changed somewhat. It is not just the courses; it is what the parents have done because of them. Three have volunteered for months as care givers. Now they are asked sometimes to fill in when a staff member is away or ill and, then, at least some income is available for them. The home cookery course encouraged parents to use their initiative and this has hap-

pened. Preparing food and selling it from home provides a little extra income.

Talks have been given to the parents, by the police informing each family what they can do when there is crime in the area; Sr. Sandra on anti trafficking; by the chefs on how to cook. What is important about the talks that we give regularly to the parents is what they **do** with the talks. They are empowered to act.

Wonderful gifts have also come our way. The Head Chefs Association of Southern Africa gave a demonstration and also provided a wonderful meal for all the children. Excitement around this was great but their gift of Sunlight soap to all the families could not have been more appreciated. “Now we can wash our blankets,” one mother said. Another said, “I so need this soap; it comes like a gift from God.”

Another great gift was the invitation to Pinocchio at the Jo’burg Theatre. Life has never been the same since. Imagine sitting in a theatre for the first time in your life - you have your degree as a teacher - you are overwhelmed at the number of people who are attending and here is a large school group of children dressed in their red school uniform. People are looking, amazed at the discipline and excitement of these children and more amazing things followed. The lights were dimmed, music, movement, energy

and a story unfolded as the show began. Teachers and pupils alike were glued to their seats. I am not sure if I enjoyed observing the members of the staff and the children more than the actual show. What I am sure of is the fact that each day is a new experience and, if I can be instrumental in making it happen so that learning can occur, my energy is well spent.

I end with a quote from Paulo Freire. “We must challenge all who teach to reflect critically on the meaning of the act of Teaching as well as the meaning of Learning. - then little by little learners begin doing so as well.” Educators open themselves to recognize the different paths that students take. Then we too, as educators, can continually reconstruct the paths we take.” For all that Has been we give Thanks, for all that is we ask for Courage and for all that will be we have Faith and Trust and know that donors have made it possible to make a difference in the families and lives of these children at school. May you continue to be blessed for responding to the needs of our Neighbourhood and may you and your loved ones be blessed in turn.

Ever gratefully,

Sr. Natalie Kuhn, O.P.  
Executive Director



# welcome to our neighbourhood

The children in our care come to the school from the inner-city, Jeppeshtown/Belgravia neighbourhood of Johannesburg. They come from homes plagued by poverty. Most of them lack language, and social skills, as well as gross and fine motor skills. Some do not even have the words to express themselves in their own home language. By the time these children leave the Wings of Hope School they will have overcome a number of challenges of their past, and will be ready to enter Grade 1.





# planting seeds of *hope*

**It is part of our Mission to help with the upliftment of the neighbourhood. We have had the opportunity to do so much for our community.**

**EDUCATING OUR PARENTS** We provided Literacy and Numeracy courses for parents of the neighbourhood. Four mothers were also sent on an elementary cookery programme. This was a practical course teaching beginners how to read and follow recipes and giving them an understanding of basic cookery skills.

We sent four mothers for training in Home Based (Frail) Care for the Elderly. Two of these women have been volunteering at a Home for retired people in the neighbourhood and though they have not been employed full time are often asked to do part time care when staff are away.

A three weeks programme was run by Sr Ann Wigley op and Sr Elfrieda Tebele op both of whom have vast experience in facilitating groups. The parents were offered the opportunity to explore options for themselves, develop their skills in making choices and decisions for their future, they were able to meet other parents, form friendships and give each other support in various ways. They reported that they had received and gave courage to each other as they continued to journey in this difficult neighbourhood, with their own daily challenges.

**EDUCATING OUR TEACHERS** All of our Assistant teachers participated in an 18 month course during which they were trained as Early Childhood Practitioners. The subjects studied enabled them to qualify and be recognised by the Education Department as Reception Class and Pre-school teachers. This was a phenomenal opportunity for them, giving them hope for their future as teachers.

This study was a commitment over and above their daily teaching programme so their time invested in the course was an additional challenge to them. The cost involved was covered by the Sieben Foundation based in USA and in part by the Opus Philanthropy Group. This donation was the Spring Board which enabled these women to reach a standard of Education which they never had believed possible. A First Aid and CPR course was completed by an Assistant Teacher who is now responsible for the First Aid equipment in all the classes

**FEEDING OUR CHILDREN** As a direct result of the generosity of the donors of the Kgosi Neighbourhood Foundation, all of our children receive two full meals and a nutritious snack each day. Our children receive a hot breakfast, lunch and a nutritious snack. Often times, the last meal our children have had was the one they were given at Wings of Hope the previous day.





# ray of hope

**What a blessing!** One of the most rewarding experiences working here at KNF is to actually be the channel of change and particularly, in this case, for a Grade O pupil who came to us with Blount's disease. When I spoke to the mother about her not wearing school shoes she said they "hurt" her foot as it was crooked. I could see that this was a major medical condition that needed treatment. As the family is from Zaire and possibly would not be treated at the Johannesburg Hospital I sent her to our local Doctor. The Doctor advised me to approach the Johannesburg General Hospital, which I did on a School letterhead. My request was that they give her consideration for the necessary surgery before it was too late. Money was given to the mother for travelling for the first visit and to see the mother's delight when she returned and reported that they had agreed to perform the corrective surgery was reward in itself.

We continued to provide the travelling money for herself and her daughter for all visits and until finally she did not need to return to the Hospital.

Blount's disease is a growth disorder of the shinbone (tibia) in which the lower leg turns inward, resembling a bow leg. The cause is unknown but is thought to be due to weight on the growth plate. Blount's disease slowly gets worse. It can cause severe bowing of both legs. Fortunately Jemima only had the right leg affected and it was not too late to do the corrective surgery. After several visits to the Hospital, X rays and other tests the surgery was performed at the beginning of August. The parents were delighted when she could come home in an ambulance and they could take care of her. Her parents had a challenge with the care she needed at home as the leg was in plaster up to the top of the femur and her mobility was severely compromised.

Her birthday is in September and a friend of hers drove her to school for the occasion. Jemima was so happy to see her friends and enjoy a party with the class. Eventually she came back to school at the beginning of October. The excitement of her being able to walk and stand tall was great and a learning experience for all of us – little ones included.

It was really humbling to receive so many words of appreciation from the mother and father whose right it was to have the child treated and who never thought that as refugees they would be helped and that money for transport could be made available. Once again you as donors need to know that you are making a difference and even the smallest donation goes towards making things happen which otherwise may not have been possible. This story is a tribute to all and once again you have enabled this Foundation to continue to be a channel of Hope. Our thanks also go to the staff of the Johannesburg General orthopaedic department who so generously and successfully made this surgery happen.





SIMPHIWE'S FAMILY OUTSIDE THEIR HOME

*"I am a proud mother. Simphiwe is receiving such a good education. When we go back to the rural area, she always teaches the other children, she answers all their questions, she knows so much, she speaks such good English. I am so proud of her."*

## promise of hope

For Simphiwe and her family, the thought of receiving high quality, private school education was a dream that they never believed could come true.

Simphiwe Tshabalala first came to Kgosi Neighbourhood Foundation in 2006. She was a quiet, hard-working, intelligent girl. Her parents were unemployed and could not afford to send her to school. She was taken into Wings of Hope School as a Grade R student.

Simphiwe is the oldest of three children. She has a little brother (Sicelo, 4 months) and a little sister (Ayanda, 3). Her older brother (Samgelisiwe) fell ill and died when he was 5 months old.

Simphiwe's mother always hoped that she would have a future brighter than the one she and her husband envisioned for themselves. Simphiwe's parents were born, raised and educated in KwaZulu

Natal. Both her mother (33) and father (35) did not complete their high school education. Her mother stopped schooling when she was in Grade 11 and her father stopped when he was in Grade 8. her parents moved to Johannesburg with the hope of finding employment that would support their family.

After months and months of seeking employment, Simphiwe's father eventually found a job as a taxi driver, he hopes to one day own his own taxi. Her mother has previously worked as a domestic worker but is currently unemployed.

Simphiwe's family lives in a small garage in Belgravia, both her parents, herself and her siblings sleep in the same room. She has no place to do her homework each night however, she says she has learnt how to write sitting on the floor. Simphiwe walks to school each day.

Sadly, Simphiwe's story is not uncommon in the Belgravia community. However, because of the generosity of individuals like Anne Lynch, Simphiwe is one of the very few students who have been given a promise of hope. Simphiwe will have her entire school education paid for. She will be a student at Dominican Convent School until the day she graduates from matric. Simphiwe is currently in Grade 3.

Simphiwe's parents are both very grateful for the education that she is receiving. Her mother still hopes that one day she too will be able to finish school, she intends to become a computer technician.

Simphiwe is working very hard at school, she continues to give the Belgravia community and her family hope.





THEMBA AT HOME



THANDO AND HER BABY



THEMBA AT SCHOOL

## hope identified

It was just another day in the life of a single mother living in poverty.

Thando Ngwenya welcomed Kgosi Neighbourhood Foundation into her home. She hoped our visit would change her life forever, it did.

Thando is a 20 year old woman, she has three children and is currently unemployed. Themba, her middle child is a student in Grade R at the Wings of Hope School. When Thando enrolled Themba into our school, he had no birth certificate and she had no Identity Document. When Thando was asked why she had not received the necessary documentation, her answer was simple... "I do not have the money for a taxi to town, I do not have the money to pay for the pictures I need for my ID."

All Thando needed was R14 for her taxi fair and R50 for the pictures and her life would change drastically.

As a result of the generosity of our donors, Kgosi Neighbourhood Foundation was able to give Thando the money she needed and a few weeks later, she had birth certificates for herself and her three children.

Thando became a parent for the first time when she was 14, at this age, she was too young to apply for an ID, as a result she did not have the necessary documentation for her to apply for a grant in order to receive income to support herself and her children.

Thando lived her entire teenage life in a children's home. When she was 13, the people in her neighbourhood were concerned about her well-being and informed child protective services that her clothes were filthy and she never had enough to eat. Shortly thereafter Thando was taken into a local children's home.

Thando was forced to leave the children's home to take care of the last person she had contact with in her family, he soon passed away. She was left on her own. Her father was nowhere to be found and she never knew her mother.

Thando has never been employed, has no work experience and very little hope of finding employment.

She now lives in a small room. Her baby sleeps on a dirty mattress on the floor. She counts her blessings because at least her room has a crumbling bathroom with running water. Many others are not so lucky.

Today, because of Kgosi Neighbourhood Foundation, Thando receives her monthly grant for her three children. Thando is working towards her matric certificate and full-time employment. She lives in hope.





## a growing circle of care

Kgosi Neighbourhood Foundation strives to educate the underprivileged children of the Belgravia community, in an effort to ensure that these children will one day lead a future free from poverty.

Since 2005, Kgosi Neighbourhood Foundation has provided free, early childhood education to the vulnerable children of the Belgravia community. Today, the eldest group of children that have been served by our Foundation are currently in Grade 5, these children have overcome immense challenges in their paths and have managed to successfully reach their current grade.

The Kgosi Neighbourhood Foundation has identified that there is a need to further support the educational experience of these children.

Most of the parents of the children we serve are illiterate and as a result, are unable to communicate in the English language. These children do not have anyone in their homes who can help them with their homework, read to them or simply speak to them in the language that they are expected to learn in at school.

The Kgosi Neighbourhood Foundation Homework Centre, in partnership with the Dominican Convent School Interact Club, works with these children.

The method is simple, two Kgosi Neighbourhood Foundation students are paired with one Dominican Convent High School student. These students work on homework together, read together, play together and learn together.

Research shows that mentoring programs have a positive effect on a child's life. The Kgosi Neighbourhood Foundation past pupils have proved this research correct as their most recent school reports have shown considerably improved results in their areas of weakness as time has progressed.

### *DID YOU KNOW?*

*Over 80% of KNF past pupils are currently enrolled in schools within the Belgravia area.*

## OUR STAFF

Sr. Natalie Kuhn, O.P.  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Yani Horn  
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

Babalwa Mfebe  
EDUCATOR, GRADE R

Dorothy MacRae  
EDUCATOR, GRADE O

Margaret Newton Johns  
MUSIC TEACHER

Mary Kazembe  
ASSISTANT, GRADE O

Kate Makunqo  
ASSISTANT, GRADE O

Mashudu Mashau  
OFFICE ASSISTANT

Thabani Fakude  
COMPUTER /HOMEWORK  
CENTRE ASSISTANT

Noluvuyo Feni  
COMPUTER ASSISTANT

Busisiwe Zulu  
COOK

Olive Kudzuwa  
ASSISTANT COOK

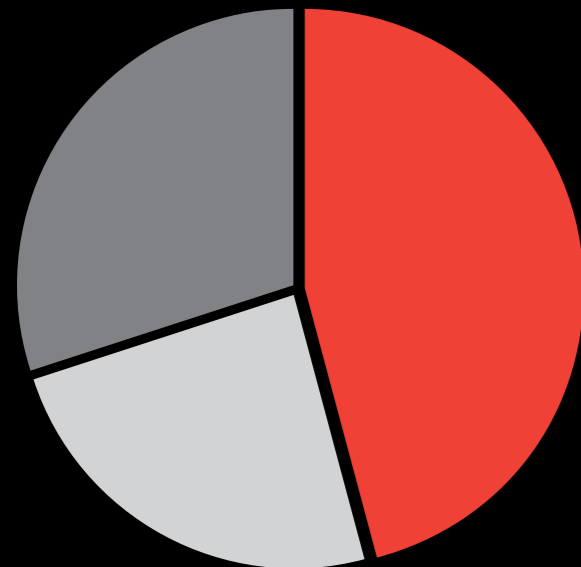
Peter Mudzwari  
GARDENER

John Kazembe  
GARDENER



## thank you

On behalf of all the families of KNF, we thank all of our donors for your continued generosity.



## 2009 donations

- MONTHLY DONORS (24%)
- CORPORATE DONORS (46%)
- INDIVIDUAL DONORS (30%)

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## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

It is with pleasure that I can endorse this report on two further successful years for KNF during which the Wings of Hope school expanded from 54 learners in 2008 to 72 in 2009. KNF also widened its remit to include adult education with practical subjects such as literacy, health care and cookery enthusiastically taken up by a number of the parents of the children at the school. This has also broadened into employment at the school in roles such as teaching assistants, security and gardening. For the teaching assistants it is good to report that KNF sponsored them to complete a certificate in education which is the first step in their gaining a formal qualification and therefore equip them for full time employment. Similarly some of the teachers at Wings of Hope have been helped to further their own qualifications.

As in previous years the school opened its doors to all children in need and as a result of this policy has taken in on average 20% non South Africans from as far afield as Sudan, but mainly children of refugees from the DRC.

KNF has been able to remain fully financed during this period by a combination of individual giving, corporate social investment (CSI) funding and, after much effort which reflects well on the school's achievements, a significant grant from the National Lottery Fund. Future sources of funding are always being investigated by our fund raising team and hope to include development assistance for the Grade o's from the Dept of Health and Social Security (DHSS). I thank all our donors for their support, especially those families, individuals, schools and corporates who have been regular monthly donors for many years. It has been heart

warming that when some corporate donors have completed their cycle of giving for various reasons, there has always been another company to step in and take their place.

The Board and staff of KNF have remained largely unchanged during this period, led as from the beginning in 2004 by Sister Natalie our CEO and headmistress. Due to Sister's age and health, we have agreed with her on a succession plan which will slowly unfold at a pace to suit her in coming years. Without her KNF would never have happened and we are all deeply grateful for her energy, ideas, love of the children, keen eye for any drop in standards and deep spiritual commitment to all who are involved in whatever way with KNF.

**Mark Cresswell**  
Chairman, KNF



## our guardian angels

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*Anne Lynch*

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Kgosi Neighbourhood Foundation  
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