



# PIN



# PROJECT NEWS

## Summer 2006

Dear Supporter,

I am pleased to write to you all again and thank you for your continued interest and support. Since my last news letter in November there has been lots happening and much to report.

It has been a very busy six months with positive developments and significant changes. Please understand if I don't mention everyone who has contributed to the activities of the last six months. I do try to be representative.

The major fund-raising time is between October and December, with World AIDS Day being the climax to all the events. In 2005 we had a very successful time. Both individuals and supporting schools were creative in their ideas and the Grannies' pins and jewellery were sold out before Christmas.

I would like to tell you about the schools which have supported the project this year. The Turton High School in Bolton 'pulled out all the stops', with nearly every child wearing a pin or a friendship bracelet. They raised well over £1,000 and I really enjoyed visiting the school and talking to Year 10.



Two other schools must be mentioned this year: the Tytherington High School dressed up for WAD and paid for this privilege, with the funds going to the PIN Project. The Windermere St. Anne's School, which already has a link with South Africa, brought both pins and bears and gave myself and Helen Barnes from Lancaster a really enjoyable day. The other school, which has been supporting the Project for some time,

is the Levenshulme High School for Girls. I would like to thank Sue Raddings for this encouragement. It was Sue's girls who helped pack books in Manchester which I then unpacked with the Project children in Zululand! These books were donated by the Denise Goldberg 'Book and 10p' Campaign, which has now sent over 2 million children's books from this country to South Africa. The Oxfam Branch for the North West assisted with the fund raising this year and I was grateful to Salford City Council for selling at their reception desk.

We have a supporter working in Italy, Barbara Curtis, who visited the Project this year with Sonia. I'd like to thank her for her support as she works in isolation, which is not easy. I know she enjoyed meeting the children and the grannies and I hope this made her fund-raising seem worthwhile.

For me there were two outstanding events: one being the invitation by CARA, a London based HIV/AIDS Advice Centre, to join them at Westminster Abbey, to talk about the South African situation. To be in a church which is over 1,000 years old and has seen so many disasters as well as pomp and ceremony, was quite a privilege.

The other event was the service at the Manchester Cathedral, organised by the Ashton-under-Lyne Soroptimists and George House Trust. This was attended by the Lord Mayor of Manchester, 7 Mayors from the surrounding towns and the M.E.P. for the North West. But the high light was the children's choir from Arlies Community Primary School of Staybridge who sang 'Nkosi Sikele i Africa' [the South African National Anthem] in Zulu! They had been practising since the Summer for this. They finished by each holding up a card bearing the name of an orphan with the Project. It really brought a lump to my throat as I am sure it did for others.

In March I returned to Zululand for 3 months and joined Thabile, our new Community Worker supporting her in visiting families and encouraging the Youth at the Friday afternoon Youth Club. The Office had been broken into just before my arrival and the computer and software stolen. This was an irritant as it was time for all reports to be completed for Nelson Mandela Children's fund! I am pleased to





report that 4 of our older Youth now have now got part time employment . The employer, Edgars, a chain of dress shops, also funded the children's Christmas Party and gifts.



In December the older children were taken by coach to Durban to the new Shaka Marine Centre. A conference was also organised for World AIDS Day. So much had been accomplished by Thabile. I was able to observe her ability at a number of workshops she organised for both children and grannies. The grannies workshops were on Children's Rights and Welfare Benefits and the ones for

the children were on Memory Boxes and Girls Issues. The former, funded by the NMCF, comes under the heading of Psych-Social Support and is designed to help the children come to terms with the death of their parents. Talking about death is not easy for the grandmothers because of their own trauma and because culturally it is avoided. I was impressed with the sensitive and skilled way Thabile handled this. The 'Girls Issues' session, as you can imagine, provided an opportunity for the girls to discuss all those concerns they naturally have in the their teens. The issue of HIV/AIDS was a central theme.

Finally, I was there for the Annual General Meeting. This was a real celebratory affair with everyone, over a hundred grannies and children, receiving a meal and with entertainment from children performing Zulu dancing and grannies singing with real gusto . It was themed 'Going Forward with Confidence' and this is what it felt like! With all the children attending school, most of the families receiving Foster Grants and our few HIV positive children on antiretroviral therapy or under medical care , things certainly look optimistic for the future.

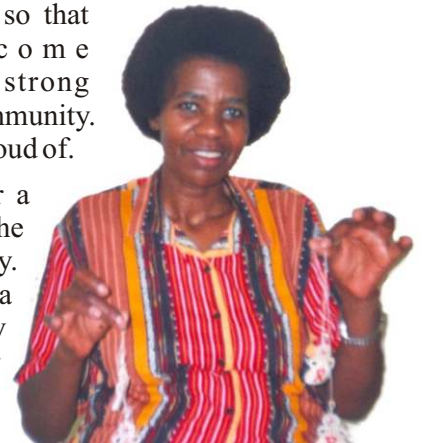
We presented the Esikhawini Library with 500 books, which had arrived that week from the UK. It was a great feeling to see the books packed in Manchester by children from Levenshulme High School, then being unpacked by the PIN children in Esikhawini. Each child received 3 books before the rest were presented to the library or kept for Thabile to present to various schools. We would like to thank Community H.E.A.R.T. for this wonderful gift.

One small but joyous event was the attendance at the AGM of our oldest granny of 88 years. She arrived very proudly in the wheelchair given by Mike Devereux, of Britannia International Removals, whose firm has also transported sewing machines given by the Mothers Union in the Lake District. The latter will be the foundation of 'a sewing centre' to be set up in the future. Many thanks to both of these but I will report more on that development, at a later date.

The very positive state of the Project led me to make a major decision. For the past six years I have been very involved in the decision making and directing of the Project. This has been necessary because of the difficulties the Committee has experienced and because we have been unable to find a competent Worker. It seemed to me that the time had arrived when all administration and major decisions should be passed over.

Thabile is extremely able and trustworthy and, in development terms, the Project should be given its independence. The Nelson Mandela Children's Fund is very supportive of the Project and funds the bulk of the running costs. In fact, it has really become an African project. Now is the time, for myself and all those who have assisted me in getting this Project off the ground and to an efficient stage, to stand back and become truly the overseas Friends. We will still provide a fair trade market, raising funds for the children's education so that they can become independent and strong members of their community. This is an aim to be proud of.

Finally, watch for a new creation for the 2006 World Aids Day. It is the Thoko Fairy, a silver beaded fairy made by one of our Carers: Pinky Myeza. I know you will like it.



Best wishes to you all and have a happy and warm summer.

Alice.