

ADOPTION CLINIC AT THE THUSANANI CHILDRENS FOUNDATION

Adoption in South Africa

Adoption in South Africa seems to be clouded in mystery and the general public are often unsure of the steps to take to adopt. Questions such as "Where do we start?" and "How do I know the baby is OK?" are often raised.

On the first question we can suggest that you contact a social worker or an adoption agency. Find them on the internet or ask your local Social Development Department for a name. The second answer Thusanani can address more in detail.

Thusanani's role in the Adoption Process

All babies up for adoption are assessed by a Paediatrician. If the Paediatrician has any concern about the baby's development, need a second opinion on an aspect of development, or if the baby was born prematurely, the baby is referred to an Occupational Therapist who will do an assessment and report back to the Paediatrician. Typically this would have been handled by the Occupational Therapy departments in one of the government hospitals. Unfortunately their backlog is approximately 6 months. This time delay could derail the adoption process for many children.

This is where Thusanani comes in. We receive referrals from the Bigshoes Foundation's Paediatrician and perform these assessments at no cost to either the adoptive parent or the current home where the baby is placed. In addition, we aim to perform the assessment within 2 weeks of the request. In some instances the baby has slight developmental delay that can be treated. In these cases the Thusanani therapist will do regular follow up therapy until the baby has reached his or her normal milestones. The Thusanani report will reflect this. The therapy provided is also a free service.

At Thusanani, 10 babies are either assessed or followed up per week. The "Adoption Clinic" as it is named runs two mornings a week. After the babies and their caregivers have left, there is a flurry of activity in front of the computers to get the reports typed and sent out. The assessment of a single baby can take two to three visits since we need to be sure that our findings are accurate. Babies also do not always co-operate willingly if you ask them to show you how they crawl! Week by week with the follow up you get to know the baby and you see the progress.

Our reward:

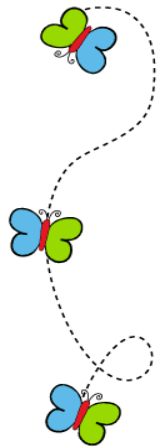
In so many of the cases, if the baby was not treated he or she would have been classified "not fit for adoption". Once we have completed the assessment, regular follow ups, the report..... and then to hear the baby was adopted, "Parents will pick the baby tomorrow". Is there anything more satisfying?



The winds of change are blowing at Thusuanani.

We have a number of staff leaving at the end of August and September; however we have almost finished finalising the hiring of new staff – watch this space! We sadly had to say goodbye to Sarah Taylor, our stalwart Speech-Language Therapist. She has made such a difference to the way we think about language development. Since her involvement with Thusuanani in 2009, we have all gained an insight into the importance of something as seemingly insignificant as the texture of food to the development of speech in children. Sarah will be spending more time with her daughters and we wish her well. Hopefully she can return in a couple of years when she has more time. We are also greeting Bridget at the end of September. Her baby boy will be born soon. Bridget Schmidt joined us at the beginning of 2009 and we came to appreciate her soft but firm approach with the children she treated. We wish her well for the start of a new phase in her family life. Basheera Surty is also getting ready to leave us. Her hours in September will be less and at the end of September she will say her final goodbyes. Basheera has her eyes set on gaining some experience in the Middle East and we hope she gains priceless professional experience working there. We have all come to love Basheera for her quiet perseverance and absolute dedication. Heleen Johnson was the manager since August 2008 and she will be leaving Thusuanani at the end of September to join the Active Learning Libraries South Africa where we hope she will continue to contribute to the development of the Non Profit sector. We thank Heleen for her hard work, dedication and passion, and plan on keeping in close contact with her in her new role.

Thusuanani welcomes on board Debbie Fewster who will take on the responsibility of the Durban branch, working alongside the Bigshoes Foundation. Many happy hours of assessing babies that are up for adoption.



Homes Training

Our next training course dates for our Children's Homes Care Workers/volunteers are as follows:

7th, 14th, and 21st October 2010

Starting time 9am,
Closing time approximately 12:30.

The training runs over 3 consecutive Thursdays and the cost of the entire course is R150.00 per person.

Tea, coffee and refreshments are provided as well as a basic therapy kit.

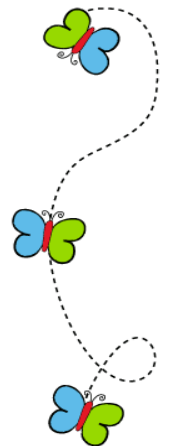
Please contact Fiona on 011 484-3128 if you would like to book a place/s or if you have any queries.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Donations :

We are still steadily receiving loads of donations of childrens clothing and plenty of new and old toys. These are being sorted into age groups and distributed to the various childrens homes.

Thank you for keeping Thusuanani in mind when collecting and sorting.



If you would like to support us, you can make a secure Credit Card Donation via our website (click on the green button on our home page). Alternatively the following are our banking details:

Bank: Nedbank

Name of Account: The Thusuanani Children's Foundation

Branch: Melrose Arch

Branch Code: 196-605

Account Number: 1966 466226