

GOOD BYE TO KRISTIE

This month we have to say a very sad good-bye to Kristie Lehman. Kristie was the first Occupational Therapist to be employed by Thusanani Children's Foundation in 2005 (previously the charity had been running on a voluntary basis) and has played a huge role in helping to shape the organization into the one it is today. Kristie started with a few toys in the boot of her car, a map and the instruction to go out and find children's homes! Under her leadership Thusanani grew from 1 OT working out of her car to an organization employing 4 OTs and an administrator with an office and treatment premises at TMI. She helped streamline the organization from a fairly haphazard collection of OTs visiting children's homes into a NGO with set goals and objectives and diverse projects. She has been the driving force behind setting up standardized training programmes, formalizing Thusanani's role and objectives in intervention at children's homes and developing and expanding the adoption clinic run at TMI. She has been involved in proposal writing and the management of the Thusanani office since its inception and on top of all this was still an active therapist helping countless orphan children achieve better lives! Kristie will be the first to admit that the last 3 years have been a huge learning curve...she started as a young Occupational Therapist; she will leave an experienced therapist, manager, fundraiser, administrator, counselor, adoption expert and a sorely missed friend to all those that encountered her during her years here! Kristie will be leaving us to get married in September as well as to start working full time in private practice. Kristie, we wish you joy and success as you start this new phase in your life and we know that your new colleagues and clients will be very lucky to have you as a therapist and a friend.



HELLO TO HELEEN

Of course, all sad good-byes are tempered by the joy of welcoming a new colleague to the team. We would like to say a very warm welcome to Heleen Johnson who joined our team this month as the new Therapy Manager. Heleen is passionate about children living with disabilities and has been involved with the Down's Syndrome Association in Pretoria in outreach. She started working as Occupational Therapist in 1978 and has a wealth of experience which includes a stint overseas in New Zealand working in the field of intellectual disability. On top of this she has excellent management experience, which is exactly what Thusanani has been looking for to take the organization to the next level! Heleen is also a dedicated mother and grandmother who loves spending time with her family. Welcome Heleen and we really look forward to working with you!



LETTER FROM LUXEMBURG – A SUCCESSFUL ADOPTION

Thusanani very seldom has any contact with the children we work with once they are adopted. We usually work very hard with them up to the point of adoption and then say good-bye as they go off with their new families. So it was really wonderful to receive a letter from a child who had received a year's worth of therapy at TLC in 2007 and who had been adopted earlier this year. We met little Nellie when she was 2 years old. She was living at TLC and had been diagnosed as having mild cerebral palsy after suffering from meningitis as a baby. She was a very sweet little girl, but with a cerebral palsy label, adoption opportunities were close to zero. Lyndsay, our therapist at TLC, started therapy focused on improving her coordination and learning skills and soon found her problems to be very mild. This was transmitted to the TLC management team through regular meetings. In August 2007, TLC requested a developmental report that could possibly help in Nellie's placement. They had decided, after due consideration, that they might very well be able to find her a family if we could explain exactly what her difficulties were and what sort of support she might need in the future. If Nellie had had to wait for a report at Baragwanath Hospital (the closest governmental hospital) the process would have been delayed by at least 4 months. Lyndsay was able to do the report immediately. The result was that by the end of 2007 TLC had found a family in Luxemburg who understood Nellie's needs and were willing to adopt her. What a happy moment when this little girl! (labeled CP and considered unadoptable) left in January for Luxemburg to start a new life with a mom, dad and brother! This is what she (or rather probably her mum!) wrote to us:

Dear all

I'm fine. But life is a little bit different here. In the beginning I couldn't understand a word they were talking. Now I know some words so I can talk with all of them. The first word in Luxemburgisch I knew was: mupp (=dog). I know, sounds funny, but that is what they talk here. Can you imagine that. But I'm learning and by now I know lots the words. Last week I visited Marc's (my new brother) school and they have even more toys there.... Sounds like fun and I can hardly wait to go to school too. Every time when I go to the parking-place with my mum I try to get into the school bus, but every time my mum is faster than me... (I'm still working on that issue, but one day.....) My parents told me I have to wait until September, then I can go to school too. Sometimes we drive to school by car to fetch Marc and then I can already play in the school-garden. My mama and daddy love to walk. Oh goodness, the first weeks I thought they would kill me. And it goes up and down here..... But they say I have to try it and Marc told me that in school they walk to the forest every week, so I better start working on my condition. A few weeks ago we went to the airport again. First I thought we had to go back to Africa again but something amazing happened... We were waiting there with a lot of other people... A door opened and 2 TLC friends came out!! My parents told me they both have a mummy and daddy now, like me. Nice to see them again! This week finally the weather got better. Guys, you really have to take care where you send the children... I was so cold here when I arrived and we had lots of rain too. Really not a climate for an African-girl like me. But now we have sunshine and I can play outside. I love playing with sand and water. Tomorrow I go to Holland again on holiday, with mum and Marc. Daddy has to stay home somebody has to do some work...). We go by train, so I don't have to sit still in the car. My dad works at the railway station so we even can drive by train for free! We will stay in Holland for 4-5 days. Marc has school-holiday for a week so we can play together. So, now I have to stop writing and I think I have to help my mum with cleaning-up and packing, otherwise we can't leave tomorrow. Hope to hear from you soon!!! (miss you..... but I can always take a look a your picture and the pictures of TLC)

Lovely greeting and lots of hugs and kisses



Wish List :

Educational toys: mobiles for babies

Other Toys: play toys – for sandpit, toy kitchen/ cooking utensils,
Toy nursing equipmen

Office equipment: copy paper, fridge

If you would like to support us, you can make a secure Credit Card Donation via our website.

Alternatively the following are our banking details:

Bank: Nedbank

Name of Account: The Thusanani Childrens Foundation

Branch: Melrose Arch

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