



While South Africa appears to be experiencing fewer Covid-19 cases and deaths when compared with other countries in the world – and there are many theories why this may be so – we are being fiercely hit by the spin-off waves causing loss of jobs, unemployment, hunger and crime ... and this continues to be acutely felt in Alex. While times are tough and confusing, Gumboots and its partners are providing leadership and the community is continuing to do its best under the difficult circumstances.

We are very grateful for your continued support and generous donations that are helping to make a difference. For any information, call Jenny Prangley on 082 928 8806 or visit our website www.gumboots.org.za.

Leratong Pre-school

Leratong School was forced to close its doors for most of the lockdown. They reopened in October when South Africa moved to Level 2, but only for the oldest group of 11 children who will be a graduating and going on to primary school next year. We wish them all the best.

It has been a difficult time for the children, parents and staff ... Peggy says, "This year has been a big struggle, but we are thankful that none of our kids got Covid".



Thank you to Santa Shoebox for the gifts they received.



Sigiya Sonke Dance Group

SANTA SHOEBOXES

In spite of Covid's restrictions, the Santa Shoebox team still managed to collect and distribute thousands of boxes, albeit without the usual celebrations. However, the 50 dancers were ecstatic about the contents of the boxes and Beauty and Jack arranged an end-of-year party with a hot lunch to acknowledge the hard work accomplished by these children in difficult circumstances. We applaud the initiative of the group.

As always, the shoeboxes bring so much joy to the children



GUMBOOTS' FOOD SUPPORT

For the 8 months from the beginning of the Covid onslaught, Gumboots supported the group and the nearby community with food parcels and clothing donations.

We were also giving extra financial support for Beauty to be able to cook the dancers a meal each day. We are grateful to our donors for enabling this support.

A grateful little boy to have a midday meal



Ratang Bana Orphan Support

The continued Covid issues are an ongoing challenge for Ingrid and her hundreds of children who are cared for under the Ratang Bana umbrella. She recounts that the unemployed parents

and caregivers are flocking to her with stories of “our children are hungry”. The R350/month/family grant that the government has been giving them is far from enough. They need jobs!

BREAD FOR AFRICA

Two wonderful pizza ovens have been built just outside the Ratang Bana gates by a collective of corporates and churches and the community – they have pooled their power in a project to fill bellies with bread and to change lives. On 5 December they unveiled this initiative – and along with the Ratang Bana mobile kitchen, they will be baking and making pizza bread and stew that will be given out to the community.



The ovens and the invitation for their launching!



A few of the fortunate



Sakhimfundo Youth Programme

Last year Gumboots purchased vacant land in Alex and has commenced building a Youth Centre to cater for dance, music, other performing arts and education support, known as Sakhimfundo (meaning Building Education). The project is two-phased – Phase 1 when completed will house the Sigiya Sonke Dance Group who will all be grateful to leave Jack and Beauty's small yard. And Phase 2 will be for further education support. Gumboots is currently fundraising for the completion of Phase 1.

With all its challenges and complexities, Alex is a vibrant and energetic community with enormous resources of talent. It is deserving of your support.



Work in progress!



The architect's impression ... end game!



EARLY BEGINNINGS

In view of the urgency to commence the education programme, as an interim measure Sakhimfundo has already "opened its doors" ... sharing the yard where the Sigiya Sonke group dances, and so of course their first students are from the group. This is far from ideal but the new leaders are making it work ... Deli Letsoela (Beauty and Jack's innovative daughter) lost her job in the hospitality sector due to Covid, and she and Tebo Dikgatlong have picked up the teaching baton. They are learning new skills about tutoring, starting a business and fundraising – and we have every confidence that they will grow and be ready to move into the Phase 2 establishment once completed.

This worthwhile new project is in need of your financial support.



Newslinks Abroad

US Kidlinks



The first ploughing



We are excited to share this brand new Kidlinks initiative, The Kidlinks Small Farm Incubator. South Africa currently faces complex challenges with climate change, high youth unemployment, poverty, as well as pervasive food insecurity, and these are especially prevalent in the Eastern Cape, where we work. We are developing a 23-hectare demonstration farm and training centre which will combine hands-on training, an online learning curriculum, and expert local instructors to empower emerging youth farmers who may otherwise be unemployed. Our system of sustainable diversity farming will help to sequester carbon from the atmosphere to fight climate change, generate healthy food, and demonstrate the competitive value of our methods in the marketplace.

The main output of the farm will be high-value vegetables to sell to the local community and retailers. It will also help trainees learn business, marketing, and management skills. Students will be given the management tools and support they need to start their own businesses.

Our vision is that youth from Gumboots projects will be given the opportunity to experience rural life on the farm ranging from short-term visits to 9-month training programmes.

UK Gumboots

Normally at this time of year we would be in the last stages of preparing for our annual fundraising Christmas Craft Fair. Sadly Covid 19 has put a stop to this. Instead we have launched a virtual craft fair online. Three of the UK trustees and two of our volunteers have donated a range of lovely handmade items for sale. To date sales have raised over £3,500 – around R70,000 - plus 25% in gift aid. This is very encouraging and has made us think about holding both a virtual and our normal craft fair next year. Some more good news – Covid hasn't stopped us participating in the annual online Big Give fundraising campaign – Christmas Challenge 2020. The campaign closed on the 8th December and we have raised £8,949 – around R178,980. This will help pay for school fees, uniforms, travel, lunches and outings for many of the children we support in Alex.



Some of the items sold in our virtual craft fair

THE CAITLIN FUND

The Caitlin Fund continues to support the Ndlovu sisters, Mbali and Thandi, who continue to do well as school – see a happy Mbali right.

