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We are one body in Christ Re 'mele o le mong ho Kreste

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SAVE A CHILD, SAVE THE FUTURE

“Save a child, save the future” is the slogan of an organisation which works closely with the Lesotho Durham LINK. Tholoana ea Lerato works to protect and support Lesotho’s most vulnerable children, promoting their rights, providing online and face to face counselling. The LINK provides a programme of play therapy for children who have been sexually abused or who have experienced other traumatic events. The programme manager’s assessment is that the LINK is playing a vital role in the healing process of these vulnerable children, helping to ensure the children’s full development; physical, spiritual, moral and social. The organisation’s manager and staff have noticed that during these times of organised play activity at the LINK, the children interrelate well with each other and they are learning about building good relationships. Through development games the children are learning how to solve disputes with friends and are increasingly able to express their feelings.



An interesting comment was that “the activities have helped the children to recognise that they have a say in the decisions that affect them and have their opinion taken into account.” Before engaging in this programme most of the children were not able to express themselves and for much of the time they were petrified to ask questions concerning the decisions that were being made. Now, however, as a result of participating in these games and structured play they are increasingly able to express their emotions.

This is a valued partnership between two organisations both of whom are committed to improving the welfare and development of vulnerable and traumatised children. And in the words of the programme manager at Tholoana ea Lerato, “it wouldn’t be possible to achieve all this without the assistance of Durham Link”.

Now it’s your chance to meet the High Commissioner!

In the last edition of e-MOHO we told you about the meeting between Bishop Paul and the Lesotho High Commissioner. Well, now it’s your chance to meet Dr John Oliphant as he has kindly accepted an invitation to meet with LINK friends and supporters at our forthcoming annual gathering. We can also confirm that this will take place on May 9th at **7pm at the church hall of St James Burnopfield (The Leazes, Front Street, Burnopfield NE16 6HR)**. Dr Oliphant will speak about the current situation in Lesotho, about hopes for the future and his perception of the role of the LINK in Lesotho. He is a very engaging, approachable man who is glad to answer questions and who encourages the LINK in its activities.

It will also be an opportunity to see photos and hear about the latest developments in the LINK in Lesotho as Rob Bianchi, one of the Durham Lesotho LINK’s executive officers, will have just returned from visiting Lesotho less than two weeks before.

So, on a lovely early May evening, why not take a drive out into the countryside and enjoy an evening to remember? We would love to see you there!

THE COST OF INTERVENTION – please pray!

Last autumn the Lesotho government invited SADC (South African Development Community) to send in troops from neighbouring nations, along with the Lesotho Defence force, to help quell ongoing political unrest. Huge pressure was put on accommodation facilities in Lesotho to accommodate these soldiers, citing, amongst other things, patriotic duty. The Lesotho Durham LINK was obliged to allocate large parts of their facilities to army officers, being promised full payment for this service. Up until now they have only received one payment and SADC and the Ministry of Defence now owe the LINK (and all the other places who were put in the same situation) very large sums of money. This has been compounded by the fact that whilst SADC troops occupy rooms the LINK have to turn away other bookings which could have a long term damaging effect. The



financial situation is becoming increasingly grave for the LINK and its future operations so please pray that SADC and the Ministry of Defence will honour their financial commitments quickly.



SADC have taken over the use of Durham house and the Rondavel

STAFF CHANGES AT THE LESOTHO LINK

Currently 18 members of staff are employed at the Lesotho end of the LINK, three of whom have been with the LINK for 20 years and a further 4 for 15 years which is a quite remarkable indication of loyalty and commitment. Recent restructuring of the way the LINK works and the recruitment of both a new accountant and an HR and admin. manager, plus the appointment of a PA to Joseph, the executive officer, have given a renewed sense of purpose to the staff team. The roles and responsibilities of some of the other staff have also been restructured, enabling them to serve in ways best suited to their skills and gifts. In the words of their vision statement, the LINK staff team are committed to making the LINK “a place for hope, a lighthouse for all, a place where people come for different forms of development and to be equipped for ministry out there in the communities.” In developing a five-year strategic plan their stated mission is “to develop LDL (Lesotho Durham LINK) into a place where God is at the centre of all activities and projects”. It is their belief that these new appointments and the re-ordering of the way the team operates will help to take forward that mission.

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