



CHRISTIAN OUTREACH FOR AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICAN OUTREACH MINISTRY PARTNERS

YEAR 2022 NEWSLETTER
MHLUZI, MIDDELBURG SOUTH AFRICA





This Newsletter and some stories aim to provide update on COFA and its related ministry partners and all the work that you help us do in Middelburg, Mpumalanga, South Africa.

The narrative is to provide an overview of all aspects of the organisation:

- Brief Information on Christian Outreach For Africa
- Some of our achievements over year 2022

About Us

Christian Outreach For Africa is an organization whose mission is to attack the cycle of poverty in parts of Africa. Rather than simply provide charity, however, COFA helps fund sustainable projects that have a permanent impact.

COFA's holistic programs provide:

- Quality Christian Education
- Basic Health Care
- Safe and Affordable Housing
- Orphan Care
- Meaningful Employment and gives the impoverished the opportunity to create a better future for themselves.

COFA is a registered 501c3 that has partnered with LCMS congregations and the Michigan District to organize and fund projects at St. Peter Confessional Lutheran Church/ Synod in Middelburg, South Africa and surrounding communities.

COFA helps support Bethel Preschool, St. Peter Christian College, Caring Friends, Cedric Hannay Children's Home, Ride4Change, and more.

COFA'S MINISTRY PARTNERS

Bethel Preparatory School

Bethel's initial start, being to take care of the kids of working mothers and teach them how to read, write and pray. Christ came through and helped raise the kids and the dream.

Bethel quickly became a creche (kindergarden) that helps instill values in children that will live through them, making them better youngsters, growing up.

A Proverbs 22:6 calling and fulfilment.

Over the years having helped raise and touch over 5000 young lives, shaping them to futures strong in values and principles.

Bethel ended 2022 with 162 children ranging from 2 years up to 5 years, which caters for the pre-primary schooling before primary school.

Teaching the smallest children with a great education, but most of all a Christian education.



St. Peter Christian College (K-12)

“Becuase of Bethel, the parents began to ask, what happens when our kids are done there? The desire that we should create a school, that is how SPCC came to being.”

Our vision became quickly, that to continue to build on the foundation. To build on the foundation in our children's lives that will stand in every storm. To equip learners to thrive to reach their full potential for the next facet of their lives:

- Building Christ-centered lives
- Nurturing the development of biblical perspectives and values.
- Offering excellent academic standards.
- Ensuring multi-skilled development
- Ensuring outreach and ministering to the community
- Developing leadership qualities of our learners

St. Peter Christian College, today reaches out to 393 students, teaching math and science, counting, but more importantly, reaching out to the Christian teaching and living of our children, who will become our adults tomorrow.



Caring Friends For Life Organisation

Caring Friends is a Christian non-profit organization that sends short-term mission teams throughout South Africa, in response to the day-to-day needs and requests from schools, communities and church bodies.

Caring Friends provides for the physical and spiritual needs of those we are called to serve with the aim to reach out to the calls of need in our country, especially impoverished areas with the aim to make accessible, services that were not generally affordable to the area.

This we strive to do this through our vast programs that include:

- Eyeglass Ministry
- Peer Education and Social Behavioural Change
- HIV /AIDS Awareness & Testing
- Community Mobilisation and Awareness Campaigns
- Community Outreach Support and Caring
- Dental Health Awareness

Touch base with us:
info@caringfriends.org.za

Ride4Change

Ride 4 Change is exactly what the name implies – Riding for a change in the life of one child or family at a time.

The aim is to make a change to the life of a child through providing them an opportunity to be educated, be and live healthy and further the opportunity to change their lifestyle positively.

Ride 4 Change exists to help organisations that make positive change drive campaigns, raise and manage funds towards the cause or campaign and be part of the Change.

We work with COFA and other local non-profits to ensure that funds donated to the causes we involve in, do exactly that.

Touch base with us and be part of The Change!

info@riding4change.co.za
www.riding4change.co.za



Cedric Hannay Children's Home

The Cedric Hannay Home, named after Mr. Hannay who had worked with Mandla Khumalo and formed a long time friendship, is home to children.

The Cedric Hannay Children's Home is the one COFA project that does not reflect the careful cost benefit analysis that we use to allocate our resources.

We created and now support the orphanage in Middelburg South Africa not because it makes long term financial sense, but because it is our duty as Christians to care for these children.

Our long time mission partners, David and Janey Hannay donated their home, built by David's father Cedric, in order to give new hope to orphaned, abandoned and vulnerable children of the Mhluzi community. COFA funded and oversaw renovations. It has been approved by the government to be a Child and Youth Care Center, which enables children to be placed into our care permanently.

The home has space for 18 children and two full time live-in caregivers. We coordinate operations of the orphanage with Christelik Maatskaplike Raad van Middelburg (CMR), a South African family and child welfare organization that is experienced in managing orphanages.

Touch base with us: steve@africaoutreach.org



Someone once said it well, when they said: “we have to be as committed to the art of funding the work as we are to the art of executing it and that at its core, we have to truly believe that the purpose and the privilege of our work and calling is to provide people/donors with an extraordinary way to use their gifts and donations, that will change people’s lives.”

It is an opportunity to make a change.

I am reminded of a song we as sang as children - “this little light of mine, I am going to let it shine.” Alysia and MOST Ministries team that visited us recently, taught us more of a verse to it - “hide it under a bushel? No! I’m going to let it shine.” So as you read this, know that you have not put your light under a bushel - you are shining your light!

We know that the past few years have been heavy and tough accross the globe and without exception also on us. It has been heavy, physically, financially, socially. We have lost loved ones along the way. But we have had some WINS! We have seen the blessing of Christ seeing and walking us through this - Psalm 23:4 manifestation.

Want to tell you a little bit of the wins we can hold on to, cherish and gain strength from.

We saw through COFA, all of you continue to reach out to South Africa and the missions in Middelburg, financially through the scholarship campaign and fund, helping keep our schools stay open during & just after the tough time and COVID-19 pandemic.

Bethel Preschool began 2022 with only 60+ students which caused great concern for us being able to upkeep the institution. With the scholarship funding being a lifeline, it helped keep things moving as children began to come back to school, leading to us ending the year with 162 children.

We have through the year learnt how to better manage children’s health and teach them better on the same. Have had to learn and teach children how to better understand and deal with loss as many also experienced the same in their lives.

We look to further develop our teachers in this through various training and development programs in 2023 and this will take shape of our staff development plan.

We saw children come out of a closed up and difficult spaces, becoming more open to being around others and learning to understand and re-learn principles of sharing and caring. Our management team took on difficult tasks of managing the now new expectations of the department of social development and early childhood developmennt agencies, however learnt a great deal of new lesson while doing so. We enjoyed visits and hosting members of the COFA Board in **August**, members of the Michigan Advisory Board in **September 2022** and friends of COFA in **October 2022**.

Fritz & Ali Quitmeyer, Pam Bishop of **Christ Our Saviour Lutheran Church, Livonia** and David Halvarson of **St. John Lutheran Church, Rochester** can surely tell you how contagious those little smiles can be and how “stout”, yet lovable those high-5’s can be.

October 2022 saw us enjoy the visit of some friends of COFA with some, like Pst. Micah Griener of **St. Peter Lutheran Church, Arlington Heights** who has visited our shores over 4 times and has become our “local” tour guide. Pst. Ron Burcham of **Risen Saviour Lutheran Church in Phoenix**, also enjoyed the southern sun with us during this time and can surely also talk to how much fun it is to pray with these young ones, perhaps even more fun and louder than any Sunday morning - hahaha!

Michael Toppe joined us yet again, together with daughter, who I think could most likely resonate more than any of us with these young ladies and gents as she spent more time closest to the floor without too much hassle or back ache. :-)



They say that “when things do not go your way, remember that every challenge — every adversity — contains within it the seeds of opportunity and growth.”

We are watering these seeds and looking to take on the opportunity to be better in 2023.

We are taking on in faith the chance to bring in more qualified team members to help with skills transfer, re-introduce a bigger **technology and extr-mural program**, better our internal reporting and management systems and tell more about **JESUS!**

True to the call of its name, Bethel, we want to be that house, that first “step in the ladder or stairway” to which our children can reach for heaven.

We continue to build and pray towards acquiring the adjacent land for the expansion of Bethel which would allow for bigger classrooms, more play and recreational space and offices.





Compound favour is when you are blessed to get help to deal with younger children, then an extension of that helping hand to deal with the older children. :-)

With a larger school and numbers, even though having dropped with the COVID-19 pandemic, our school needed as close attention.

The risk and breakdown to not having this entity function was more detrimental to our community than anything - thank God for his infinite Mercy.

COFA, through you, your gifts of prayer, your gift of hope, your pledges and giving of money and your gifts of time have impacted our community of Mhluzi, Middelburg unequivocally.

Having lost so much with the advent of COVID-19, physically, financially and emotionally, we had to pick up the pieces, taking up our past theme of "Picking up all we lost along the way", we took on to opening up school post COVID-19. An extraordinary and costly exercise as it required many capital projects to be undertaken. We laid down systems, we built additional wash stations, had to incur on constant reliable supply of sanitizers, cleaning materials and plan and additional man power for the management of the process.

We were fortunate and blessed to have your support through a COVID-19 relief grant and scholarship program also to supplement and keep things alive. Our children got back into school and class and for some, also got back to having a nutritious meal on a daily basis.

We quickly became the model school on how to take on this goliath of a task. Local and nearby schools were directed to our model and way by our Department of Education which was a great boost of encouragement for us. With the energy this brought us, we took it as far as we could, picking up on a process of accreditation that had been stalled by COVID-19.

We opened up schooling with a loss in the number of children enrolled due to a number of reason, biggest of all being the financial implication and forced move this had created for many parents and families during the pandemic's heightened times.

Many families had to relocate from Middelburg, especially having come to work there as the town is a very industrial town and now lost their employment and so on. Some forced to take very drastic downscales with living arrangements changing and impacting



on school location, fees etc, beyond the extension and reach of help we provided. Our roll numbers at a point, having dropped to 346 students and slowly picking up as we, with snail's pace move away and beyond the pandemic and its impact.

This process of accreditation is by Umalusi. Umalusi Council sets and monitors standards for general and further education and training in South Africa so getting the nod from this council, speaks volumes in what you do and your offering. We later in the year were awarded the accreditation - what a boost coming off the back of a time of uncertainty.

We celebrated this win, but also understood what it meant for us in now maintaining it. We continue to work hard to ensure our quality remains on top. We look forward to the awarding ceremony for our certification and excited that we can look up at this as a token of our hard work and resilience.



We wanted to hold on to this and keep the momentum, so with the re-opening of school sports and extra mural activities, we got on top of things to get the children back and healthy, launching our sports programs with the support of a local business and suppliers of ours like Nashua, Standard Bank, Mega Meat and Chicken.

We invited all parents who we knew would like to come out after having been couped up and have fun with us to our inter-house sports day - the support was amazing. We later in the year, **June 2022** launched our completed sports combi courts which house and cater for our tennis and netball programs. Not only did we launch this, we took it to the next level, partnering up with local professional coaches **KPM Academy** to execute this with us in all its fullness. If we are to do it, we are to do it right said our team.

This process was so much fun, active and fulfilling, Muzi Khumalo, one of our serving directors, took with him a torn achilles tendon home, what he now calls a “true living sacrifice.” - haha!

All this allowed us to gain more confidence and keep moving forward with things. With the launch of the **sport courts**, this came with paying attention to our grounds, our **buildings and security**. Blessed with gifts of kindness, we lay down grass around the courts and yard, planted trees and celebrated world environmental day through this teaching our kids to take care of their surroundings and also using it as symbol of life for our grade 12 class.



We were blessed with funding to fix and **upgrade our security** perimeter, having experienced a robbery during COVID-19 closure. This has helped keep safe the assets that we have been entrusted with. The perimeter fence runs the length of our campus, closing off the yard around the back more specifically where criminal elements take advantage of. We put in a **camera system** in all classes, common areas and offices to help manage and deter elements, also helping us manage the classroom .

With all this done, it was only natural to then try to tackle the problem of school roll and student numbers. We hosted our first **Open Day** after COVID-19 to show what we had to offer. We prayed that we would be graceful in showing our blessing, reminded of the eternal gift on Grace every morning. Off the back of our open day in August, we started seeing more enquiries come in for the next academic year, and also saw a pick up in students who had been at home over the COVID-19 period from ours and other schools start to enroll with us. Another constant reminder of Grace! Following on, we were fortunate to gain lead with the University of Pretoria's **career program**, who sent and helped us host a career day for our Grades 10 - 12 learners. A group of students from the university studying in different fields came to talk to our group about the experience, what to expect and so on - a very effective way to impart knowledge, nothing better than hearing it from a peer.



Having now firmly gotten back to the way of things, in August, we launched another important program for our school, our Book Club Program. This came with the building of our **library** space and acquiring of books and materials for our learners.

Our kids got stuck into this and enjoyed spending time with each other and taking up reading to better themselves. Our book clubs range so to cater for the different age groups:

Blooming Bunnies: Grades 1-3
Bookworms Club: Grades 4 -6
Chapter Chat: Grades 7-9
Happy Booker's: Grades 10-11
The Literary Alliance: Grades 12 & Seniors

A need for more reading books still exists.

As we wound down the year, we were blessed yet again to have visitors in our partners from the **Michigan Advisory Board** and some friends of COFA visit. In **September 2022** members of the Michigan Advisory Board that was made up of minds strong in Information Technology served us well as this is where we are looking to better ourselves and system.

The mandate for this visit was to look at and improve our digital placing. We spent time with the team building and mapping out a **digital transformation plan**. We looked to improving processes, implementing new communication and IT policies and start up with ensuring we get to a place where we can go and become fully digital.

Our head of departments were blessed to get laptops and learn to be more efficient on these, now holding more virtual meetings, created a cloud based system and now learning to use it, also integrating our staff in moving to doing some of the basic administration online. We have put in faith 2 computer desks in the staff room and look to gear these up to encourage more practice that will benefit us. This aligned to the extra-mural activity for our staff in computer lessons and literacy.

Technology being the talk of the time, we also felt the need to even move the direction of our teaching to this stage, pushed by the talk of IR4, Artificial Intelligence ect. In October, Prof. Petros "Pete" Gheresus, Ph.D, Emeritus Professor of Industrial Engineering, Kettering University, visited us to help us kick this off.

Prof Pete spent some time with our IT Faculty and students, workshoping on Robotics and

Coding Programs. Spent time with our leadership mapping out and planning towards a program that will help us offer Robotics and Coding for not only our school, but the community at large. The big dream being to create a supportive Robotics Centre to our community and serve local schools and individuals in building and tapping into this side of life.

We long to see ourselves one day engaging our students with a class over the big pond with the advent that technology allows.

In November 2022, we launched our **St. Peter Alumni Program**. Having learnt more of this with our travels, it was important for us also to build on how to sustain and continue the relationship beyond our school gates.

The Alumni programs works with former Grade 12 learners, assisting and supporting them in finding employment, finding work training programs, finding scholarship opportunities and creating where possible business or work for them in our serving partners and system.

The aim is to create a sustainable cycle of touching their lives beyond our sight and planting seeds of them "paying it forward" when they find themselves in a position of blessing.

2022 quickly came to its last end and we closed off the year with the annual Grade 12 Farewell (Prom) and more importantly a Pledge taken by all Grade 12's to sit the National Senior Examinations. A proud moment and reality for all students taking part in this ceremony and what a great honor to have some friends of COFA and Board Members be part and help see this out.

Pst. Micah Greiner and Pst. Ron Burcham lead in prayer and word at this occasion and blessed our students as they went on to take the Pledge, witnessed also by many parents, teachers and Mr. Gary and Barbara Grom, lifelong supporters of the work in South Africa. I should think this was an amazing time and feeling for Mr. Grom, having some years ago seen the school start off with just 32 students.

Our scholarship program continues to extend help to the children and families of our community and applications opened up at the end November for 2023.

We took up a new theme for 2023: Re-Igniting Our Purpose. As we do, please continue to pray and support us.







Caring Friend's purpose is that of reaching out to the day-to-day needs of the people and together with local partners and our international partners MOST Ministries, we reached out and touched lives accross the country.

MOST Ministries post COVID-19 sent two groups to South Africa on eyeglass mission, which is one of projects Caring Friends has establish permanent team in Middelburg for. In **July 2022**, MOST Team 2203 made up of predominantly members from **St. Luke Lutheran Church, Haslett** visited our shores and together we went out to different parts of the country, including that "South African experience" in the Kruger National Park.

We saw and ministered to over 510 lives, sharing over 656 glasses to those in need. Not only do we share glasses, we shared the word of Christ to all the attending members. We visited areas in South Africa like Vlakfontein, Matsulu and others that the general population can hardly afford seeing an optometrist, let alone the taxi fare to get to nearest town where one could be located.

What seemed so soon after, having been starved of our mission partner's visits during COVID-19, MOST Team 2220, landed in South

Africa on **27 October 2022**. Wonderful to welcome some familiar faces who had returned to gather and minister to the people again with us, notably Charlotte Campbell (4 times) and Glenn Borchers (2 times).

We sang songs, ministered and shared to over 628 people, sharing 1030 glasses to those in need with one lady I remember very much, going home now finding her own way with a white cane.

Outside of the eyeglass ministry with MOST, Caring Friends continues to care minister through other programs and partners up with the Department of Health and local corporates in taking these to the people. In **October 2022** we hosted a Wellness Day for Columbus and in **December 2022** the World Aids Day Commemoration for Columbus Stainless and also for the Dept. of Health in Mpumalanga.

Earlier in the year, we assisted St. Peter Christian College in the management and upkeep of COVID-19 measures, making the transition from the lockdown a little easier on the staff and managment of the school.

We continue to talk to our government in the process of qualifying our clinic as a CCMDD pick up point which will serve as chronic

medication dispensing/ pick up point and also with the same department talking to helping them roll out the school's health program which will see visual acquity, eyeglass services, dental and audio services to the children of Mpumalanga schools.

August 2022, we assisted **Ride4Change** roll out a sanitary pad campaign to schools in Mpumalanga, ensuring that the young girl child remains in school even during their menstrual period.

We are excited to see more of our programs go out and serve the public, notably our YOLO/ youth developement program go out to serve the children at St. Peter, Cedric Hannay Home and The Care Village. Also working towards supporting Ride4Change again in **April 2023** on the upcoming dental hygiene campaign.

We continue to invite you to come and serve with us either in South Africa, through MOST Ministries and through COFA.

Touch base with Caring Friends:
info@caring-friends.org.za

For the Cedric Hannay Home For Children 2022 has been a great year as we have almost completed construction of our extensive upgrade project. With your continued and generous support, you have made it possible for us to add impressive new living facilities, such as an industrial style kitchen for large, easier meal preparations, a games room and TV lounge equipped with a theatre style flatscreen, and a new and fun outdoor play area for our children to enjoy.

We have added even more bedrooms, including several individual rooms for teenagers needing more privacy, and to comply with South African government regulations mandating that over eighteens leave the house. We have also blessed to add a separate wing for them to live in until they no longer need to, continuing to make this home until they can go out and spread their wings. We continue to believe that all our kids should always have a roof over their heads, a loving place to call home, and be able to spend time with their younger siblings. Since passing on this message to the older kids, it has had a substantial impact on their outlook on life, as they now know that they will always have a home and will always be a part of this family.

Today we provide the security of a stable and happy home for seventeen children and once the upgrades have been completed, our house will be able to comfortably accommodate another ten children to permanently live here. We will also be able to accommodate up to five permanent live-in caregivers and/or social workers.

We have twelve kids benefiting from the COFA Scholarship Program that enables them to attend school at St Peter Christian College, Blessing our two-year old goes to Bethel preschool, Angelique in ninth grade to a special-ed school in Emalahleni, and Xoli, Mahlatsi and Lesedi to Tshwenyane





school in Mhluzi. While these last three kids have been educated in a school with a different home language, we have decided that from 2023 they will be moving to St Peter Christian College so that they too can benefit from the more stable, Christian education offered there.

Some kids are enjoying the new sports development programs offered at school and Tshepo in particular has taken a shine to tennis. He has won several competitions and during 2023 will start taking part in the Middelburg junior school league.

Moving forward, our focus is shifting from raising funds for capital projects to addressing the well-being of the kids and caregivers. We need to have a more holistic approach to their lifestyles, wellness, health, and spiritual needs. This by not only providing a roof over the kids' heads, food on the table, care as needed, and an education, but by following and installing Christian principles. Education doesn't just stop at attending school, it also includes extramural activities such as sport, music (singing/instruments), dancing, tutors to assist with homework, mentors for leadership development, and, looking further afield, funding for tertiary education and/or training as may be needed.

Thank you for your contributions to our programs that lift the lives of these children and will enable them to fulfil their full potential.

1 Corinthians 13:13 (NIV)

And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.





Thank you for the work the YOU do, through us! You can contact us to find out more about our projects or simply get involved or help us continue changing lives and spreading the message of **Hope | Faith | Love** - join up and become a COFA Ambassador!

COFA Ambassadors work to increase the awareness of COFA in their home churches by encouraging prayer for the ministry, staying up-to-date on COFA news and activities, encouraging other members to get involved, perhaps visiting South Africa, and assisting with fundraising efforts for specific ministries. If you are interested in becoming an Ambassador, please email us at friendsofcofa@gmail.com.

Christian Outreach for Africa

111 W. Olive Street

Arlington Heights, Illinois 60004

steve@africaoutreach.org