

BEFSA Newsletter

March 2006

www.befsa.co.uk

Patrons: Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Jon Snow

Dear Friends of *BEFSA*

We thought it was about time we put together a newsletter to tell everyone what we are up to here in South Africa!

As most of you will know *BEFSA* began its work in November 2004 following confirmation of our trust status by the Charity Commission. We have now just received news from 'The Master' in Cape Town, that we are now formally registered as a trust in South Africa with myself as Chair and Keith as Director of the trust.

Sarah is busy updating the website so keep an eye on it and you should soon see some changes afoot. Hopefully, like us, you will think it is for the better too.

Since arriving in October, we have been over to the Eastern Cape on three occasions. During one of our visits we met with senior representatives of the Department of Education to secure their agreement to a major North/South partnership linking 37 schools in the Fort Beaufort District and with 37 schools in Oxfordshire. The good news is that we have not only secured the Department's approval to the partnership initiative, we have *also* been given the contact details of all 37 Eastern Cape schools to be included in first 'tranche' of partnerships, office space within the district office and a local history teacher to support the partnerships, (Luvo, for those of you who know him). On 17th March there is a conference taking place in Oxford where Martin Roberts (one of our trustees) will be briefing Oxfordshire schools on the proposed partnership with Fort Beaufort schools. We are hopeful that 37 Oxfordshire schools will come forward to link with schools in Fort Beaufort. It's all very exciting!

School Report

The FANTASTIC NEWS is that Chipping Norton School have raised over £6000 for *BEFSA*. Part of the money will be going to Chipping Norton's partner school (Imingcangathelo School) to assist the development of an ICT resource base at the school. As I write this letter Cheney School are also holding a 'non uniform day' in March as part of their 'Africa Week'. We have also had donations from Matthew Abbott, Head of English/Assistant Head at Gillotts School in Henley who ran a half marathon in support of *BEFSA* - so Oxfordshire Schools - you have been great!

In January two volunteers joined us; Tom Berry and Rose Higginbottom. Tom and Rose were both former students of mine at the Cherwell School in Oxford. Since leaving Cherwell they have been to University in Bristol, Rose to study French and Tom to study French and Drama, followed by a Master's degree in International Development. They have travelled widely in Africa and are now helping us at a family centre in a village called McGregor, about two hours northeast of Cape Town. Here they are working with children who mainly suffer from Foetal Alcohol Syndrome.



At the end of March they move on to support a small primary school on Robben Island where the head teacher is also keen to make links with a school in Oxford. The school at Robben Island, although reasonably resourced by Fort Beaufort standards, is a two teacher 'multigrade' school struggling to meet the needs of 7 year groups spread across two classes.

Jo Berry (Tom's sister and another former pupil of mine!) has also just arrived in South Africa. She was the Deputy Head at Pegasus Primary School. She is coming to work part time at a school in Cape Town but has also offered to do some voluntary work for *BEFSA*. I'll update you next time on her work.

Another school which has come to our attention in the Western Cape is on the edge of the Elgin Wine Estate owned by Paul Cluver. It is a farm school catering for children of mainly primary school age who are the sons and daughters of the farm's workers. It was set up by Paul Cluver's mother in 1950's. The school has grown significantly since the 1950's to its present size of 500. It now takes children from all the neighbouring farms. The school needs help with its feeding programme. Currently there are many children at the school who go through the day without a drink or any food. *BEFSA* aims to support two local women who are willing to walk several kilometres to school each day to cook and serve food to the children. These women are also keen to make uniforms for the children. They have the skills but unfortunately no sewing machine. Can anybody help? If so please email us at keithborien@befsa.co.uk You will not be surprised to read that the school is also keen to partner an English school. Watch this space for news of our work in Elgin.

Other news

Many of you will know about the Nkonkobe Heritage Tourism project in the Eastern Cape which has been sponsored by the Commonwealth Local Government Forum and which Keith (wearing his *BEFSA* hat) has been managing on behalf of Oxfordshire County Council. Although the project is due to come to an end at the end of March 2006 we have been successful in securing two lots of additional funding from the British High Commission. This money is being used to support a micro credit scheme which has enabled over a 100 women to start up their own small business in the rural areas in which they live. (See picture on the next page) Great news!



Some of you will be aware that Plater College in Headington, Oxford closed in 2005. In partnership with the Oxford Oratory, (the Catholic Church at the St. Giles end of the Woodstock Road), **BEFSA** has rescued 300 boxes of school books. With huge support from Father Jerome Bertram (Oxford Oratory), Malcolm Heaton (Adam Crease Shipping, Hounslow) and Charles Ferguson (Nationwide Relocations, Abingdon) these boxes of books were loaded into a 20ft. container and shipped down to South Africa at the end of February. The books are due to arrive in Port Elizabeth at the end of March and will be distributed to local schools in April and May. Our sincere thanks go to all those individuals and organisations who gave up their time to support this initiative.

Our thanks to....

.... our trustees and friends who have been very generous in their support. Most of the donations we have received have been of a one off nature but two of our Friends make a regular monthly payment to **BEFSA**. Our donations page on the **BEFSA** website has also recently been extended to enable donors from Europe and the Americas to give in Euros and US Dollars. Keith is currently talking to the Charities Aid Foundation in South Africa about **BEFSA** receiving donations in South African Rands and for South African donors setting off their donations against their tax liabilities. One of our trustees, Peter Giliam donated the money he received from friends and family for his 50th birthday to **BEFSA**. Many, many thanks Peter.

Other support has come from Beryl Bowcott, Hugh and Cathy Turner, Margaret Ferriman, Martin and Diana Roberts, Mark Tailby, Neil Monaghan, David and Gwyneth Johnson, Harry and Petra Bichler, Jeannie McCormack, Charles Parry, Ruby and Peter Borien, Madan Jha, Ian Adkins, Banbury and District Race Relations Council, Sandra Dwek, Arthur and Dani Graham, Janice Gordon, Tony Walker, Netia Maymen, Mary Stuart Smith, Mike and Heather Salter, and Mike Westward.

Many thanks to you all.

Best wishes

Catherine

Catherine Borien (Chairman of *BEFSA*)

P.S. Are there any artists out there? We'd love some ideas and designs for a trust logo.

Further information on *BEFSA* can be found on our website:



www.befsa.co.uk

UK Registered Charity Number 1106964

SA Registered Charity Number IT666/2006

Anyone wishing to make a donation to our charity may do so via the *BEFSA* website (above) or you can send it to:
BEFSA, PO Box 624, Oxford, OX2 9AQ, England.