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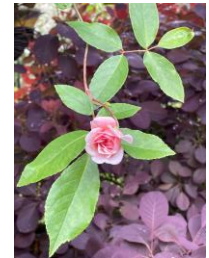
Newsletter no 37

Autumn 2022

September 2022  
Greetings Thembisa friends.

## HOPE

We, the Trustees, often wonder how you are and HOPE all is well. It's been so long since we last met. Yet, there's no denying that without support like yours, Thembisa would not be able to donate to projects in South Africa and Zimbabwe that provide love, care and HOPE for the marginalised. One of those we help may even become another Desmond Tutu (Thembisa's Patron 1999-2021) who rose from impoverished beginnings to uplift millions, not only in South Africa but around the world. He said: *HOPE is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness.* Let's face it – we all need hope. So THANK YOU for choosing to be part of Thembisa and for providing HOPE for some in a more positive future.



There's no denying it, times are tough. We are all affected by the pandemic, Russian ruthlessness, economic recession, deep grief at the death of those who matter most to us, and more. The media tirelessly reports on that most likely to cause distress and fear; and yet (in the words of Max Ehrmann in his prose poem, *Desiderata*):

*With all its sham, drudgery and broken dreams, it is still a beautiful world.*

*... And whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should. Therefore be at peace with God, whatever you conceive Him to be.*

## CHOICES - Tied up with hope are the choices we make

As a child I was in awe of my Yorkshire father. A world traveller before the air travel era, he'd spent 16 years in China as an industrial consultant. His last two years were as a prisoner of the Japanese including 9 months' solitary confinement in a tiny cell with nothing to do or read. In the small hours, he'd be woken by a military guard and taken for questioning by the officials. They thought he was a spy! How did he manage to survive? At least part of the answer lies in TOTT, his acronym for *Think On These Things*. Rather than focusing on his own sorry plight, while imprisoned in Rome, the apostle Paul wrote to encourage believers in Philippi (chapter 4:8) *whatever is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – Think On These Things*. Directing my mind to TOTT has lifted me up countless times. I hope you too will find TOTT beneficial for *As you think, you are* (Proverbs 23:7).

## CHALLENGES

It's been a tough year for the Team too. The sudden death of Trustee Edward Andrews on 2 April 2022 shocked us to the core. Edward – seen here in his role as Braai Master with his 'assistant', Frank Adam, Thembisa's chairman – is sorely missed. In addition, the Trustees (all volunteers) are stretched: some overloaded in their regular jobs, one on much needed furlough, another awaiting a knee replacement etc.

An example: Helen was a supporter for many years. When she retired, she offered her time and talents and later became a Trustee. She has made huge contributions not least in planning, research and fundraising.



## The Thembisa Trust

**Patron:** Dame Janet Suzman      **Chair:** Frank Adam      **Treasurer and Administrator:** Peter Braithwaite  
**Trustees:** Peter Braithwaite, Jenny Camons, Liz Carmichael, Tonia Cope Bowley, Caroline Mathew, Grace Townshend, Helen Whiter

We'd love to hear from you if you would like to contribute in any way.

## HELP

With the Thembisa Team so thin on the ground we really do need more hands on deck. None of us are spring chickens but we all have a love for Africa and a commitment to giving some marginalised a chance in life. Recent young volunteers who worked with us on social media have moved on as career opportunities have opened up. We have HOPE that we will soon be joined by some, already fulfilled in their careers and with time to give, who will want to join the Thembisa Team. What perhaps could you, or someone you know, offer?

Next year, 2023, Thembisa turns 35. Celebrations are in the planning pipeline. We will keep you informed. Meanwhile if you are likely to be near Oxford and would like to meet one or some of the Team, let us know and we'll try and arrange a get together.

Wishing you all the very best

*Tonia*

Tonia Cope Bowley, Thembisa co-founder

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## Giving thanks for the life of Edward Andrews

"Close friends are truly life's treasures. Sometimes they know us better than we know ourselves. With gentle honesty they are there to guide and support us, share our laughter and tears. Their presence reminds us that we were never really alone."

Thembisa gives thanks for Edward Andrews, who died suddenly from heart failure on 2 April 2022. Edward was Thembisa's chief 'braai master' since he joined us as a Trustee in 2008.

Edward was born in Pretoria, where he went to secondary school and met his lifelong friend Frank Adam. While at school he developed a love for Latin, chess and football. From school, Edward went on to study law and Latin, but after a year joined the army, for military service in the infantry. He married Lorraine in November 1983. In 1985 Dominique was born, followed by Stuart in 1986. Edward, by now a project manager in IT, remained keen on football, playing five times a week into his forties. In 2001, Edward and Lorraine began to feel that a move may be in the offing, as the political situation in South Africa was making it hard for white middle-aged men to find jobs. In 2004, when Edward was aged 44, the Andrews family arrived in Oxford.

Edward worked as the manager in Littlemore Post Office until 2011, quickly earning a reputation for being incredibly polite and for his unwavering good humour, personable manner and integrity. Edward then set up his own business as a 'handyman of note'. His reputation as a fine craftsman quickly spread, and he never needed to advertise for work. For Edward, this was an expression of ministry, to help people; and he took pains to get things just right.

Edward's life verse was 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, and your neighbour as yourself'. He will be remembered as a servant-hearted friend to many, many people on two continents.

Frank Adam, Chair, Thembisa Trust

### Thought from the Chair

Anthony Douglas Williams said "When our actions are based on good intentions, our soul has no regrets."

Throughout these challenging times Thembisa has continued to hold out hope, for one more food parcel, for one more opportunity as shown by the graduation of Nomatter Kayisa through a Crossover scholarship, for one more enabling and helping hand.

The whole is greater than the sum of its parts so thank you for making Thembisa's whole far greater than the sum of its parts; thank you for holding out hope for 'one more ...'!

Frank Adam  
Chair, Thembisa Trust



### Remember that you can buy Thembisa cards and gifts online!

Go to <https://thembisatrust.square.site/> where you will find a large selection of cards and a small selection of African handmade gifts such as tablecloths, peg bags and Christmas tree angels for sale. (We are planning to add to the range of gifts.)

## Visit to MNCP

Mama Ntombi's Community Projects (MNCP) is committed to providing hope and opportunities for the children in two impoverished areas near Pietermaritzburg. Activities are focused on education, health, and community development. In February 2022, a bumpy ride over dirt roads brought me to the MNCP Community Centre in Ezinketheni. The Centre was built using donations, including ongoing support from Thembisa. The building is used for homework, reading clubs for older children, and community workshops.

I was welcomed by Sandra Pillay, Chief Operations Officer, and Solomon Qadi, MNCP's social worker. Solomon does everything! He gets up at the crack of dawn to prepare porridge for 200 children and liaises with social services to provide help if a child is orphaned. He arranges the funeral when a grandmother dies without relatives. He also supervises days for residents to have their dogs inoculated against rabies and dipped for mange, both widespread in that area. (Medical care for animals is an impossible luxury when owners cannot meet their own basic needs.) The Trust that has been funding part of Solomon's modest salary has had to stop doing so. Thembisa Trustees have committed to providing half a year's salary but would like to cover the full annual salary. **Can you help us raise the additional £2500 (see below)?**



*Stimulating play in the preschool*

MNCP has only three paid employees (Solomon, Sandra, and the preschool teacher), but attracts the help of numerous volunteers. Local schools and colleges donate funds and provide some activities. For example, Varsity College recently invited the children to their campus for an Easter treat. Many fun activities were planned but the children just wanted to run and roll around on the lovely green lawns – lawns are non-existent in Ezinketheni! At the MNCP Centre I watched 20 pre-school children having a wonderful time playing with the provided toys. Sandra had previously informed Thembisa of MNCP's need for a generator, as Ezinketheni is without electricity. A generator will provide warmth in winter and light and power for the technology used for the clubs and workshops. Thembisa raised £2000 towards this, with an additional grant of £400 from Bernwode News. As I write, the generator and required wiring are being installed, and the MNCP personnel can't wait to have electricity!

Just a small amount of help, given with local knowledge at the right time, can make a huge difference in people's lives! For example, we visited a local lady, Gogo (Granny) Ngubane. MNCP helped her when she was very ill by giving her food parcels and assistance for her hospital visits. She now provides not only for herself but for her family through her sewing, poultry, crafts and gardening projects. There are other gogos who are too old and infirm to provide for their and their grandchildren's needs, living in cold shacks with tin or crumbling mud walls. MNCP supplies blankets and food parcels to the neediest.

Grace Townshend, Thembisa Trustee



*Gogo Ngubane with some of her beadwork, and Solomon with the laptop that was donated to MNCP by Computers4Charity (see page 4).*

### THEMBISA's 2023 GARDEN PARTY / BRAAI

During the pandemic it was not possible to hold a garden party/barbecue at Ferndale. But we are planning to celebrate once again on 21 May 2023 for Thembisa's 35th birthday. (Details will be sent nearer the time.)

#### MNCP APPEAL

We look to this Ferndale event to raise funds for a particular project. As we have missed the opportunity in recent years, we are inviting donations now to support MNCP with a gift towards Solomon's salary. You can donate via:

- the enclosed donation form
- the Donate button on our website

[www.thembisatrust.org](http://www.thembisatrust.org)

- cheque to The Thembisa Trust, 34 Trinity Road, Oxford OX38LQ.

Thank you!



## Cross Over celebrates its first mentor to graduate as a teacher!

This Zimbabwean educational programme for disadvantaged students is a success story! In 2022, 91 students enrolled. The children love being at school and most walk 5–15 miles both ways daily to attend. Despite losing time due to lockdowns, the Grade 7 class of 2021 achieved excellent pass rates. Deb Norton, Cross Over founder and visionary, is working with the Cross Over team in developing a remote learning platform to enable their materials to be more widely available.

Nomatter Kosiya is one of the local people employed by Cross Over as a mentor to the children. He studied to obtain the qualifications he needed before undergoing teacher training. Nomatter (seen here with Deb) graduated as a teacher in April 2022 and was selected to give the address on behalf of his fellow graduates. He is the first student to graduate on a Cross Over scholarship. This is a great example of how making a difference in one person's life can become a ripple effect, enhancing the lives of others.



*Opportunity:* Thembisa has supported Cross Over since 2016. If you want to help Zimbabwe, you can do so by donating to Thembisa. Please state that your donation is for Zimbabwe. 100% of what you give will be sent, with Thembisa paying the transfer cost.

## Bonginkosi Self-help project, Sweetwaters



Thembisa has supported this project since 2008. Volunteers living in the Pietermaritzburg area initiated the training of widowed grannies who cared for orphaned children to make blankets as a source of income. This developed into quality blankets and quilts being marketed in affluent areas.

The women also grow vegetables round their homes to feed their families and some do sewing. However, this community was hit hard by the pandemic and 2021 violence. Thembisa's support currently underpins the distribution of food and winter warmth parcels to this cut-off community by a small group of volunteers. The parcels are received with joyful appreciation.

## A laptop for MNCP from Computers4Charity

Computers4Charity (motto: Caring for Climate and Community) expertly wipe and refurbish donated laptops, then give them to worthwhile causes. We were very grateful to receive a laptop from Computers4Charity earlier this year. It was delivered to MNCP, where social worker Solomon will be the first to benefit from using it. In time, MNCP's dream is to help many children achieve computer literacy. You can watch a video of Grace Townshend speaking to Computers4Charity about MNCP at <https://www.computers4charity.org/computer-donations/the-thembisa-trust>.

## Project funding July 2021 to June 2022

In this newsletter we have focused on just three projects. However, all the projects we support have continued providing practical help and holding out hope during the difficult times that South Africa and Zimbabwe are experiencing. We express our heartfelt thanks to two organisations who provided grants during this period: the Souter Trust (£2000 to Cross Over) and Bernwode News (£400 to MNCP).

Project	Amount
Mama Ntombi's Community Projects (MNCP), Pietermaritzburg	£7800 <sup>a</sup>
Sweetwaters Bonginkosi Self-help Project, KwaZulu/Natal	£1000
AE feeding programme, KwaZulu/Natal	£2000
iThemba Community Projects, KwaZulu/Natal	£500
Food4Futures, Grahamstown	£1000
Chishawasha Orphans Project, Zimbabwe	£1000
Cross Over Educational Programme, Zimbabwe	£2537 <sup>b</sup>
<b>Total</b>	<b>£15,837</b>

<sup>a</sup> Included £2400 raised specifically towards the cost of a generator.

<sup>b</sup> Included earmarked £2000 donation from the Souter Trust.