



AFRICAN SCHOLARS' FUND (ASF)

Non-Profit Organisation 002-838 (established 1970)

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NEWSLETTER – NOVEMBER 2010

☆ *The core function of the ASF is to make awards available to enable learners from desperately poor homes to complete their secondary or FET college education. Written communication throughout the year serves to motivate and guide our bursars through the many challenges they face.*

WE ARE MOVING BACK TO RONDEBOSCH

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When Porter House was sold in 2009, we had no choice but to seek alternative accommodation. We secured office space in Waverley Business Park, Mowbray. However – 9 months down the line, in addition to banking and transport issues, it has become apparent that we need to be close to a post office that is familiar with and supportive of the organization. Rondebosch post office is familiar with our work and are prepared to let through the many applications and letters that are inadequately addressed and stamped. We have been fortunate in securing office space back in the Rondebosch area where the rental is on par with what we are paying in Mowbray. The move back to Rondebosch has been scheduled for 1 December 2010. This will allow us to settle before our busy period starts again in January.



2010 SOCCER WORLD CUP

Although the soccer world cup brought much excitement and an influx of foreign visitors to our shores, which was a huge positive, the event also had the expected “negative” impact on our work. Many schools did not write the June exams and did so only once they re-opened in July. Mid-year reports were very late, hence our reporting to donors has been adversely affected. Mid-year results impact on whether or not we consider a bursar to still be academically on track, which set our second payments back somewhat. The pressures of “catching up after extended holidays” was again evident with the influx of 2011 application forms, where June results did not quite meet our criteria. Nonetheless, the many letters received from our bursars indicated that the 2010 soccer world cup was an event that has been etched in their memories.



CIVIL SERVANTS' STRIKE

With the extended break from school during the soccer world cup and the teachers strike (18th August to 9th September), the 2010 matric students had a mere 149 teaching days. They are, however, expected to produce better results than the class of 2009. Are we being unrealistic or are we expecting miracles? Will they prove that indeed “where there is a will, there is a way”? More importantly, how much faith will the Higher Institutions of Learning have in the final outcome? We wish all matriculants well with their final exams and are confident that the ASF bursars will do us proud. To the many educators who dedicated much of their time to extra lessons for the benefit of the grade 12's during the September break, we salute you and thank you for your dedication and commitment.

JUNE EXAM RESULTS

Despite the many interruptions during their school year, of the 2567 bursars registered on our database, 2242 sent us their June results and 1143 qualified for their second payment. 1424 Learners did not qualify, because their marks were low or because they failed to send us their results on time. Maths / mathematical literacy and the Sciences continue to remain an area of grave concern.

At FET level we are pleased to report a mid-year pass rate of 85%. This is slightly lower than last year, but we are aware of the fact that the transition from high school to college remains daunting for many of our bursars. By July 2010 bursaries had been awarded to 68 students, amounting to just over R280 000.



SPECIAL AWARDS

The Mears Merit Award – presented to the learner with the best overall result in grade 10, based in the Western Cape. This year was presented to Mechane Onke – Manyano High School (Khayalitsha).

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The Mary Livingstone Essay – This year 69 essays were submitted from 13 schools. First and second prizes were awarded with 2 merit winners. Thank you most sincerely Ruth Allsop and Adriana Holleman, the adjudicators, for your time and effort.



SCHOOL VISITS

5 Local schools were visited during the course of the year. 3 Schools in Port Elizabeth (Douglas Mbopa, Ndyebo & S.E.K Mqhaya High Schools) and 2 schools in East London (Vulamaziboko & Eric Mntonga High Schools) received visits from us during the latter part of this year. These visits coincided with trips undertaken to Port Elizabeth and East London to present the FET Student Support Workshops. Reports and photographs will soon be placed on the website.

58 Learners from Sinako Junior Secondary School (Queenstown – Eastern Cape) visited our offices in September. The principal, 5 teachers and 2 parents accompanied the group. Their itinerary included visits to the Simonstown Naval Base, Parliament, Table Mountain and Robben Island. We spent just about 45 minutes chatting with the group who broke into song before bidding us farewell.



THANK YOU

We have about 350 individual donors who keep this work alive. Every year they selflessly give to the ASF knowing that, on their behalf, we pass it on to those who are in need. Their generosity affords many the opportunity of facing the next day with dignity and a resolve to better their lives. Thank you for allowing your hearts to be your true guide – your true center. Through our very generous corporate donors we were able to continue the extension of our services: that of offering material that could be workshopped with the grade 9 learners – the aim being to assist and better inform them on their choice of subjects for the senior phase of their high school career. Students at FET colleges continue to be presented with the Student Support Workshops offered in March and October each year.

SING AUSTRALIA is a community based organization “for those who love to sing”. All across Australia singing groups get together and sing popular songs at weekly meetings and at community based gigs with a special emphasis on those who need the joy of music and voices: hospitals, old age homes, and community events. Sing Australia Ashbury (based in Sydney’s inner-west) recently held their annual social event which was themed “Around the World in 18 Songs”. It was attended by 60 people with a three course dinner and slides, songs and music from around the world. Sing Australia

Ashbury arranged a raffle with prizes donated by Sing Australia members and local businesses. Rosemary Shapiro-Liu (who lived in South Africa until 2004 and is a supporter of ASF) coordinated the Social and introduced Sing Australia Ashbury to the African Scholars Fund.



It was agreed that half of the proceeds of the raffle would be donated to the African Scholars’ Fund. Dawn Chamberlain, volunteered to manage the raffle and with her encouragement, the singing group managed to raise a whopping \$650 AUD for the ASF. Sing Australia Ashbury is thrilled to be able to support six young people for a year.

FNB provided funding for yet a further 20 FET students in the Eastern Cape, which included sponsorship of 2 student support workshops.

De Beers provided funding for 217 high school learners and facilitated grade 9 workshop material being distributed to schools in the Northern Cape.

DG Murray Trust provided funding for 263 high school learners and 30 FET students in the Eastern Cape. In addition to the 2 FET student support workshops (Eastern Cape), the Trust also enabled ASF to courier grade 9 workshop material to the Life Orientation Educators at 7 schools.

Nelson Mandela Metropole again provided funding for FET students in their metropolitan area.

A large number of **our donors** continue to celebrate birthdays, anniversaries, batmitzvahs and barmitzvahs by requesting that family and friends make donations to ASF in lieu of gifts. We thank you all for your continued commitment and generosity.

Donations to the ASF fund are tax deductible.

South Africa:

Bank: STANDARD BANK

Account Name: AFRICAN SCHOLARS’ FUND

Account Number: 071404104

Branch Number: 025009

Swift code address: SBZA ZAJJ

United Kingdom

Natwest (Sort Code 55-70-13)

Account Name: AFRICAN SCHOLARS’ FUND

Account Number: 16388364



VOLUNTEERS

We have peak periods when the sheer volume of work would be a mammoth task, but we have our loyal band of volunteers to rely on. Thank you Ruth Allsop, Erika Targett, Wendy Kerby and Fran Barbe for continuing to cheerfully help with letters, reports, application forms, preparation of files, stamping of envelopes and anything else that needs to be done - we are grateful for your continued commitment to the cause.

A FOND FAREWELL

Farewell and the very best of luck to Cathy Birch, ex trustee, and her family as they leave South Africa to settle in Australia. When you get a bit homesick - think "braaivleis, rugby, sunny skies & Chevrolets" and everything will be all right - promise ☺.



NEW APPLICATIONS – 2011

Applications poured in and every year we wonder where the money will come from to meet the ever growing demand. Yet, our loyal donors never fail to pull us through. We carefully worked our way through close on 5000 applications. Adhering strictly to the criteria always presents a challenge - especially when reading the heart wrenching letters that accompany the applications. To date we have provisionally accepted close on 2000 applications and await their year end results before confirming whether or not they qualify for 2011.

"...My name Siphokuhle and I am 15yrs old. I live with my mother, stepfather, my brother and two cousin brothers in a one room shack. My mother is HIV positive, my father has already died because of HIV. I am thinking that my mother is also going to die. Who's gonna take care of me and those children, so I want to learn and take care of myself and those children. (gr 8)."

"...I am Aljero. I live in the Karoo. We only have one sleeproom and are 6 in the house. We only eat bread and pap and sometimes vegetables and fruit. Me and my family sleep only on mattresses and sometimes under blankets..". (Gr 10)

"...I am 16yrs old and live in Worcester. I see that it is really difficult for the youth to make a living and to be successful. There is a lot of pressure on the youth and some of the young girls get involved in prostitution to earn money to have food on the table. Children don't even want to complete school because they know that they would not be able to go to a university or college. I wish that there could be a lot of youth centres to keep the children busy - everyone deserves the chance to make the best of their lives and with you guys it is possible for

someone to change their life and makes it better." (G10)

OUR BURSARS SAY "THANK YOU"

"....I have received the money to purchase my essential school products. It has been difficult in my life financially and you assisted me 100%. I started receiving my money in 2006 when I was in grade 8. You've been my parents and my ATM. You always gave me money with peace and love - I thank you. (gr 12).

"...I bought 2 shirts, school pants, 2 pairs of socks, a windbreaker, school shoes and even a school bag. The money really provided me with all my school needs and wants. I even paid my school fees with the money. You really helped me through a lot of things. Please don't get tired, try and help others who are also in my situation. KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK!! (gr 11)

" I thank you with a doubtless heart for supporting me and other learners. You might think that you assist me financially only, but honestly you are also responsible for my performance at school. You make me think of my future". (Sisanda)

"...I would like to thank you for the great job that you are doing. I am a beautiful girl now at school because of you. I am going to work hard so that you won't regret yourselves by giving me the money. Thanks a lot bursary fund, may the good LORD bless you." (Nolonwabo)

"Hello my social workers. I write this letter for you and my sponsors. I want to say the thing you do for me makes a difference. I have two sisters at home, and they did not have school shoes, so I used the money to buy uniform for myself and school shoes for them. I also want to say thank you for writing me letters. Thanks to my sponsors and teachers, I could never have done it without you people. Thanks a lot." (Mzuvukile)

"...I wish to thank the ASF Team for all the support they have given me in the duration of my high school education [2004 - 2010]. From school fees to stationery, I knew that I have a family who vitalizes and understand the meaning of the word 'education', which will consider my educational needs, and satisfy them. When I sometimes wished to quit school because of the hardships I am facing at home, the ASF Team always came to my thoughts in a motivating way, giving me second thoughts about such decision because I knew that there are people who loves and values my education more than my biological family." (Sinawo)

"...I have received the money and I want to thank you very much. It made a huge difference in my life. I now have a white shirt that is really white, and it makes me happy when I am wearing it. My new school shoes have also boost my self-esteem. The uniform I had before was not so great. I don't have to worry what others are saying about me now." (Ntuthuzelo)

" I can never have enough solid words to express my gratitude toward you. I know that you must be a very unselfish person to do and give so freely." (Ricardo)

"I am writing from within my inner person and respectively showing my appreciation. For those couple of years that I have been in contact with you, the people of the ASF, I have learned a lot and gained so much. Through all those things I have learned that family is not just about the people you grow up with or have been raised by. But family is something more, it is a much bigger extended reunion among human beings. Family is about love, care unity, support and guidance. And that is what I have received from you. Your existence, input, support, love and care meant the world to me. Thank you all very much." (Nomandla)

"...The first thing I did when I received my money was paying my school fees. I settled my school fees completely for this year with an amount of R450. That will longer be of a burden to my mother. As she already paid my registration fee for this year with an amount of R500. That is why I settled my school fees with an amount of R450, because the school fees for this year is R950. I then had an amount of R300 left, which I bought me more stationery eg. Pens, pencils, exam pads and a new calculator, as my old calculator was stolen. That cost me an amount of R150. I gave my mother a R100 and took the R50 that was left for me for pocket money which I also shared with my younger sister. The money was of great benefit to me and my mother. We are truly thankful to everyone at African Scholars' Fund." (Ishaaf)



- 40 YEAR MILESTONE

Having begun in 1970 during the apartheid days, this fund has helped promising children to complete their High School education by giving small amounts of essential funding and large amounts of encouragement. It all began in a private house, with a staff of volunteers, using old envelopes, keeping files in apple boxes and just R27 in our kitty. Now we have offices, experienced paid staff and computers. We began with just 18 scholars - now we annually support 2500⁺ learners at school and 150⁺ students at FET colleges.

Our single-minded purpose is to help these promising but very poor young learners to complete their education – all of whom are enrolled at State

schools, yet we receive no State funding. We rely completely on individual donors and corporates. We are a channel to help schoolchildren. We are not a "charity" - we give **awards in response to** good work, to proper letters, to those who show responsibility and promise. The amount of money we give, R800-R1800 p.a., is enough to give a learner a sense of worth, but can hardly be considered as life-supporting. It relieves the strain and allows the learner to pay for basic educational expenses (school fund, stationery or uniform).

Our work is labour intensive, personalised and detailed. We spend as much time and effort on administering R800 for a learner at school as we do on one FET student costing R5000⁺. To date, over 40 000 high school learners and more than 1600 students at FET colleges have been helped by the organization. Our goal is to enable them to break the cycle of poverty and to become productive members of society. Bursars are encouraged to stay in touch and give back to the organization.

We were, a few years ago, very proud of the fact that 95c of every Rand given by our supporters reached the children. However, with annual increases in postage, telephone, rental, insurance etc. it has become difficult to keep operational expenses to a minimum.

ANNUAL REPORT 2009

Much to our dismay, we discovered that a batch of Annual Reports were printed incorrectly. It would seem that the UK Chairman's reports were completely left out of an undetermined number of Annual Reports. Should the Annual Report that you received not follow the sequence below, please let us know and we will forward the correct document to you (or it can be printed off our website: www.asf.org.za).

- Tribute to Margaret Elsworth – Founder (2pgs)
- Chairperson's report (1pg)
- Director's report (2pgs)
- Financial report (2pgs)
- Abridged financial statement (1pg)
- School results – 2009 (2pgs)
- Words of gratitude from our bursars (2pgs)
- FET College report (3pgs)
- Letter of appreciation – FET student (1pg)
- UK Chairman's report (1pg)
- UK Statement of Accounts (1pg)
- Donor Highlights (1pg)
- List of Sponsors (3pgs)
- In memoriam (1pg)



*THE TRUSTEES, STAFF,
SCHOLARS AND
STUDENTS WISH YOU
AND YOUR FAMILIES A
BLESSED CHRISTMAS
AND A PEACEFUL NEW
YEAR.*