
ECONOMIC SLUMP VS SOCIAL SUFFERING (Newsletter 2011)
PUBLIC SCHOOLING – (fast becoming) PUBLIC ENEMY NO # (Newsletter 2012)
CHAOS MUST LEAD TO CONTEMPLATION, TO CONSULTATION AND FINALLY TO ORDER (Newsletter 2013)
EXPRESSIONS OF “I AM” AN ASPIRANT STUDENT, A VALUED EMPLOYEE, A RESPECTED CITIZEN, AN EQUAL HUMAN BEING IS EVIDENCED “FAR AND WIDE”
((Newsletter 2014)

NEWSLETTER – JANUARY 2016

ONE YEAR AND A BIT LATER AND EXPRESSIONS OF “I AM, THIS IS MY VALUE, CAN YOU HEAR ME - DO YOU EVEN SEE ME” CONTINUES. THOSE THAT LOOK ON MUST ASK THEMSELVES: “WHAT ARE THE FILTERS THAT SHAPES MY EXPERIENCE OF THIS DRAMA CALLED LIFE?”

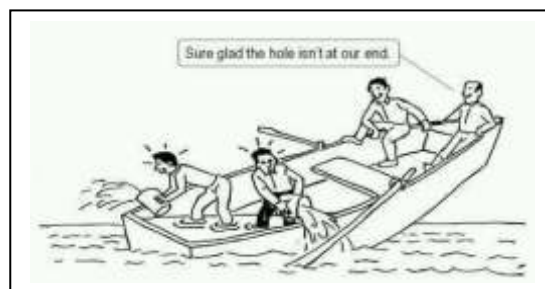
Not only is this a rather interesting question to ask, but more so it requires much personal courage to ponder in quietude in order to arrive at your answer honestly and authentically. In fact, this is a deeply personal matter that speaks to the very essence of the Self and reveals much about What we do, Why we do and How we do. It ultimately shapes our experienced reality – little wonder we have such different outlooks on life, such vastly different perceptions of what is “happening out there”. It is our personal filters that brings the “drama of life” to life. And what drama we’ve had this 2015. Since education is the ambit in which we operate, let us draw your attention to just a few matters relating primarily to this sector - matters that impact our young bursars.

“Schools in the Western Cape takes strain in having to accommodate learners that come from our other Provinces...” An all too familiar remark, often times passionately debated around our dining room tables, weekend braai’s and especially after being emotionally fuelled by a News report. Do we find ourselves joining the chorus in bemoaning the situation, devoid of empathy for those youngsters that are forced to leave their parents/guardians / siblings and relocate to another province to make a home with a distant relative – sometimes an understanding family friend or even a stranger in the form of a pastor’s sister, or teacher’s relative, because “education is what will free me from the cycle of poverty I find myself in”?

“Department of Education seems set on closing down a large number of smaller schools and build hostels to accommodate displaced learners...” It is a fact that there are large numbers of rural schools, particularly in the Eastern and Northern Cape where enrollment numbers are low, where there is a shortage of qualified teachers and where resources are painfully inadequate, but is removing these vulnerable & impressionable youngsters from their homes and “institutionalising” them the only answer – bear in mind that the hostel environment that will be made available to these learners, can in no way be compared to the hostel environments that is the norm at private schools.

“Chaos erupts as students protest against rising tertiary study costs...” Indeed, but as stated in our 2013 Newsletter: ‘chaos must lead to contemplation, to consultation and finally to order’. There has been much contemplation, a fair amount of consultation and a reasonable restoration of order – but we hold our breaths for we are very aware of how all of this still hangs cautiously in the balance. And if the scales continue to tip in favour of “cost of living” where “reward of living” is neglected, should we be surprised if chaos once again erupts, not only in the educational space – but across all sectors?

The above raises more questions than it provides answers, but the frustrations experienced and outplayed by the youth reflects the bigger picture – highlights the challenges that face our South African society as a whole. We cannot have the mindset as depicted in the cartoon. We need to personally ponder, reflect and only then react – with empathy, compassion and understanding, for the greater good of ALL.



We have come a long way, but much still needs to be done and unless we pull together, solutions – living together in harmony, will remain beyond our reach and collective experience.

So too, has this organisation come a long way – with many challenges that was overcome and many that inevitably will still present itself (this is the very nature of Life itself). However, the individuals that man this ship, along with the individuals that support the direction in which it sails, work together as one collective and hence it never fails to dock into port safely. And therein lies the lesson – therein lies its continued success. We thank every single individual for their continued contribution in keeping this Fund afloat.

Our success stories reflects the full circle many of our bursars have come (see www.asf.org.za) and it is you, our loyal donors, who are the catalysts to this transformation. Your investment encourages a pool of talented future employees, helps create potential clients to enter the world of the consumer and meaningfully partake in growing the economy of our country. The ASF offers the lifeline to those in need – you, in turn, are the life blood of the organisation - thank you.

SO, LET US TAKE A QUICK GLANCE BACK ON THE YEAR THAT WAS:

Donors: 2015 - for the first time, we actually exceeded our budget on the projected Donor Income! This, in and of itself needs to be celebrated – albeit it largely due to The Fund having been blessed in the receipt of 4 very generous bequests from donors Dosé, Roehm, Watson and Wilkinson. There really is no need to elaborate on these gifts – the mere fact that it was willed to the organisation speaks volumes with regard to the relationship between the ASF and its donors. To the many donors who request that their guests make a donation to the ASF in lieu of gifts for birthdays, weddings, anniversaries and other special occasions - we are indeed grateful. We even have donors who annually compose letters reflecting on the progress of the young learners they support and then send these off to their family and friends to highlight how one individual CAN make a significant impact on the life of another.

Founder's Luncheon: This turned out to be a wonderful moment of mutual acknowledgement and thanksgiving. We hope to host an annual event of similar nature since it proved to be a delightful opportunity for donors, beneficiaries and staff to engage. It is somewhat unfortunate that it has to be limited to the Western Cape, but unless we receive sponsorship we cannot consider hosting elsewhere in our area of operation.

Partnerships with other organisations:

Asset Trust: We provided additional finance to 95 grade11 & 12 bursars (Masibambane & Bloekombos High Schools) that enabled them to attend the Summer/Winter schools. A “feedback workshop” was conducted in November 2015 and the candid, very honest response from our bursars was shared with Asset Trust. This year, we hope to extend the additional support to our grade 10 learners as well (this programme runs in the Western Cape only).

SA Travel & Tourism College: Full sponsorship of a year long training programme [valued at over R50k] that presents qualifying grade 12 female learners with an internationally accredited Hospitality qualification. This year, *again*, one of our bursars (this time from the Eastern Cape) was accepted onto the programme. On graduation, students are immediately employable and we are pleased to confirm that our bursars have little trouble in securing employment at some of the best hotels in South Africa.

VW South Africa – Uitenhage: This partnership gives access to our Engineering and Business Studies TVET graduates, who meet the VW criteria, to partake in their 3-year learnership programme.

UCT Interns: ASF hosted 2 Interns (Development Studies – Theory & Practice) for a period of just under 3 months that culminated in the in-house development of an interactive Gr11 Career Guidance Workbook. Bursars will engage with the content of the booklet for their entire Gr11 year, with parents/guardians & the Life Orientation Educator able to track and support their findings.

Life Choices: A massive “thank you” to Life Choices for making it possible for the ASF to facilitate a donation of 55 bikes to learners from 3 rural schools on the outskirts of Cape Town (28 November 2015). We hope to build on this even further in facilitating the donation of 200 bikes, from the same donor, to 1 or 2 schools in the Eastern Cape this year (2016).

International HIV Aids Conference: Networking at the Life Choices Bike Handover Event on 28 November also led to the possibility of sending a group of ASF learners, who are affected/infected with HIV Aids, to attend the International HIV Aids Conference due to be held in Durban during the June holidays. We look forward to making this opportunity available to our young bursars.

Groote Schuur Primary School: The ASF 2015 again served as one of two external adjudicators on their panel to select a current gr6 learner who is to receive the Anton Meyer Scholarship award to go towards completing his/her upcoming gr7 year at GSPS.

SPECIAL AWARDS:

Yvonne Parfitt Trust: We are annually invited to nominate an ASF bursar, and yet again the gr12 bursar we put forward, Asanda Magoda from Cosat in Khayelitsha, was successful in securing sponsorship to continue her tertiary studies. Asanda has been accepted at Wits University and will study medicine. Her 2015 report card reads as follows: Xhosa (90%); English (90%); Mathematics (90%); Life Orientation (80%); Information Technology (80%); Life Sciences (96%) and Physical Sciences (93%).

Mary Livingstone (English essay competition): There were 5 prize winners (2 Silver and 3 Bronze Certificates were awarded – no Gold). Bellville South High School produced the winners of a silver (gr11) and a bronze award (gr10). The other 3 winners were out of town bursars: 1 x Molly Blackburn (Uitenhage), 1 x Noupoot and 1 x Flagstaff (Eastern Cape). This year 56 English essays were submitted from 15 schools. This is significantly lower than the 153 essays (25 schools) received 2014, but it serves to highlight the impact the postal strikes had on our work. We thank Ruth Allsopp and Adriana Holleman for their continued commitment, their time and especially the valuable literary feedback they give to the entrants

Mears Merit award (top three gr10 learners – WCape): Intesebenziswano, Sophumelela and Zisukhanyo Senior Secondary Schools this year produced our top three achievers.

JUNE EXAM RESULTS (the end of year results will be available in the 2015 Annual Report which we hope to bring to you towards the end of April 2016)

Schools: 2015 we had 2018 bursars registered with the fund. 1790 (89%) Bursars sent us their June results of which 1272 (71%) qualified for their second payments. Adequate performance is necessary for ASF to continue providing support and the learner's attention is drawn to the fact that they need to reapply every year. The largest percentage drop-offs occur with the gr8 learners, clearly indicating the difficulty in transitioning from primary to high school. A similar trend is noted with the gr10 learners which speaks volumes with regards to their ill informed choice of subjects.

Additional support: In addition to the financial assistance, the fund continues to [1] distribute Advice Booklets to the grade 9 bursars (focussing on subject choice). [2] an interactive career guidance booklet that facilitates a 3-way interaction between the learner, parent and educator – leading to a more informed decision on post school direction. [3] The grade 12 bursars receive an information pamphlet giving advice on bursaries, tertiary institutions and [4] grades 10 to 12 learners will receive additional funding to attend the Asset Trust Summer/Winter Schools.

304 ASF sponsored matriculants sat for final exams 2015 – the results will be made available in the 2015 Annual Report.

Technical and Further Education and Training Colleges: TVET support has, in the past, been limited to the Eastern Cape. This year, we extended our service to include a handful of students in the Western Cape. The results are as follows: ECape: Bursaries have been awarded to 33 students, amounting to just over R114,839.50 We had one student in the NCape amounting to R3,900. Although students are set to start classes on 21

January 2016, the results for their 2015 academic year is not yet available – hence, we cannot report on the pass rate of our sponsored bursars. We are extremely grateful to the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality who continue to provide annual funding towards our group of TVET students in the Eastern Cape. In the WCape bursaries have been awarded to 5 students, amounting to just over R46,849.00 Here too, we are still waiting on results to be published and can therefore not report on pass rates. We continue to offer Student Support Workshops in March and October. Success stories of our students who have completed their studies and are gainfully employed are reported on in our Annual Reports and featured on our website.

THROUGH YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT WE ARE, FOR THE 2ND YEAR RUNNING, ABLE TO INCREASE THE AWARDS FROM R900 – R1000 !!!

Donations to the ASF fund are tax deductible.
Bank: STANDARD BANK
Account Name: AFRICAN SCHOLARS' FUND
Account Number: 071404104
Branch Number: 025009

We have entered that busy period in our operational cycle where we need to assess the influx of December results (from current bursars and the thousands of hopeful new applicants), in preparation of their first payment cycle. Having said that, every effort will be made to have the Annual Report out towards the end of April.

You are invited to have a look at our revamped website: www.asf.org.za . Your comments and suggestions are always more than welcome.

May the Essence of what you truly seek, find you always. And may you and your loved ones experience a blessed and safe year.



Eliza James - Director