

July 2020

Mandela's Birthday during Covid 19

On the 18th July 2020, South Africa celebrated Nelson Mandela's birthday. Usually this is a joyful and happy event which South Africans always celebrate with great fervour. This event unites the population; moves people closer together and, for 66 minutes, dedicate themselves to the well-being of their fellow South Africans or the environment.

I am sitting at my computer wanting to report on a cheerful and happy birthday occasion in one of our kindergartens – but, instead, I have to write about the impact of a pandemic which hit all of us totally unexpectedly and unprepared.

Because of Corvid 19, the whole country has been in lockdown of one sort or another for 116 days and all kindergartens, beaches, fitness centres, hotels etc. remain closed. A curfew has again been imposed from 9pm to 5am; the sale of alcohol and cigarettes is prohibited; all events and functions have been cancelled and, in the tourist industry, the outlook is bleak. Unemployment is estimated at 3 million – and rising - and reports of many more hungry people appear almost daily. People queue for hours to receive food packs or a bowl of hot soup and, at road intersections, many wait patiently for a day job.

Last year, we celebrated Madiba's birthday extensively in our Educare. The little ones made sandwiches and proudly distributed them to the student of Silikamva High School. Afterwards, everyone cheerfully sang the national anthem before enjoying their own lunch.

Instead of an exuberant mood, laughter and shining children's eyes, there is now a yawning emptiness in all classrooms – with only the teachers working frantically to prepare their classrooms for the re-opening. The Department of Social Development sent 60 pages of instructions and rules to all ECD centres which need to be implemented before we are able to re-open. As a first step, the staff was introduced to the new regulations; then the parents had to be informed; and, in addition, the entire building had to be prepared for the re-opening. This entailed every classroom e.g. all tables and chairs, toys and books, the entire kitchen, toilet, the office and all other rooms had to be cleaned and disinfected. The procedure for the arrival of children each morning and for fetching them in the afternoon had to be discussed with the teachers and will be implemented by the parents.



Hand wash and sanitizing



children with masks and social distancing

Last week, the Health Inspector visited and approved all safety measures which have been instigated, allowing the Grade R children to return to Little Lambs. Much to the detriment of many parents who wish to take up their employment, all other age groups have to remain at home – perhaps unsupervised.

On opening, all ECD centres have to follow stringent hygiene procedures which are adding additional costs to the already strained and stressed budget.

We thank you for any and all support you may wish to assist us with.

Stay safe and healthy!

Warm regards



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