

Kwasa College, Springs, Johannesburg



Kwasa College continues as a beacon of hope and light for the children, their families and the local community. Sharron Dinnie, Rector of the College, writes that 2020 was ‘an extremely difficult year for us all, one in which we have faced many challenges ... Yet, as I look back and reflect I am filled with deep gratitude’.

In the weeks following the first lockdown, deeply concerned for the local community as unemployment levels rose and rose, Sharron succeeded in establishing a food bank on the school site. With food donated by local businesses, local shops, suppliers and the community itself, fortnightly food bags for 240 families were provided.



Planning took place for the safe reopening of the College. Staff adapted quickly and willingly, working hard and taking on responsibilities beyond their normal duties. Children became used to new systems, to wearing masks (reusable, and laundered weekly by the College), to remaining socially distanced, and to remembering to attend school only on alternate days. Both the College minibuses were pressed into service in order to reduce ‘load’ numbers.



In August 2020 came the fulfilling of long-held dreams when work on the White Building was completed. Once a dilapidated, dangerous building right at the main entrance to the site and housing 220 squatters, it now provides a hall that is able to accommodate whole-school assemblies, with a sprung wooden stage and a sound and light system, reception and office space and an IT/Media room, plus a clinic to cater for children and staff and which will soon be opened to the local community. We shall be telling the story of this building in a future Sources of Hope article.



Sharron's concerns over finances – with unemployment in South Africa running at 43% – spurred the HTSM Kwasa Group and the West Green Charitable Trust into spreading the news of Kwasa and the student sponsorship scheme even further. Address books and contacts lists were scoured, letters and emails sent, conversations started – and the response was truly astounding. Before Covid-19, there were 30 sponsorships in place providing bursaries for 53 students each year. That number now stands at a total of 90 bursaries! (For more details about the scheme see www.htsmguildford.org/kwasa.) In another sign of hope, the South African government has continued during these difficult times to meet its financial commitments to the College.

And for 2021? Schools in South Africa remain closed until at least the middle of February, but the Grade 7 children who graduated in December, some of whom have been at Kwasa for nine years, will then start the next phase of their education at high school. They remain part of the Kwasa family, however, and where necessary Kwasa will pay for books, sports equipment and fees charged by their schools. At Kwasa itself, when the new school year finally begins, it seems that all classes will be full and the staff complement complete.

Kwasa – light and peace after the storm

January 2021