



## JOSHUA HOUSE TO BE OFFICIALLY OPENED

A historic landmark for iThemba is the opening of the third iThemba cluster foster care home, Joshua House. The event will take place on 23 April. Paul and Lauren Bagnoli, of Friends of iThemba based in the USA, will be the guest speakers at the function and will cut the ribbon to officially open the house. This happy and energy-filled home is modern and spacious with a wonderful outlook over the valley. It speaks clearly of the positive contribution the foster parents, Shane and Lara, have made. The Joshua House children are eagerly anticipating the function.

The family was photographed taking a break on the grass adjacent to the house, from left: David, Kendell, Shane, Max-Joshua, Lara, Nandi and Peter.

# Message from the Chairman



The iThemba offices are abuzz with activity of a slightly different kind at the moment, as we prepare for our exciting yearly event Vision Africa 2008. Invitations have been sent out, guest lists finalised, flight times confirmed, menus planned and events are being fine tuned. There is a growing excitement as we await the arrival of our overseas guests, knowing that new friendships will be formed, old friendships deepened, and lives changed as we experience together the hope on our campus, in the Embo community and country wide.

Vision Africa is a significant event for us here at iThemba. It was, in fact, through one of these events that iThemba was birthed. Together with

the commitment and vision of those friends visiting at the time and others who have joined us on consecutive events we have been able to realise our dream of bringing hope to those children who have lost their parents and homes due to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. We do this by giving them a loving secure family and an education that will equip them to become leaders in their communities, the leaders Africa so desperately needs.

We have discovered that visiting the African continent has a powerful effect on our guests, leaving them with vivid memories of colour, optimism, rhythm and energy and it is hoped that in years to come we will host many visitors local and abroad who will experience the hope and spread its message.

This is our fifth consecutive event. It includes many aspects of showcasing community in Africa as it is today. The highlights include interacting with the iThemba families and meeting Mr Rob Parsons (founder of Care for the Family in the UK and an international author and expert on family relationships) who is our guest speaker at our Gala dinner. Our visitors will also have an opportunity to see 'No Apologies', our Actively Abstinent programme, being presented to primary school learners in the Embo valley. Most exciting of all will be the official opening of Joshua House, our third home.

This is an uplifting landmark in the history of iThemba. It marks the

steady progress of the organisation against all odds and uncertainties and reminds us of the need to continually strive to raise the funds required not only to sustain our existing homes but also to enable more children to experience the hope that iThemba offers.

Judy and I have recently returned from a trip to Atlanta where we were able to attend a board meeting with our very special friends and supporters.

The enthusiasm, vision, determination and support received from that meeting has been and continues to be such an encouragement to us. This, however, is not our only form of encouragement. The response, help and support we are receiving from our community and from South Africa is providing us with the means to move forward, to swim against the current of despondency and hopeless statistics.

The orange ray of hope depicted in our communication material is apt as it represents the rising of the sun and the rays of hope steadily spreading. We thank you all for giving us the means to do this.

We would love you to come and visit us and meet our great iThemba families...and experience the hope.

Sincerely,

Danie van den Heever

## iThemba children update

### JOSEPH HOUSE

Peaceful celebrated her 21st birthday in February. As the oldest member of the iThemba family she has proven her role as leader and inspirational figure for the other children. Promise intends registering to study Travel and Tourism Management at Damelin College. We at iThemba are very excited about her commitment as this reinforces our goal of encouraging the children to pursue qualifications at a tertiary level. Christopher is excelling at Hillcrest Christian Academy whilst Brenda and Brian are blossoming at the iThemba Academy.

### ESTHER HOUSE

Ndu has left school, having passed Grade 10, and has entered into a learnership with an electrician who has offered to train him. (See Q & A on opposite page). Lindo, Musa and Sanele are benefiting from individual attention and care at the iThemba Academy.

### JOSHUA HOUSE

We are pleased to welcome Nandi, an 11 year old girl from Malvern Children's Home, to Joshua House. She is a true joy and has settled very well in her new home. David, Peter and Nandi are attending the iThemba Academy and are making good progress. David was fortunate to meet South African cricket legend Shaun Pollock recently when he visited the campus. David is a promising cricketer and was inspired by interacting with Shaun who is well known internationally for his sporting talent and leadership skills.



## Q & A with Ndu

The first thing you notice about Ndu is his smile. When you witness this warm, engaging reflex you can't help but smile yourself. He is a valued member of Esther House. We asked him a few questions to determine his goals for 2008 and about his thoughts on iThemba...

*What are your goals for 2008?*

To be the best electrician I can be and to focus on my soccer. I hope to be play soccer for Orlando Pirates one day.

*What is your favourite place on the campus?*

Esther House, my home.

*What inspired you to follow a career as an electrician?*

I really enjoy the work and I find it easy.

*Who is your role model?*

Benni McCarthy – South African soccer star.

*What does hope mean to you?*

It means everything. A good life and a good future.

*How has your life changed since joining Esther House?*

Everything is good there. I am happy. We laugh a lot in the house. As the oldest I do feel like I am a role model and I am always asked lots of questions!

*What are your three favourite foods?*

Roast chicken, pizza and eggs on bread!

## Sustaining the Legacy Fund



*The iThemba campus has immense potential for expansion and it is hoped that many more homes will feature on the grassy banks in the future.*

Expanding the offering of iThemba in terms of additional cluster foster care homes and improving the facilities at the iThemba Academy is a priority. The Legacy Fund has been set up to ensure the sustainability of the organisation in the long run.

iThemba has embarked on an exciting fundraising campaign which challenges American and South African donors to match what has been raised for a specific project.

"Our intention has always been to have enough money invested to support the running of each home from the interest earned," said Danie van den Heever.

"Our research in this area indicates that a \$500 000 in-

vestment will produce enough income to cover all of the costs of operating a cluster foster home in South Africa."

A donor has pledged to match every dollar that we can raise for this fund up to \$300 000. The challenge is for donors to consider donating an amount that will double in value thanks to the matching grant. Each donation will be receipted for tax purposes. The South African government has endorsed iThemba as a "best practice" model in foster care in South Africa which is encouraging and inspiring. With continued support from friends and donors from across the globe we are certain that the spreading of hope will continue well into the future.

# New addition to iThemba team



*Chris and Kerry Nel have joined the iThemba family.*

**N**ew ideas combined with fresh energy are invaluable in an organisation. iThemba is delighted to welcome dynamic couple, Chris and Kerry Nel, to the team.

Chris has taken on the role of Chief Operating Officer (COO) as of 1 April. This challenging yet rewarding position

will entail the implementation of the board's strategic plan and managing operations, activities and staff. Other key focus areas will be overseeing marketing, fundraising and relationships with donors. The Nel family have recently moved to Hillcrest from Hout Bay in Cape Town and are optimistic about the change. The couple who have four children - Jordan (11), Erin (7), Bevan (6) and Brenna (3) and are pleased to be back in KwaZulu-Natal, where they have previously resided.

"We have always been involved in the community," explained Kerry. "We have a keen interest in education and family."

Chris has a background in business, previously at Ooba (formerly Mortgage SA) and prior to that running his own company, whilst Kerry has recently been focusing her energy on motherhood, photography and community work. With experience in media correspondence and a background at Focus on the Family, Kerry will initially be involved at the iThemba Academy in a part-time administration role with a view to expanding this role in the future. The pair's skills complement each other and they plan to contribute to iThemba as a team.

Chris has clear goals for his new position and hopes to make great strides in the near future.

"One of my goals is to ensure that we deepen our relationship with our friends and donors highlighting that what they are giving is investing in people's lives and restoring hope in people's lives," said Chris.

The couple expressed that their definition of hope was, "to have a reason to look forward to the future with an eternal purpose in mind." With these powerful words the possibilities for growth for iThemba with this couple in the fold are profound.

## Support the need

Our friends and donors, both locally and abroad, are most valued and crucial to the longevity and sustainability of the organisation. Should you feel moved to donate please notify us of any deposits made so that we can issue a tax certificate and acknowledge your generosity.

Donations can be made by direct deposit into the following accounts:

### **SOUTH AFRICA:**

Name: Focus on iThemba • Bank: Standard Bank • Branch: Durban • Code: 040026

Account number: 050 184 911 • Swift address: SBZAZAJJ

Cheques can be sent to: Focus of iThemba • Private Bag X7039 • Hillcrest • 3650

### **USA:**

Name: Friends of iThemba • Destination account: 2000012696390

Bank: ABA 031201467, Wachovia Bank, 36 South Street, New Providence, NJ 07974, 908 – 286 6156

Cheques can be sent to: Friends of iThemba • PO Box 446 • New Providence • NJ 07974 • USA

*Thank you for harnessing the power of hope and making a significant difference in the lives of South Africa's future leaders.*

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