

THE LEAP SCHOOL IN JOHANNESBURG HAS OPENED ITS DOORS!



It is February 2008 and LEAP, Johannesburg has been running for just over a month! Yes, the dream of last year has become a reality and every day, Monday to Saturday, 42 Grade 10 learners from Alexandra spend their day (weekdays 7:30 to 17:15) in a converted house in Bramley Park.

We are delighted to have premises with a green and lush garden, a swimming pool, a fully-equipped kitchen, and enough space for this year to house a computer centre, two classrooms with data-projectors, an LO room, and enough offices and bathrooms for all our needs. There has been much work to do in terms of clearing and cleaning (we still need desperately to paint!) and maintenance but the learners and management staff have been busy and we are functioning well. We have even fitted in a swim for a group of learners.

Thank you to Macmillan Study Guides and Frank Kobrin for renting to us, and to Rodney and Jean Weinstein of Zenprop Property Holdings for covering most of our rent.

STAFF

Besides the enthusiastic learners, we would like to welcome another group of committed and hard-working people to the school: our teachers.



Rebecca Bokaba – Admin



Kim Forbes – English



Heather Hops – Maths



Jeanette Long – Life Orientation



Thabang Mahafe – Sesotho



Milford Malunga – CAT and Accounting



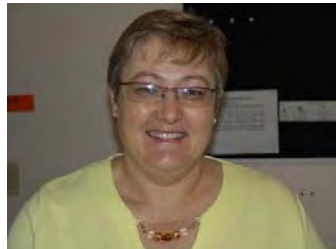
Oral Minyi – Geography



Khozi Leotlela - Zulu



Ashnee Mohabir – Science



Heather Skinner – Life Sciences

Thanks, too, to our helpers and volunteers, without whom we would still be in a sad state!



Joseph was finishing his contract with Macmillan, so helped us to feel safe and gave us much advice regarding the premises. We were sorry we could not afford to keep him!



Sven spent his January setting up computers and being a general handyman ... only to be exhausted for the beginning of his University Year.



Sonnyboy painted and hammered and carried and installed and ... Thanks to him we are able to use the beautiful furniture donated to us by Coronation Asset Management.

SPECIAL EVENTS AND PEOPLE

We have been spoiled with visits and unexpected blessings (besides the 42 wonderful learners!). Thanks to Louise Cameron of Roseact (on our Steering Committee), 18 of our learners and Oral went to Monte Casino to see **The Lion King** – a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity! The Steering Committee has met once this year thus far, and we are encouraged by their support and enthusiasm.

Other visitors include John Gilmour, the director of LEAP, who shared a light supper with the staff and gave us much advice and guidance. Mark Allen, also from Cape Town, visited and made sure we were on track with our finances. We have had a number of visitors from the **Media**: Dave Ball (*The Sunday Times*) has volunteered some time to do Media Studies lessons; Duncan Fleming (*The Star*) wrote a positive article about our school (see attachment); Alexandra News sent us Dimakatso, and The Tribune sent Amanda to cover the celebration). The exposure will hopefully encourage other funders, but more importantly it gave the learners a chance to express how they are feeling about the school. They were told to be honest in their comments, and we were pleased at their sense of belonging and, as many commented, safety in the school.

Sarah Morrison of **The Epoch and Optima Trusts** (Tshikululu Fund) was treated to a song on her visit, and we are holding thumbs for a positive response from **Rentworks** (Tim Stuart) and Afrilinux (Gary Hodgson) to equip our Computer lab.

The **Fluor Engineering Week** competition is coming up and we are gratified that 2 LEAP teams have been invited to participate. Thanks to Wally Gardiner and his team for being so supportive – Fluor also does our bulk photostating for free; we were gratified to see Wally and his wife at our Celebration ...

The Celebration

On Saturday, 9 February, we invited parents and funders to our lovely new premises to **celebrate** the opening of our school. Our creative maths teacher, Heather, seized the opportunity to teach volumes and proportions in a creative way – she organised her learners into baking teams, and they baked cup-cakes for our celebration. As Nhlakanipho, one of the learners, commented post-celebration: **'All the cakes were eaten very quickly, which meant that they were good.'** What an amazing way to teach more than one skill and raise the sense of achievement of the kids. The learners greeted their guests with singing and some drama and choral verse. The funders were thanked by some nervous orators but, of course, an audience that cheers and sings in response is so heartening (a challenge to those of us who tend to be a bit more staid!) and puts one at ease. We were grateful to the mom and grandmother who spoke during the **community time** to encourage both staff and learners in their quest to create the best future possible for these 42 teenagers.



Would you like to help?

We asked the staff and learners to write up a **wish list**. I am copying it below, with an additional list of my own regarding our needs. Please take note and network. It is not just things and funds that we need, but expertise and support.

- Volley balls and net
- Soccer balls
- Musical instruments, especially drums
- Netball hoop
- Table tennis table
- Chess boards and pieces
- Exercise books (72 page)
- Swimming lessons
- Black jerseys
- Tracksuits
- Microwave
- Office chairs for the staffroom

Holiday Programme for April

Can you teach a **craft**? Coach an **art** skill? Teach a **sporting** skill? A lifeskill? A **cooking** skill? We need you for an hour (or more, if you want) during the week of Monday, 14 – Thursday, 18 April. Please call Kim at 083 453 7456. This will be an opportunity for the learners to balance their maths and science programme with more creative and fun activities.

Do you have any contacts at a **food supplier**? We need delivery of fresh fruit and bread twice a week, and yoghurts and milk once a week.

Do you have a **paint supplier** contact? We urgently need to paint our house, the walls of which are looking a bit grubby.

Do you have any kitchen/catering equipment you no longer need? kettles, knives, containers, etc.



Here are some of the LEAP learners at the **celebration**, sporting their new golf shirts. Thanks goes to the Thoroughly Equipped Small group of Liberty church for subsidizing each learner R20 – it meant that the learners could afford to buy the **shirts** for Saturday (though some are paying off the R35). If you are aware of any group that could subsidise the same amount (total of R840-) or more, the learners

would be able to purchase a second shirt, or possibly a sweatshirt or jersey for winter.

One of our challenges is to start regular **sporting activities**. We have managed thus far in our garden, but it is simply too small for any real exercise. We have enquired at the local government school regarding the use of their fields; they are willing to hire us the fields at an hourly rate. Their proximity makes them an ideal venue as we would save on transport. We are also enquiring at a community centre in Alex, and working on fitting this into the timetable.

This week the learners will start their **Science programme at Redhill** – they have been very excited about this and enquired about it in their first week. We thank Redhill and its teachers again for being so willing to share.

We continue to seek **community projects** that we can link with in Alexandra. Some of the learners are establishing contacts with some homes and charities this week, but do let us know if you are involved in any projects that would benefit from our involvement. We consider the notion of contributing to the community to be a cornerstone of the education offered at LEAP. We can also be a conduit for any donations of children's clothing or toys that you might want to donate.

The learners will receive their first **report** this coming week, including either an effort rating or a self-assessment rating. Another report will be issued at the end of the first term.

Please feel free to visit us at any time. We are at 36 Maree Street, Bramley Park, just off the Grayston Bridge.

We are always in need of contacts for sponsors so if you know of a company that would be interested in supporting education with a maths and science focus, and with the goal of transforming young people for a successful future in South Africa, please send us the information. Here, also, are the LEAP banking details should you wish to send it out.

Bank: FNB

Branch: 4 Merchant Place

Branch code: 200607

Account holder: LEAP Science and Maths School

Account number: 6214 9555 255