



AFRICAN SCHOLARS' FUND (ASF)

Non-Profit Organisation 002-838 (established 1970)

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NEWSLETTER – NOVEMBER 2011

ECONOMIC SLUMP VS SOCIAL SUFFERING

In reading the letter that follows, one cannot help but become aware of the fact that no matter how little we have, we have more than enough. Your support enables us to continue assisting those that find themselves in situations of despair.

Nelisiwe writes: *"My name is N M. I am 13 years old. I live at Zabalozza location. I live with a guardian. I have a brother and sister. # I used to live with two guardians. They had two children who were older than me. They treated me like their own child. They took me from Johannesburg because they loved me as their own child. I started schooling when I was 7 years old at Tonti Primary School in Transkei from grade one. # My mother came to fetch me and my elder sister. She came with us to Dimbaze. It was December and on January 2000 I started school at Metele Primary School. I was in grade two. We moved to stay at Zabalozza. From about two months she started drinking too much. She used to come back from the shebeens at twelve midnight or two o' clock in the morning. We were living in the shack and then we moved to another shack. She started selling liquor. I had to look after my brother. In 2007 when the school were nearly to be opened my mother went to town. She met with a lady in a taxi. She asked the lady if she wanted kids, because she wanted somebody to live with her kids while she was in Durban. That lady then agreed that she would stay with us kids as she needed them. # When the schools opened I had no shoes and my sister had no socks for school. My sister woke up and washed with cold water and wore unironed uniform. She went to school and the other children were laughing at her. She had no lunch and she went to school without eating. One of the teachers called her she asked her why her uniform was not ironed. She didn't answer her. She asked if we wanted to come and stay with her. We said that we wanted. She took us after school. She had one baby boy and then one of her sisters child came to stay with her. She had a financial problem. She is a single mother. She is teaching grade R. She is not getting enough money. She is taking care of four children. The worst part of it, she is studying with the university of Fort Hare to become a qualified teacher. # By submitting this application I hope that you will consider it with sympathy. Thank you, yours faithfully - Nelisiwe"*

Every year we receive in excess of 6000 applications – that is 6000+ stories similar to that of Nelisiwe. We don't give blindly – the first thing we look at is academic promise. Only then do we read the letters that come with the application forms. Many times it brings a smile to my face when I hear my colleagues shout in pure delight: "thank heavens child, your marks are good enough!" Reading the letter first and then considering the academic record is disastrous – it is heartbreaking to have to say NO once the applicants' circumstances are known.

2010: 40 YEARS OF SERVICE

We wanted to celebrate the fact that we have been supporting learners for the past 40 years, and that we are still able to do so. We contemplated hosting a celebratory function to say thank you to our loyal donors, to acknowledge our bursars and alumni, and to elicit the support of new donors. We did not want to spend large sums of money, but we did want to make some kind of statement. We settled on producing our 2010 Annual Report in colour and we produced a 40th Anniversary Publication that gave insight into the foundation of the ASF. It brought back many memories for a number of loyal donors, as this excerpt from a letter received from one such longstanding donor indicates:

" Thanks for very good reports – especially the 1970 – 2010 one! I remember helping distribute the first lot of text books – under the Elsworth dining room table! .Enclosed cheque towards your good work..". Patricia W.

Congratulatory letters were also received from Premier Helen Zille; DA Councillor Owen Kinahan and the Minister for Education (Western Cape) Donald Grant.

Now for the next 40 years.....

Again, we are going to appeal to you to please DIG DEEP, as you are the lifeline that helps us pull these learners out of their DEPTHS OF DESPAIR.

Donations to the ASF fund are tax deductible.

Bank: STANDARD BANK
Account Name: AFRICAN SCHOLARS' FUND
Account Number: 071404104
Branch Number: 025009



JUNE EXAM RESULTS

This year we have 2527 bursars registered with the fund. 2361 (93%) Bursars sent us their June results of which 1419 (61%) qualified for their second payments. 942 Bursars did not receive their second payments because their marks were too low or because they failed to send their reports on time. Every effort is made to contact these bursars and they are encouraged to work harder in order to improve before sending their December results - they are furthermore invited to apply again for the following year. Besides the financial assistance, the fund distributes Advice Booklets to the grade 9 bursars (focussing on subject and career choice). The grade 12 bursars receive an information pamphlet giving advice on tertiary institutions and availability of bursaries towards further studies.

At FET level we are pleased to report a mid-year pass rate of 84%. To date bursaries had been awarded to 140 students, amounting to just over R538 000. The mid-year intake has more than doubled in comparison to last year where we had 68 students registered on our database. We offer two Student Support Workshops in March and October respectively, where the focus is on ensuring that the student is more prepared for the world of work on completion of his/her course of study.



SPECIAL AWARDS

The Mears Merit Award - presented to the learner, based in the Western Cape, with the best overall result in grade 10,. This year we presented to 1st and 2nd prize winners Eager Bays and Zaiboonisha Mackay (both from Spine Road High School in Mitchells Plain). The 3rd prize winner was Sadiqah Adams who hails from Manenberg High School. The cash prize, framed certificates and dictionaries were very well received.

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The Mary Livingstone Essay – This year 99 English essays were submitted from 46 schools. The adjudicators were disappointed with the quality of the work submitted and a decision was taken that no outright winner would be chosen. Instead, two highly commended prizes and two merit prizes were awarded. Thank you Ruth Allsopp and Adriana Holleman for your time and effort.

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The SA College of Tourism – two of our 2010 grade 12 learners received full scholarships to attend a 12 month course valued at close on R45 000. We are very proud of the fact that, at the time of writing this report, Sisanda Lamani and Nazeerah Pamplin are listed amongst the top 10 students at the college. Their conduct and dedication prompted an invitation for two further applicants from the ASF. This has

resulted in two of our current grade 12 bursars being given this opportunity in 2012.

SCHOOL VISITS

12 Local schools were visited during the course of the year. Letters from our bursars, inform us of the conditions under which they are expected to excel, but going into the field and experiencing it firsthand brings matters uncomfortably close to home. One can either get sucked into the despair, or come away feeling absolutely humbled realising that these youngsters will reach out, grab at and make the most of any lifeline that is offered. Full reports can be viewed on our website: www.asf.org.za

NEW APPLICATIONS – 2012

We carefully worked our way through some 6000+ applications. Adhering strictly to the criteria always presents a challenge – especially when reading the heart wrenching letters that accompany the applications. To date we have provisionally accepted approximately 2500 new applications and await the year end results before confirming whether or not they will receive an award for 2012.



THANK YOU

We have about 350 individual donors who keep this work alive. Every year they selflessly give to the ASF knowing that, on their behalf, we pass it on to those who are in need. Your generosity affords many the opportunity of facing the next day with dignity and a resolve to better their lives. Thank you – in these tough economic times, we beg you to continue giving. We cannot do this without you. Thank you too to our very generous corporate donors.

FNB provided funding for 20 FET students in the Eastern Cape. Ntolbehlubi Makaunja, an N5 Business Studies student was identified as one of their top 10 achievers and will be presented with a laptop and printer/copier/fax machine.

DG Murray Trust provided funding for 317 high school learners and 30 FET students in the Eastern Cape. Thank you also to the Trust for availing the funds to commission the development of a new database.

Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality again provided funding for FET students in their Metropole.

A large number of **our donors** continue to celebrate birthdays, anniversaries, batmitzvahs and barmitzvahs by requesting that family and friends make donations to ASF in lieu of gifts. We thank you all for your continued commitment and generosity.



BoE Private Clients Annual Golf Day resulted in a generous cash donation that will go towards learner support in 2012. Members also donated a number of



golf clubs and bags which will be distributed to the Western Province Development Squad. A huge thank you goes to Jan du Plessis for facilitating this thoughtful gesture.

UCT Baha'i Society has been around for many years and annually hosts a formal function where members meet to enjoy an evening of socialising outside of their busy academic schedule. This year, however, it was decided to enhance the purpose of the social event – the 1st Annual “UCT Baha'i Society Charity Formal” was launched. Proceeds were collected in honour of those Baha'i imprisoned in Iran for the act of educating women and children. The proceeds were donated to the ASF to provide scholarships to young students in the greater Cape Town area. We gratefully acknowledge the Care, the Commitment and the Sacrifice made by those who are incarcerated. We know that the letters written by the sponsored bursars will serve as a source of comfort.

“Thank you for giving us this platform – keep doing what you are doing” say our individual donors. “But is what you are doing enough, should you not be doing more?” ask our Corporate donors - FOOD FOR THOUGHT...

What is it that we do? We reach out to the poorest of the poor. We make just enough money available to allow them to contribute towards their school fund and acquire stationery and/or uniform.

Does this really make a difference, you may ask:
*“....parents can't afford everything I need for school. This term I will buy school bag, calculator, school jacket and school socks because I did not have them” writes Lorna M.
 “....they will not be able to pay for fees, books, transport, uniform and all other hidden cost in future. I feel encouraged and lucky to be one of the four pupils selected to be assisted and this has given me more motivation to study even harder and to better myself” writes Pasga.*

What happens to our learners when they complete high school? Unless the learner intends to study at a public FET college, we can no longer offer financial assistance. All our matriculants are given a synopsis of and the contact details for REAP (Rural Education Access Programme); NSFAS (National Student Financial Aid Scheme) and Study

Trust. Where possible, we identify and assist our grade 12's in applying for bursaries (i.e. The Yvonne Parfitt Trust) and scholarships (The SA College of Tourism). The grade 12 learners are also directed to the Bursary Register which is available at all institutions of higher learning and at public libraries.

Do we keep track of the learners after they leave school? This is an almost impossible task. Those that continue their studies are picked up by other organisations, and those that decide to immediately enter the world of work migrate to other towns / cities. We encourage our bursars to stay in touch and to give back to the organisation when they are in a position to do so.

Do bursars ever give back to the ASF? Yes, many of them do. However, we recognise that it may take a good number of years before they are able to do so. We understand the culture where those that become financially stable are expected to help immediate and extended family through school and further education before they can consider giving back to the ASF. We are working towards growing our alumni base and look forward to the day where the alumni make up the greater percentile of the donor base.

So, are we doing enough – or are we falling short? We ARE DOING what the ASF model has been premised on. We will continue to do so, because the need still exists for assistance at secondary level. There are a vast number of organisations that pick up matriculants who are ready to enter at tertiary level. There are a handful of organisations that assist learners at the level that they need to successfully pass through in order to gain access to the tertiary level. There is only one organisation that we are aware of, that works with learners in State schools; that keeps these learners in their local schools and communities and that continues to motivate and encourage them to work towards reaching their potential and becoming the role models that are so lacking in their communities. The ASF does this – we work at grassroots level and we make a difference to every learner that engages with us. More needs to be done to ensure holistic growth and development, but we do what we can and we stand in proud salutation of our bursars' remarkable achievements.

VOLUNTEERS

We have peak periods when the sheer volume of work becomes a mammoth task. Thank you Erika Targett and Wendy Kerby for continuing to cheerfully help with letters, reports, application forms, preparation of files, stamping of envelopes and anything else that needs to be done. You have become such an important part of our team and we are grateful for your continued commitment.

