

The Lost Children of Masiphumelele

The Township of Masiphumelele, located about 45 minutes south of Cape Town, South Africa, has an estimated population of between 35,000 and 40,000. The official governmental statistics proclaim that approximately 25% of these people are HIV+. However, those who work in this township believe that the actual figure is over 50% - and rising. While anti-retroviral (ARV) drugs are available, free of charge, from the provincial government, a small minority of those infected actually use the drugs. This is because there is such a negative stigma attached to admitting that you're HIV+ that they refuse to even be tested for HIV. They seem to be operating under the premise, as do many of us in the western world, that "what I don't know won't hurt me."

As a direct result of many years of this "turning a blind eye" to the problem and the disastrous consequences which this action (or rather inaction) has brought about there are now hundreds, maybe even thousands, of children in Masiphumelele who are at great risk. Many are HIV+ themselves and don't know it. Many more have been orphaned as both of their parents have succumbed to this terrible disease. And still many more are being deserted or abandoned or mistreated by parents who are too sick (or too addicted to drugs and/or alcohol) to look after them or sometimes even to care.

Currently there are few institutions set up to handle this steadily increasing problem. In fact there is only one orphanage located in or near Masiphumelele and this facility, which is called HOKISA (house for kids in South Africa), is designed only for older children, who live in dormitories, which can be dangerous places for kids. In addition it is over crowded and there is a waiting list to get in. Worst of all, in our opinion, is that this is not a Christian organization and therefore the children are not being taught the Word of God, which we believe is the only salvation for this potentially lost generation. There is no place for younger children. There is no safe place for children to escape abuse or abandonment. And there is no place where these children will hear the Word of God. The local, evangelical, Bible believing, churches are doing as much as they can given their limited resources and the difficulties their members face in simply surviving from day to day in this place. The reality is that the task is simply too large and too costly for them to have any real chance of having a significant impact.



After much prayer and consideration, we believe that God is leading us to step into this void and establish a Christian based home for young children. A place where they will be safe and loved and brought up in a God honoring way which will help break the vicious cycle of abuse, drugs, alcohol, sex, HIV, AIDS and death which has gripped this nation for far too long.

Being well aware of the necessity of involving the community from the very early stages of such an undertaking we have had several meetings with the Masiphumelele Pastor's Fraternal and have received their full support. They have told us individually and as a body that this is just the sort of thing that Masiphumelele needs. They have also let us know that many, if not all, of the workers necessary to run such a place could likely come from within their congregations as we are committed to having only Christian workers at the home.

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We are also aware that there are numerous governmental requirements regarding the establishment of a home for children and to that end we have had 2 meetings with the Western Cape Department of Social Services and have received their full support as well. They have told us that another orphanage in Masiphumelele would be welcome, especially one targeted at younger children. However, they have emphasized to us that there is an even greater need for a safe house for abused and abandoned children. While there are many similarities between an orphanage and a safe house there are also many differences. Is it possible to serve both needs at one location? We believe the answer is yes, but there is still much investigative work to be done.

Whether it's an orphanage or a safe house there is one thing which the Department of Social Services has made clear. When dealing with younger children it is much more desirable (in fact it is almost imperative) to have them live in small family type units since young children do not do well in dormitory situations. We have had to keep this in mind while searching for a suitable building.

There is still much work to be done before we can open our doors to the needy children of Masiphumelele and Ocean View. We do not even yet have in hand the official requirements from the Department of Social Services for the type of home we wish to create. Nevertheless, we have heard Gods call and are committed to making this dream a reality within the next twelve months.

While we have absolute faith that God can and will provide the necessary funds when they are needed, we also know that we have a responsibility to do our part in making our needs known wherever and whenever we get the opportunity. If you would like to become involved in this project or would like to get more information or would just like to be kept up to date as we proceed please let us know by getting in touch with Bill Eames at wre1312@gmail.com.

We are excited about what God is doing in the Cape Town area of South Africa and feel privileged and blessed to be used by Him in this challenging new way. We look forward to working along side you and many others as we endeavor to positively impact the lives of the children of Masiphumelele and Ocean View.