



**Mennonite
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Celebration Story

We invite you to share with your congregation the following story from Botswana, where Witness Workers Glyn Jones and Susan Allison-Jones are serving Africa-Initiated churches through activities such as bible classes and leadership development. The story should take no more than two minutes to read aloud. You might also wish to include it in your church newsletter.

–Deborah Froese, ParyerNet Coordinator

Education and hope for vulnerable children



In the neighbourhood of Old Naledi, unemployment rates are high, and children are vulnerable. Although government funded schools are intended to provide education for all children, neglected children, many from low or no income families, slip through the cracks.

Children who are not encouraged to attend classes often roam the streets instead. The Old Naledi Education Centre is helping to change that. Founded by Rev. Kassai of the United Evangelical Church in 1973, the centre began by gathering children from the

streets and feeding them breakfast – followed by a morning of teaching.

Buitumelo Phama, Headmistress, has worked at Old Naledi Education Centre since 1981. “Fees are small... we accept students for \$600 pula (about \$90 CDN) for the whole year,” she said. “We also organize sponsors for students from families who cannot pay, but if no one can pay and no sponsors can be found, then their education is free.” Today the school also helps older children who have dropped out of classes or have struggled to learn in public school.

Mennonites have had a long-standing relationship with the Centre. Rainham Mennonite Church in Selkirk, ON has sponsored a student for several consecutive years. In the summer of 2007, Susan Alison-Jones, an international worker in Gaborone supported by Mennonite Church Canada Witness and Mennonite Mission Network through Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission, facilitated a three month volunteer term at the Centre for Monica Shank of Valleyview Mennonite Church in London, ON. This prompted an extended family member of the Shank’s to organize a Christmas fundraiser potluck for the school in December of 2007. It raised \$1000.

“Monica came and organized assemblies and told the children about the word of God. Mennonite ministries helped us very much,” said Phama. “Please pray for us so that the school will not be closed, so we can continue to collect vulnerable children from the street, and for the teachers who earn little money every month, that they can continue to be hopeful.”

Praise God for the caring nurture provided by Old Naledi Education Centre and the people who help support it!

“For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ.” 1 Cor. 3:11