

Dear friends of the Foundation House of Encouragement

While we experienced very hot summer weeks after a wet and cold spring and early summer, the children in the township of Soshanguve suffered through one of the coldest winters on record. The winter season in South Africa is short and, especially in the Soshanguve area, dry and sunny, so it warms up to a pleasant 15 degrees during the day. This year, temperatures dropped to minus 3 degrees and it was freezing cold in the shacks or the small houses without properly closing windows and doors. Some of the children in our centre had no warm jackets and used the blankets they slept with at night in the mornings and evenings.

Four siblings, aged six to eleven, have newly come to the center. They were recently taken in by their grandparents after the death of their parents. Only the grandmother has a part-time job as a domestic helper. There is no money for warm clothes or firewood. The grandfather walks a long way every day to collect wood. In the morning, he starts a fire to heat water for washing and in the evening, he lights a fire again for the children to warm up before going to bed. The children love it because they can often hear interesting stories about the old days from their grandfather by the fire.



Amogelang, Mmaphefo and Lesedi with grandfather Maluleka. Tshupo had just gone shopping with the grandmother when our centre manager dropped by.

At the centre, all the children drink lots of hot tea to warm themselves up. In smaller groups, the caregivers activate the freezing children outside with games or sit inside around a gas heater and do reading and language exercises.



It was probably also a little colder for the young adults on the year-long IRM (Installation, Repair and Maintenance) course. This was especially true for the group with the four young ladies who moved from a small workshop to a plumbing company where they now spend more time working outdoors on construction sites.



In this hosting company, the learners were not only familiarised with course related work. In addition to gather experience on various cutting and bending machines, they e.g. also learnt how to weld. They made the steel bench and the grill grates (photo) themselves. The leather and fabric bags are also their own creations, starting from drawing the pattern to sewing with industrial machines. There are once again 30 young people on the current IRM training programme. The apprentices have a very good relationship with each other and support and motivate each other.

Warm regards,

Walter und Estelle Bosshard

Bubikon/Soshanguve 28 August 2024