

GOOD START TRUST INTERIM REPORT

April 2021



SUMMARY

1. **Covid 19:** The 2021 school year started 3 weeks later than expected on 25 January, with learners only returning to school on 15 February, due to Government Covid regulations, and changing the organisation of school terms. To date, government schools continue this year to have only half sized classes attending each day, to ensure social distancing.
2. **The Breakfast Club** has continued to operate adhering to **Covid appropriate Health and Safety protocols** at two inner city schools: Good Hope Seminary Junior School and St Mary's Primary School. **A Memorandum of Agreement**, drawn up under the guidance of Michael Bagraim, Labour Lawyer, will clarify terms of employment of those helpers paid by The Breakfast Club.
3. We are very grateful that **The Smart Club** has been able to start up again at both the above schools, due to a welcome injection of funding.
4. **Our accounts are in the process of being audited again pro bono by L Rubin and Company**, for which we are deeply thankful.
5. Our application to be granted Non Profit Organisation (NPO) status was resubmitted in February 2021, and we have had official confirmation that it is being considered.
6. We are delighted by **the revamp of our website**, www.goodstart.org.za. Social Happiness Media Design Ltd, will continue to maintain and develop the website.

A. Finances

Both the Breakfast Club and Smart Club bank balances were sufficiently healthy in January 2021, to allow us confidence that we could provide support in both capacities to both schools for most of 2021, although Breakfast Club funding is healthier than that of the Smart Club. Generous donations from a variety of sources, including charitable Foundation focusing on educational projects, and private individuals from within South Africa, from Switzerland and the UK, have allowed us to approach the year with confidence. THANK YOU.

Paula Cohen continues to oversee our financial records, and to give invaluable advice. THANK YOU, Paula.

On 28 February, Pascal Shaani of L Rubin and Co came to oversee Breakfast Club stock takes and petty cash counts at both schools. The audit of our finances will be completed within the next month or two. THANK YOU for this service to The Good Start Trust.

THE BREAKFAST CLUB



Memorandum of Agreement (MOA):

The need for a simple MOA has become evident over the past year, to ensure clarity that payment of and leave allowed to helpers solely working at The Breakfast Club is fully within the South African labour law. In the newly formulated MOA, rate of pay is seen to far exceed that laid down as the National Minimum Wage, and leave conditions are in agreement with those of Section 22 of the Basic Employment Conditions Act 1997.

Helpers employed by the schools, but also, in agreement with the school, working for The Breakfast Club for 1 or 2 hours per day, continue to be paid by the Trust at the same rate of pay as those employees working solely for the Breakfast Club, but are otherwise seen as being in contract with the school itself.

Trustees have passed the newly formulated MOA which will be signed by all employees at the beginning of May, as Term 2 begins.

1. Good Hope Seminary Junior School:

Donations of milk and fruit have been very welcome. Donors range from a generous fruit farmer, to a local young mother who gives in appreciation of the fact that her family does not suffer hardship, to a Lenten donation of over 100 litres from St Cyprian's School. We sincerely thank all donors.

The Team:

Patricia Bagraim, who has been a vital organiser of the Breakfast Club since its inception in 2016, unfortunately contracted Covid 19 during the December holidays, causing her to be hospitalised for a short while. No sooner had she started her full recovery, when she fell accidentally, breaking her ankle badly, resulting in major and complex surgery. She will unfortunately be unable to supervise Breakfast Club at the school for some time, but continues to be actively involved from home as much as she can. Fortunately, **Petra Sieblist**, her assistant, could immediately take over as Supervisor and is coping extremely competently. We are hoping that Petra's renewed South African Visa will allow her to stay with us for another two years.

Marlene Murray's husband sadly passed away in February after a long period of ill health. Our condolences are with her and her family.

The team has continued to work efficiently and smoothly. Our special respect goes to **Linda Hosking**, who recovered from major surgery over the Christmas break, but does not miss a single morning of cheerful service on the Breakfast Club team.

Two or three volunteers each help at least one morning a week, to lighten the load.

Operations at the School:

- Mr Cicilie, the principal who arrived at the school in January 2020, not expecting to weather the Covid storm, has been unreservedly encouraging and supportive of the Breakfast Club. We would also not have experienced such a smooth run without the active assistance of a Gr 7 Educator, Ms Joy Stephens.
- Half size classes, attending alternate days of the week, have meant that only half the school's learners are offered breakfast each day. Our records of numbers eating each day indicate that an average of close to 250 learners in the school are eating our e'Pap and fruit breakfasts.
- As half the learners were at home every second day without the opportunity to eat e'Pap there, Trustees made the decision in March that one sachet per learner should be offered to take for use at home once a month for those mornings when not at school. One sachet (500 g) should make sufficient breakfasts to last 10-15 days, depending on the age of the child. On 1 April, 218 sachets were handed out to those who wished to take food home, and there were many, many grateful learners at Good Hope that day.

2. St Mary's Primary School:

Welcome **Donations** of milk and also fruit have come from parents themselves, from funding collected by the St Vincent de Paul Society at St Mary's Cathedral, as well as from generous individuals.

The Team:

Aletta Ashmore continues to supervise the team, ably assisted by Gaby Menegaldo. The team of ladies paid stipends has been assisted by two or three volunteers who also now each come in once a week. Their help and cheerful chat is much appreciated.

Operations at the School:

- Ms Sellar, Principal, and her staff, could not be more accommodating or appreciative of The Breakfast Club team. Three of the St Mary's assistants work for Breakfast Club for 1 hour a day, and are paid a commensurate stipend, making operations slick and smooth.

- At St Mary's School, a smaller school than Good Hope Seminary Junior School, the half-sized classes alternate attendance one week at a time. Our records indicate that an average of at least 155 learners have been eating breakfast on a regular basis.
- When free sachets were handed out in late March for use for the weeks at home when no school breakfast would be available, 203 sachets were handed out. Parents and learners have expressed gratitude. More free e'pap sachets will be handed out to tide the learners over during the term end holiday break.

THE SMART CLUB



All learners suffered a huge deprivation in their education in 2020, but none as severely as the youngest who could not access on-line learning even if there was technology at home to facilitate this. Many parents felt unable to home school. Huge gaps in learning of course developed in those unable to catch up without professional help, and natural developmental progress seemed to slow without the stimulus of teaching of those who have been trained.

In addition, underlying anxieties within families generated by low income, unemployment, and crowded living spaces among other factors, caused deep unsettlement in young children who could and cannot voice their feelings and frustrations.

As a result, we were very anxious to boost learning support within our schools as quickly as possible. Principals at both schools have been deeply appreciative of the learning support offered by The Smart Club. We are thankful that despite the practical hurdles presented by a delayed school year, half size classes, irregular attendance and children having become unused to the disciplined routine of learning, the following has already been set up:

1. Brain Gym, Gross and Fine Motor-coordination Skills for Gr R – 2

Helmien Jonker is a retired Occupational Therapist who started to work in October 2020 with St Mary's Grade R's and 1's to boost their gross as well as fine motor co-ordination skills, and to introduce them to Brain Gym to sharpen mental processes. She is now working with Gr R, 1 and 2 at St Mary's. Understandably, educators have been delighted and have noted great progress among learners. We plan that she will start work with Gr R in Good Hope Seminary Junior School in May after Term 2 starts.

2. Youth Counselling:

We were delighted when **Grace Immelman**, a qualified, registered Youth Counsellor and Foundation Phase Educator moved back to Cape Town. Grace is well known at Good Hope Seminary Junior School, and could take up this role easily as Amy Haworth (Counsellor at Good Hope in 2020, also a Trustee) had been given the full time position as Learning Support Educator for the Western cape Education Department working at St Mary's and Good Hope. She has already spoken with parents, with educators, and has set up counselling sessions to start as soon as the Term 1 classroom assessments have been completed. She will at present work for 6 hours a week, although additional funding will enable us to pay her for more hours.

3. Provision of Ritalin

The provision of Ritalin by the District Six Clinic has been adversely affected by the immense pressure on that clinic caused by Covid testing. However, Smart Club is able to obtain the medication required for a small number of learners whose parents cannot afford to pay. A dispensing and monitoring system has been set up at Good Hope, with parental and educator signed permissions.

4. Liaison with Schools Based Support Teams

The Smart Club works in co-operation with the Western Cape Education Department SBST's, with Adrienne Millner, former Principal, and Aletta Ashmore attending SBST meetings at St Mary's and Good Hope respectively. Discussion with the Learning Support Educator and class educators will lead to a conclusion as to whether, and how, The Smart Club could assist in supporting Learners who struggle in the classroom.

To date, it has come to light that we could immediately support in the following areas:

- Hearing screening at Mary Kihn School for the Hearing Impaired for learners who present with specific speech difficulties, to rule out the possible effect of hearing impairment. This service is free of charge. Two Gr 1 learners who do not speak will have their hearing screened in May as an initial step in investigation.
- Vision acuity tests: here we refer learners to the manager of Shine at Good Hope as she has a contact for free eye tests and reduced-price spectacles. Four young learners have been helped.
- Speech Therapy for 4 learners, 2 at each school, who present with quite severe speech problems which inhibit their ability to communicate verbally, affecting their social and linguistic development.
- Occupational Therapy assessments and one-to-one treatment for several Gr 1 and 2 learners at both schools who have more severe co-ordination or sensory difficulties.
- Educational Psychology assessments for initially 4 learners are being arranged.
- Potential Paediatric Neurology assessments for two young learners can be arranged.

We intend to embark on this support as our funding allows. There is abundant evidence that the Smart Club's services are desperately needed. On our wish list is the provision of a trained Teacher of English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), to support learners who come to the schools with very little English, either because they have recently moved from an area like the Eastern Cape where isiXhosa is the lingua franca, or perhaps because they have come into Gr R or 1 from a crèche in Khayelitsha, or have recently come to South Africa from another country, having heard and learnt very little English to date.

Signed:



On behalf
Date: 20 April 2021

of the Trustees, THE GOOD START TRUST

TRUSTEES, The Good Start Trust
Aletta Ashmore
Amy Hayworth
Adrienne Millner
Esmerelda Phillips