

# JULY 2010 NEWSLETTER



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Dear Rally Supporter

### 43 000 children now have hope for the future!

By the time this newsletter reaches your inbox the 2010 Rally to Read is just a fond (albeit distant) memory, the 2010 Soccer World Cup is something of the past, and we are all settling back into our old routines. But, at 135 schools, 43 220 learners and 1 418 teachers will never be the same again. For they have been touched by the Rally to Read!

This year was a bumper year for the programme and we are extremely grateful to all our partners and sponsors for making it such a special event. The final sponsorship amount of over R6.27-m exceeded our wildest expectations – thank you for your amazing support!

We have already started working on the 2011 Rally to Read and hope that you will join us again next year to disperse hope at some of the most remote and needy schools in our beautiful country.

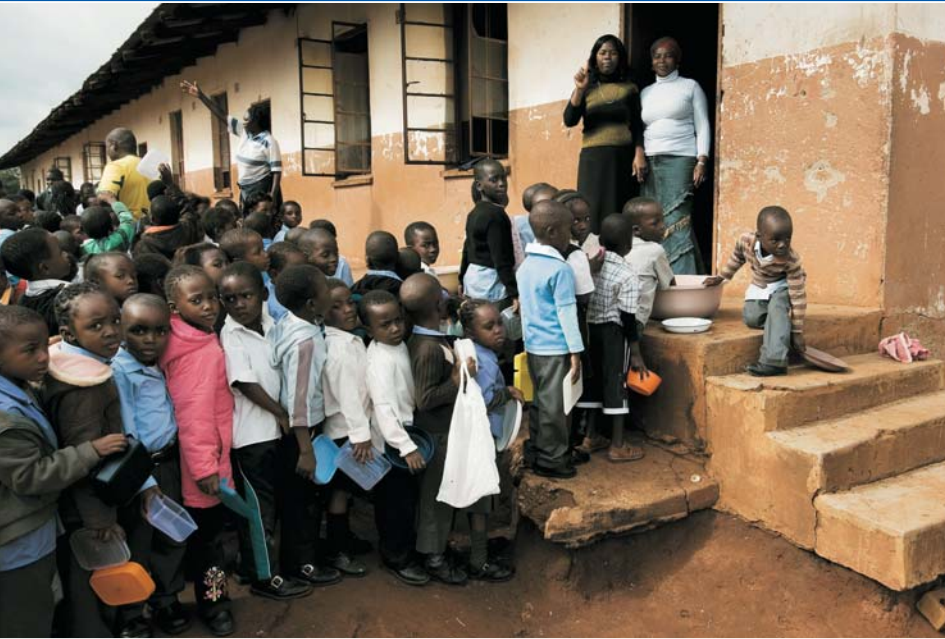
Best Rally wishes, until next time!

Kind regards

**Iris Francis**

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# SOME FEEDBACK FROM RALLY 2010 PARTICIPANTS



The Rally to Read touches everyone. We share extracts from some of the feedback we received from 2010 participants.

## 'My eyes were sore with happy tears'

**Taryn Muller** writes, "A huge thank you for such an amazing weekend – my eyes were sore from happy tears!"

"I cannot put in words the enormous spiritual experience of this weekend. Apart from an extremely comfortable hotel bed, phenomenal food, gorgeous scenery and the gracious company of passionate and inspiring people, my family and I are so grateful to have been invited and be made part of a meaningful, productive and emotional rally and see progress, education and happy smiley little faces.

"Pieter and I would very much like to become a permanent part of this Rally for years to come. Ngiyabonga!"

## 'It was undeniably life changing'

**Natasha Menon** of Standard Bank writes, "Rally to Read has most definitely been an experience I will cherish all my life. Not only was I humbled by the experience, but I felt privileged to be chosen to attend, as it was undeniably life changing..."

"Sometimes you need to be taken out of your comfort zone before you really take notice of the world around you. We tend to blunt our senses as we navigate everyday routes, limiting our interaction with those less fortunate souls to occasional eye contact.

"The Rally to Read gives you the opportunity to explore beyond the urban edge and experience what a life of simplicity is all about."

## 'People here are already reserving their place for next year'

**Simone Eiman** of Green Hands writes, "I had six new 'Ralliers' with me this year, and they cannot stop talking about it. People here at the office are already reserving their places for next year.

"The Rally to Read has allowed me to help others shine – these children are the future of our country and if we leave their lights dimmed, this country will fade into darkness."

## Other comments

"It was a life altering experience for me." – David Irish, Global Warming

"The experience was truly amazing!" – Warwick Brooker, FNB Commercial

"You really outdid yourselves with the arrangements and the team leaders were great." – Lizelle Langford, READ

"This project just pulls at my heart... the PEOPLE, the FOOD, the camaraderie, the setting, velvet skies scattered with diamonds at night, fresh air... it was a blessing to be part of it! – Cheryl Kirsten

# THULONG GETS HIS LIFE-CHANGING OPERATION



*Theresa Nel and Charmaine Petersen, both of Budget Car and Van Rental, visit Thulong in hospital. Budget has been Thulong's transport sponsor on his visits to the Cape.*

At almost every Rally partner school, one can identify worthy causes that need additional attention, but the story of a Northern Cape learner nicknamed Thulong is particularly heart-wrenching.

Louise Wessels, CSI Manager for Idwala Lime in Danielskuil, Northern Cape, reported in the April 2009 issue of the Rally to Read newsletter: "We identified Gamorona School as one of the neediest schools, as their buildings were in a poor condition, the roof leaked (causing terrible damage), they had no running water – the list went on and on."

The Idwala Lime team took this school under its wing and started visiting regularly. On one such visit they came across Khumoetsile Matlholo, Thulong for short. "He was born with a severely deformed face. He had no nose – only open cavities – and he had a large lump on his head," says Louise.

The Idwala Lime team just had to help, so Louise started to network with some of her medical contacts in Johannesburg and also contacted the SMILE Foundation. And so the process started.

In May 2009, Thulong and his mother Susan made a life-changing trip to Tygerberg Hospital in Cape Town. The specialist medical team there were willing to evaluate Thulong for possible re-constructive surgery to his face and skull.

Almost a year later Thulong made his second trip to Cape Town – this time for his operation!

Louise says, "According to the Professor the operation went well and Thulong is doing fine, although the medical team is concerned about his right eye."

*Thulong still has a long road to recovery ahead of him but, as a result of the kindness and compassion of a whole team of caring people, he has already taken the first few steps. We will keep you updated on his progress. – Ed.*

# BUCKET BOYS...



The Rally to Read serves as inspiration on many levels. 2010 Rally participant Steven Butler was inspired to write this poem about two brothers who, each day (including Rally day!), have to cross a river to get to school. They strip off their uniforms and carry them over in buckets – hence, the title. We publish an extract of the poem.

*Well before dawn...  
Prior to the sun  
Blessing the darkness with light...  
Two brothers  
Prepare for their daily journey...*

*After their morning porridge...  
They bid farewell to their mother  
Who sends them off with kisses  
Filled with pride and love  
As they individually give  
An appreciative nod  
To the father  
Who has excused them  
From their normal  
Saturday chores...*

*By the door  
Is a "bucket of purpose"  
Bearing their names...*

*An hour into their travels  
They approach the river's edge  
Then begin to disrobe  
As they do each morning  
At this juncture...*

*They carefully fold  
The school uniforms  
Obtained at great sacrifice!  
Yet considered an investment  
By their parents...  
Their prized attire  
Placed neatly in the bucket...  
Safe and secure  
In the pail...  
Then carefully balanced  
Upon their heads  
As they "make a game"  
Of jumping from rock to rock  
Which eventually subsides...  
For they soon  
Must wade waist deep  
In the water  
Before reaching the other side...*

*Five additional kilometres  
Do not weary  
Their excited feet!  
On today "outsiders"...  
Fellow South Africans (!)  
Have come from nearby provinces...  
Their vehicles adorned by banners*

*That make their mission  
Very clear...  
"Rally to Read"!*

*HOPE is the theme  
For the occasion...  
For the givers  
And receivers alike!  
All are blessed on this day!  
Especially the "bucket boys"...  
Who return home  
With their pails filled...  
And their hearts and minds encouraged!*

*"Bucket Boys"  
Today...  
Leaders of the motherland...  
Tomorrow!  
What a most wonderful day  
It has been!  
Eager minds now freed  
From the restrictions  
Of not "having"...  
Giving all of Africa...  
A brighter future!*