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Sunday, 23 August 2020

Dear friends,

*"More than 20 years ago, in 1999, a group of mothers asked the Salesian Sister Mary Hughes to help them look after their small children. She didn't hesitate and started a small development project for women and a creche for a handful of children. The seed for a project of love to help children thrive in a world of hunger, social tension, and hopelessness."*

*This is my introduction to our project description. I have attached a copy for you to read or maybe distribute to kind people who might want to help.*

*Last year we celebrated the 80<sup>th</sup> birthday of Sister Mary, and many wished her well. A day of happiness and so much fun to see the excitement of the children. They always love to perform. And how did they enjoy their ice creams!*

*Many friends who supported Lerato for all these years came, and it was good to see you all. On that day, the world was very different, and we didn't know what was going to hit us. When the Covid-19 epidemic arrived, nobody was prepared for the impact it had on our daily lives.*

*Overall donations for Lerato dropped, and we didn't receive any school fees. Unfortunately, we experienced a drop in income of more than 50%. A BIG thanks to those of you who continued to support us during these difficult last months. Without your help, we would have followed many others who had to file for bankruptcy.*

*Yes, the Eikenhof community is suffering. We see many people hungry. And of the few who had a job, most of them lost their income during the lock-down period. Worse even, that 70% of the Jacksonsdrift residents are from a migration background and have no access to government subsidies.*

*Initially, we were not even permitted to run a feeding scheme. But, when we were allowed to hand out food again, many people came on board helping with food donations and distributions. Thanks! We are still running a feeding scheme for children and adults.*



*School started with the expected difficulties. Regulations must be followed, cleaning materials and personal protection equipment had to be bought. When the inspector came, all was in order. By now, most of our school children are back in the classroom.*

*We will design an outdoor program with play and meals for our creche children to ensure that the little ones are safe and not starving.*

*We recommend our teachers for doing an excellent job. The kids are as good as gold.*

*So, what's next?*

***These are our priorities for the rest of the year:***

- *Get the school back to normal.*
- *Provide a place of safety, play, learning and food for our creche children*
- *Continue the soup kitchen for nearly 1000 members of the community.*
- *Support the children in the soccer and netball team. These are nearly 80 kids who practice every afternoon and attend tournaments on weekends. They love it. Allowing them to do sports keeps of them of the street.*
- *Restart the homework support program for about 60 children to improve their marks and matric results.*

***How can you help us?***

*I already mentioned that our financial situation is very insecure. In the past, I never had to ask for money so directly, but if we don't receive more donations, we will struggle to pay for salaries and food.*

- *Please help us with a donation.*
- *Find people who come on board and donate.*
- *Find out if your company may be able to sponsor Lerato*
- *Ask your overseas family and friends if they could help.*

*We are authorised to issue Section 18A certificates for SARS tax reduction*

*We also need the following:*

- *Non-perishable food items*
- *Clothing, shoes and blankets*

*Lerato has been a beacon of light for these kids and their families for over 20 years. We helped over 4000 children to build a better future and distribute more than 30000 meals a month. This has to continue!*

*We pray that we can continue to bring smiles to many more children.*

*Regards*

*Bruno Pauly, Chairperson*



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Please, use 'Your Name' as reference and send a request for a Section 18A certificate to [bpaul@lantic.net](mailto:bpaul@lantic.net)