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Mpumulannga

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Principal: Ms Shirley Parsons

The name Dasha Foundation is the over-all name in which all business is conducted according to the Constitution approved by the Department of Trade and Industry and the Department of Health, Welfare and Social Services.

At present the Foundation has three Facilities:

1. Stimulation Centre for seriously Disabled Children
2. An educational School for Children who can receive teaching according to their abilities
3. A Protective Workshop to which children from the school, and other adults go, to receive skills training and produce saleable goods.

BEGINNINGS

The School opened in 1995 with three children and one teacher. The numbers soon doubled. It was named DASHA School by the founder—'Dasha' meaning God's Gift. Due to accommodation difficulties the Centre and School amalgamated in 2003 and our house was purchased at the current address. The Centre began in 1993 under the name Lowveld Centre for Disabled Children and catered for two children. The Workshop was started in 2004 with children who 'graduated' from school and others from outside who were too old for school. We have recently purchased the house next door as space has become a problem and a waiting list together with additional services must be met. A longer term Development programme is in place which would enable us to have larger grounds, and provide additional facilities. The Foundation operates according to the Public School Calendar Year; and is open from 08h00—13h00 Monday to Friday followed by an afternoon care facility until 17h00.

CENTRE

Exercising and other activities are undertaken according to each child's abilities. Regular visits by Occupational, Physio Therapists, and Oral Hygienists take place. Interac-



tion, and day-to-day skills are taught and practiced, such as feeding themselves, drawing, music, qualified instructors assist with swimming.



SCHOOL

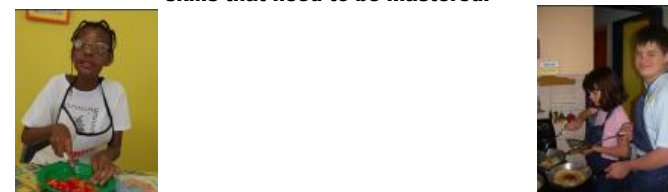
Regular school subjects are taught—reading, writing, and arithmetic, with each child working at their own level, in their own workbook. He/she follows a programme with specific goals according to their individual ability. This enables them to receive much individual attention. Basic relationships, outdoor activities and skills are dealt with. Pottery and art work are favourites, as well as the making of hand-made paper. Swimming and other sports are encouraged with regular visits to gymnasiums. Several take part in galas and have done very well. Some children do equestrian training regularly and this improves their self image as well as posture and physical fitness.



LIFE-

SKILLS

Children are taught how to behave in public as well as how to relate to one another and to others. We teach through game and group interaction. Children are also expected to fulfill certain duties in the kitchen and dining room. Washing and drying of dishes, setting tables, making sandwiches and baking cookies are life skills that need to be mastered.



WORKSHOP

Natural skills are developed such as knitting, sewing, bead and art work. They are involved in papermaking, cards, fabric painting, candle-making, needlework, and pottery. Good quality products are sold as opportunities arise. Several outside jobs have been undertaken successfully which bring in some finance.



ACTIVITIES

Mornings begin with a time of devotion, bible story, prayer and singing, with each child then moving on to their particular sphere of work. Part of the timetable is also to assist with cooking, washing of laundry and helping in the Centre.

EXTRA MURAL

- * Music Therapy
- * Music and Dance Groups
- * Concert—participation, assisting with décor and costumes
- * Gym—Weekly trips to Body Quest with trained Instructors
- * Horse Riding and Equine Therapy done weekly
- * Swimming (training by a qualified coach is offered if child has the ability to achieve in this field)

OUTSIDE VISITS

Chimp Eden, Bird Rehabilitation Centre, Reptile Park, the Kruger National Park, African Silk Farm, Tshukudu have been visited.



These are arranged by segments of the community or interested volunteers. A high-

light in 2008 was for a small group who spent a week at Sodwana which included a boat trip where dolphins were spotted; snorkeling in rock pools observing underwater life and climbing sand dunes were the order of the day.



FUNDING

In spite of Fees being paid, and a subsidy from Department of Social Services, running costs are not covered by these, so Fund Raising has to take place and donations are solicited from businesses and individuals.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- *Sponsoring a particular child by providing a monthly amount for that child.
- * Making monthly contribution to assist in covering general expenses
- * Visiting the School and providing love and care for the children
- * Volunteer of your time and assist with various activities, or teach new skills
- * Supporting the Development Fund so that the School can ultimately have premises where 24 hour care can be provided
- * Assisting in Fund Raising efforts
- * Pray for the Children and Staff on a regular basis
- * Assist by supplying much needed materials
- * Are there any tasks in your company with which they can assist?



PERSONNEL

Principal
Secretary
Educator
Educator
Centre Mother
Workshop Supervisor
Workshop Assistant
Cleaner/Kitchen
Cleaner/Assistant
Teacher Autistic class
Assistant Autistic class

Ms S J Parsons
Mrs M Mattheus
Mrs C Middel-Bovee
Mrs P Nyoni
Ms P D Ginindza
Ms P Hlatshwayo
Ms I Nkosi
Ms Z Mahlangu
Ms T Maseko
Ms S Samuti
Ms L Ngobe

Committee

Chairperson
Vice Chair
Treasurer
Secretary

Mrs M Breet
Mrs R du Preez
Rev J Parsons
Mrs C Middel-Bovee

