

Dear Friends

It has been a long time since we have written and so much has happened that I'm not even sure where to start. I looked back at our last letter we sent out around August last year and marvelled at just how far God has brought us – so I'll give the biggest pieces of news piece by piece.



The move.... We moved!! We arrived in our new house at the beginning of November and we have been so so grateful. We have loved our new house, flaws and all. It definitely needs a paint job, and four / five months down the line we still don't have many pictures on the wall, but it is definitely home. The kids have loved the space and the swimming pool which gets used most days. I've loved the garden even though it has been a huge amount of work. Tim has been hard at work getting the pool clear, sorting out the pond and getting the jungle gym up among many other things. It's a beautiful space and we pray that it will be a blessing to all who come visit or stay.



The growing family part one... So in September, we met a little boy (Simelokuhle... we call him Sime) that we knew was meant to be with us. He was thirteen months old at the time and needed a lot of medical care and TLC. We understood that he would be placed with us in November, but it was not to be. Seems that the Social Work system had different priorities and so we have waited. We have good reason to hope that it will now happen in this next month. In the meantime, we have visited him often, taken over his medical care and been so grateful to his place of safety who have helped him thrive. Jesse prays every night for his little brother to come home.

The growing family part two... On the fourth of February, this year we received a phone call asking if we could take in an emergency placement of an eleven-year-old girl. And so Casey arrived in our home. After a harrowing court appearance the next day, she was officially placed with us for three months. She has added a level of joy and noise to our house like you cannot believe. While her back-story is heart breaking – she has been incredibly brave and grateful to be safe. Our other three children have been amazingly adaptable and been incredibly gracious including her in our space. We suspect this may become a longer placement – but we leave that in God's hands for now.



The growing family part three! And to make matters slightly more exciting, we took in two three-year-old labbies – Obi and Amia (Obi means heart and Amia means beloved). Amia (Ami) was a gift for Jesse's fifth birthday and he is so chuffed – best present ever. We are going to be training them up to be emotional support dogs to help our children with trauma. Already they are so loved although very naughty!!



The NPO – We have gotten our bank account and can now receive donations! Erudite, our overarching body has done all the work needed and we are excited to share that with you now. Our expenses are a little scary as you can imagine – but God has been faithful and is slowly showing us how he provides day by day. We would love some monthly partners, and if you feel that God is leading you in that direction - all the info is included in the bottom of this letter.

Training – Again, we desperately need the tools to be able to do this work well. We have enrolled in a once-a-week training course running from March to May for working with traumatised children.

The Church – Strubensvalley United has been a blessing. We were closed for lockdown, we opened in October, closed for Christmas and opened on Valentines day once again. We are slowly getting to know the folk and have

been very warmly received. It has been lovely to finally put faces to names and voices. We are in the process of establishing a pastoral care team and will be working on the Sunday School early next term. I'm officially being inducted (finally!!) on the 21st of March at 2pm.

Otherwise 😊 ... Tim is doing well. He continues to enjoy teaching at Christ Church in Midrand, and we are so grateful to them for helping Tshepi attend. Tshepi is doing well – got through Grade 4 and has settled into Grade 5 with lots of friends. She can't wait to start netball after half term. We are so proud of her as we have passed the first year milestone of her being with us. She has grown and changed and adapted and is healing – and we're very grateful for where we are on the journey with her. Christine continues with home-schooling, Grade 2 this year. She still loves her art and spends hours in imaginary lands – a real creative spirit. Jesse is our delight, full of stories and nonsense. He loves animals and lion guard and paw patrol and just loves his Ami and his hamster Otty. He most of all can't wait to have another little boy in the house, now having three older sisters!

Thank you for journeying with us! Please drop us a line to let us know how you are doing and if you are ever near the West Rand – come by for tea!

Love you all.

Tim, Jackie and the ever-growing clan at Omphile House



Requests:

- 1) Our biggest need right now is a seven seater (or bigger) vehicle. With six of us now, soon to be seven, we cannot travel anywhere in one car. This adds to our petrol bill and can make things very tricky. It is also a safety concern once Sime arrives – if I or Tim are alone with the kids and need to get somewhere fast, we cannot simply load them up in a car and go.
We are starting to write to companies requesting assistance – but if you have any contacts we can try in this regard please be in touch with us!
- 2) We are also on the hunt for another bunkbed – single on top and double at the bottom. These generally cost thousands of Rands and that is just beyond us. If you ever see a second hand one going for R1000 or under please let us know!
- 3) Financial help is always welcome. We have had increased expenses with Casey, setting her up with school, larger grocery bills and the like. We are also helping pay for Sime's formula and are travelling lots to get him to medical appointments etc. This coupled with a larger house, greater electricity and water bills. Donations are tax-deductible and, under Erudite, we will be monitored and audited. Our details are below – please contact us if you have any questions.
- 4) **PRAYER** – we cannot do this alone. This work is amazing and scary all at the same time. God is doing incredible things and we are so grateful. We need daily wisdom, patience and trust. Please pray for our two new fosters – Casey has a long road of healing ahead and the future is still so uncertain. Sime we just long to have in our care – please pray he comes home soon.
And please continue to pray for Christine, Jesse and Tshepi as they adapt and form part of the healing team for each other and our two new children.

Banking details:

Omphile House
Fnb
Acc: 62876260169
Branch code: 250655
PBO number: 930053024

PS: While you are welcome to send this on as an email to trusted friends – please do not post any of our children's info or photos on social media platforms – Thank you!