

## ***NEWS FLASH.....***

### **PRETORIA-TSHWANE CLUB**

*An update on what's happening and what's on in our club and region*

*Issue 5*

*Spring 2020*

*From the editorial team.....*

In these unusual times of lockdown and even isolation for some, the activities of our SI Pretoria-Tshwane club have not come to a stand-still. The huge problems of many of our fellow South Africans – with food, shelter and keeping warm in an exceptionally cold winter – have given us an even greater sense of purpose.

Apart from our involvement at the school where our member, Jane Tsharane, is principal, such as donating oranges for the children on their first day back at school and sanitiser for the school, we have been active in a number of other areas you can read more about in this issue of our newsletter.

Our virtual club meetings via Zoom have been fun and a great learning experience. We are proud of the fact that we could manage new technology so quickly and that the meetings could run (more or less!) smoothly. In a time when one could easily feel lonely and isolated it was great to see and communicate with fellow club members.

We hope to see all our members in person at the Courtyard Hotel for our November meeting, which is normally the last one of the year, where we will wish each other a good Festive Season and exchange small gifts. But in the meantime, please still keep well and stay safe!

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#### **COVID 10: The Great Game Changer**

*Staying together during the Covid-pandemic*

When the full impact of the COVID-19 pandemic hit, we decided to strengthen our sisterly ties. The result was a composite picture of our members carrying the message **Distance makes us stronger**.

Great fun was had by all and this is now our profile photo.



## A special Covid-19 fund

We created a special Covid-19 fund to support ad hoc needs and to help people cope with all the challenges created by the pandemic.

With this fund we provided support at the Sefako Makgatho school. When the learners of the different grades returned to school, each one received an orange from SI Pretoria-Tshwane.



## Sefako Makgatho school

Jane Tsharane's school, Sefako Makgatho was, and still is, a shining light in this difficult time. Jane is the principal and a very involved member of our club.

Gawa Pritchard also bought and delivered bottles and bottles of Jik to ensure that the learners are safe.

Ethne Davey harnessed her expertise to connect the water tanks so that the school can have running water for washing hands. On 1 July when learners started going back to school, the school was ready to face the pandemic.

A maths game called, *Catch you*, was donated to Sefako Makgatho Primary School. The two VIP interns were also present. Both the learners and the VIP interns were given a short introduction to the game so they would be able to play it with other learners. We hope that this game will improve math skills at the school.



## Playing the Game



From left to right: Ndiu Seyani-Mpofu, the VIP project leader, the two VIP interns Koketso Chepape and Andile Zwane and Jose Vermeij who donated the game

## Sefako Makgatho Primary school in Atteridgeville ready to start school after lockdown.



markings on the pavement



buckets ready for use



2 Jojo tanks are connected



recycling brings in money



soapy water to wash hands



each classroom own bucket



COVID19 instructions in sight



social distancing



instructions on all levels



2 masks each to use all day



food brought to the class



eating lunch in the classroom



curriculum on the tables  
half of the chairs in use



tables at fixed distance  
chairs at 1,5 m



each child own desinfected toys  
cereal boxes to store books



2 isolation rooms for learners  
with symptoms

## COVID-19 Steve Biko Support

One of club member's daughter-in-law is a paediatrician. She and a colleague work at a paediatric immunology clinic at an academic hospital. They became very worried about the state of the little patients they were seeing during the pandemic. The patients and their families have a shortage of foods and other necessities. We decided to help. We raised funds and donate a sum to them every month with which they can buy groceries. They then pack it in buckets to tribute among the neediest patients.



**Sorooptimist  
International  
Africa**

Please help the 2 paediatricians at the immunology clinic at Steve Biko hospital. For 6 years they have supported their little patients' families with some of their basic needs. Joblessness caused by Covid-19 exposed the dire need for food. Now they make up food buckets (R500 each). Any monetary contribution is welcome. Every cent will be used well

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## NEWS FROM OUR PROJECTS

### Weskoppies Hospital support

Since the start of COVID-19 we have not been allowed to enter the Weskoppies Hospital premises and had to find other ways to stay in touch with patients in to two women's wards we support at this psychiatric hospital. The club sponsored 70 cloth 'goody bags' with toiletries, 90 face masks and 30 personal, hand-made cards with encouraging messages. A friend of our current President, Gawa, donated 30 beanies and mittens for the cold winter days. For Women's Day, Ina managed to slip in packets full of wonderful, cheerful biscuits. According to sources the women were extremely pleased.



## VIP Project

The Volunteer Internship Programme (VIP), a SISA (pilot) project in collaboration with SI Southern England went well this year despite the COVID-19 lockdown. The Club is sponsoring the young women to attend a study skills training course and members of the club are involving them in an array of interesting activities such as creating art (in the studio of one of our members, Mimi van der Merwe), applying the maths game, making jewellery and writing reports.

The two young women volunteers, Koketso Chepape and Andile Zwane have been a great support to the staff of Sefako Makgatho Primary. They joined us in our August ZOOM Club meeting and told us about their experiences at school and their studies.

The composite photo on the front page was also used to raise funds for projects during the lock-down. Donations by SI Ede in the Netherlands and SI Southern England made it possible to buy computers and data for our VIP ladies for their online studies. It helped them also to engage in an educational programme in which they learnt study skills for the classroom that was organised by one of our members. Thank you, SI Ede and SI Southern England.



*Above: Andile and Koketso receiving the laptops inside the Mapula Embroideries Laptop Bags.*

## Tuks Residence Women's Leadership Academy (TRWLA) Mentorship and Networking with SI Pretoria-Tshwane Club members

After many months of planning and preparation – including mentorship training of eight of our Club's members – our formal collaboration with the TuksRes Women in Leadership Academy (TRWLA) launched on the 30<sup>th</sup> of September.

SI Pretoria's relationship with TRWLA has been firming up since the Academy's founding six years ago and at the start of 2020 our Club signed an Agreement of Understanding with Pretoria University. Rolling out our collaboration plans for this year were, however, scuppered by the arrival of Covid-19, the ongoing levels of lockdown and closure of the university.

Nothing daunted, the TRWLA director (Akudzwe Mhangami) and her executive set about preparing for an online programme for its members - one of which is the Mentoring and Networking project.

Akudzwe's vision for this project is that TRWLA gives its members the opportunity to engage with women who have journeyed through life and are willing to share their stories with the aim of preparing TRWLA members broadly for life and leadership. Soroptimists make good mentors for TRWLA members as foundational to the philosophies of both organisations is that of 'Servant Leadership'.

The launch session included 15 TRWLA members and our 8 Club members. The mentors' biographies had been shared prior to the session so the time was spent in a 'getting to know you' mode from both sides. The mentee group are students from multiple disciplines including law, medicine, finance, social work, education and our mentor group include women from a variety of professions and life experiences. After the launch a WhatsApp group was set up and mentees approached mentors to begin their journeys together.

This is a new project for the SI Pretoria-Tshwane Club and we approach it with a sense of anticipation for good experiences ahead. We know that as older women we have as much to learn from the young TRWLA members as we have knowledge, skill and wisdom to share and we thank TRWLA for giving us this opportunity.

## ACTIVITIES WE SUPPORT

Mapula Embroideries have a brand-new website. Thanks to the funding received from SI Westminster, the Mapula Embroideries website has gone live! The Mapula Embroidery Trust is very happy to have a website especially in the time of Covid, since it can boost sales in this time when everything has come to a stand-still. Mapula Embroideries are thrilled to announce that SI Naantali in Finland has placed two large orders. Thanks for your support, SI Naantali!

Please have a look at the new website: [www.mapulaembroideries.co.za](http://www.mapulaembroideries.co.za)

The support of the Kibeho project with funds from SI Ede resulted in the rental of a house in Rwanda where the group of embroiderers can gather, and where the coordinator can live. Due to the pandemic the training of a new group of 30 women is halted for now (to be followed!).

The training of a group of Lesotho women in embroidery that was planned with Pretoria Hatfield Rotary Club has also not yet taken place. As soon as the opportunity arise the training will commence as the need is high in Lesotho.

## SISA and SIAF Conference 2020

During this period of non-travel and lockdown there were 2 Soroptimist conferences planned. We were all geared up to join hands with our fellow African sisters in April this year for the launch of the SI African Federation! You can imagine our disappointment when COVID spoiled that party. Nevertheless, the elections of board members went on digitally and in June the African Federation was officially born! Let's hope the first SIAF conference can take place in 2021.

Our yearly SI South Africa conference was a digital one this year. Not only because of the travel restrictions, but also because the African Federation has a different time schedule from SIGBI and will take place in May instead of September going forward. ZOOM gave opportunity for many more members to join the conference and to hear and learn about all the activities from South African clubs.

Moving to a new African Federation also provided opportunity to have a fresh look at all our SI South African rules and regulations. A project group with members from all clubs have worked very hard on this, and it can guide us to be more focused in our project work.

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## SISA President's Challenge

One of our club members, Sally Currin, is SISA President for 2019 to May 2021. Her President's Challenge is aimed at Planet Earth - number 13 of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. The club set up a WhatsApp group for all club members to share their personal actions they are taking to mitigate the climate crisis. Lots of practical actions were shared.

At one of our club ZOOM meetings a Wonder bag was raffled to raise money for a club activity we can organize on this theme.

In the running up to this project the club members have started making cuttings from the spekboom plant. These will be distributed to women in the Winterveld who are members of the *Mapula Embroideries* group. The spekboom, aka *Portulacaria afra*, is a small-leaved succulent plant that helps fight air pollution. It has the ability to 'sequester' or capture four to ten tons of carbon per hectare! Essentially, it acts as a carbon sponge, absorbing carbon from the atmosphere and turning it into plant matter. Excess carbon in the atmosphere is responsible for global warming, so the more carbon we can remove from the air and return to the ground, the better.

(Source: <https://www.gardenandhome.co.za/gardening/7-reasons-plant-spekboom-garden/>)



## Important dates in 2020/2021

- SIAF inauguration 30 June 2020
- International Day: December 2020 (to be organised by SI Johannesburg)
- SIAF conference 2021 (date to be confirmed)
- SISA conference 3<sup>rd</sup> weekend of May 2021
- Club Meetings: every 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month

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Greetings to all, from SI Pretoria-Tshwane in the Jacaranda City

