

SWAZILAND LIONS LEAD WITH EYE CARE PROJECT

Visionary program for Manzini Lions!

The beautifully rolling hills of the Kingdom of Swaziland are the backdrop for a number of wonderful service projects undertaken by the Lions Club of Manzini.

During a recent visit to Swaziland we were able to experience, first-hand, the obstacles and the opportunities for Lions service.

It was great to meet and be hosted by Club President Louis and Vivienne du Plessis and also meet their wonderful Manzini Lions and see what they have been doing this past year.

We have over the year's followed with interest the work that the Club has done with the blind and sight impaired. The Club's sight activities grew with their meeting Dr. Jonathan Pons, a UCT graduate and the only ophthalmic surgeon in the whole country. The Club was successful in obtaining an LCIF SightFirst grant and with the support and assistance of Dr Pons and his dedicated medical and support team have been able to complete some 1192 cataract operations from January 2005 to December 2006 from his eye hospital located in the small town of in Siteki, some 65km east of Manzini.

LCIF grant Administrator Lion Jose Brage-Borges arranged a visit with Dr Pons so that we could see the great work that this partnership with Lions at the Good Shepherd hospital has been able to achieve. It was a real pleasure to meet Dr Pons face to face. He has been able to make miracles happen and overcome many obstacles.



A very happy, and justifiably proud, LCIF grant administrator Lion Jose seen here with Dr Jonathan Pons at the Good Shepherd Eye Clinic in Siteki.

The services provided by this eye clinic are so highly rated within Swaziland that private patients travel from far and wide to see him. We were quite amazed when we met 5 very elderly patients and a young boy who had been brought to the clinic to be treated. The elderly patients from Nhlanguano in the south of the country had advanced cataract related problems while the young boy had a damaged pupil. All would be treated in a day or two.

This is a wonderful LCIF project that is supported by your generous CSFII contributions. Well done Lions!



<<The microscope and instruments located between the two specially adapted and locally made operating theater beds is able to quickly move from one patient to the other. These special beds seen (above) in the prep room, help speed up the movement of patients in and out of theatre.



Continued from Page 1

The eye clinic has its own team of "caratact finders" who are able to travel the length and breadth of the country in the clinic's Toyota 4x4 to find patients that can be assisted at the clinic. By Dr Pons' own admission the correct identification of cataract and other related eye problems has taken quite a while for the non-medical field workers to perfect but through trial and error they are now able to achieve a very high success rate.

No patients with treatable eye care problems are turned away from the clinic. This not only boosts the perception of the clinic as a source of help but also, and possibly more importantly, results in a smooth and efficient treatment system with minimal frustration and aggravation for patients who at this stage of their medical condition are close to - if not already blind.

The clinic has a dedicated team of eye care workers and from earlier being able to only do 3 cataract operations per theatre day when the clinic was first established they can now do 30 per day. The biggest hold-up in the theatre procedure is waiting for the specialised scalpels and other instruments to be sterilized!

The first LCIF grant has now been exhausted and we are very pleased to confirm that earlier this week LCIF confirmed that a second SightFirst grant in the amount of some US\$78 000 had been allocated to the Manzini Lions Club for their ongoing work with and support of the wonderful work done at the Good Shepherd Eye Clinic by Dr. Pons and his support staff. **Congratulations.** This is a really wonderful Lions supported sight project of which we can all be very proud.



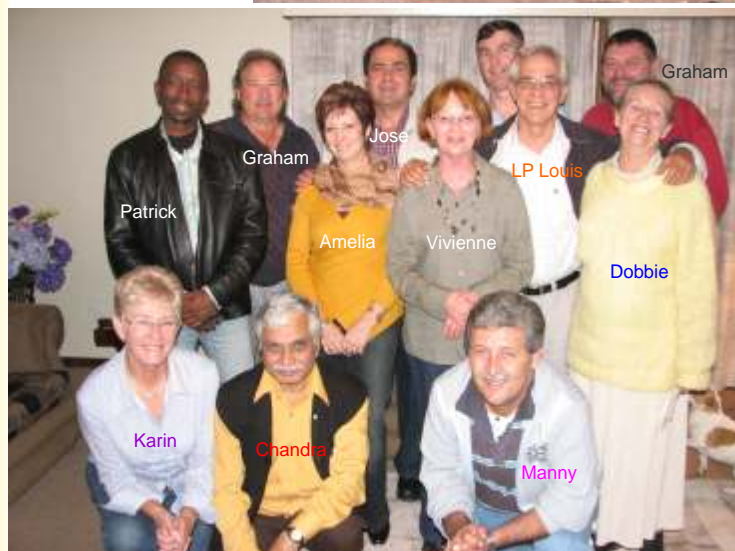
Young Swazi boys engrossed in their traditional game of skill and tactics at the Nwandle children's home located on the outskirts of Manzini



Amy, the super talented and hospitable owner of a Mongolian restaurant in Manzini prepared the most amazing multi course meal of delicious pekin duck, prawns, whole fish and crab for a really festive club social on Friday evening.



The Manzini Lions Club recently completed a new dormitory for the "Nwandle" children's home - one of many serving the Manzini area.



Manzini Lions hail from all over the world - including Swaziland!. This wonderfully cosmopolitan mix and a real passion for service bodes very well for their future growth and a vision to be the No. 1 community service leaders in the Kingdom! Seen here are some of the Lions that attended a gathering on Saturday!



We visited the McCorkindale children's home with Lion Dobbie where the surrounding fields have been rented out to a private farmer. Here they are tending their chilli crop. We were told that the pellet gun is for snakes which is rather sad. The home has received substantial support from Lions in the past but poor management at the home and an unwillingness to accept much needed change there has resulted in the Lion's energies and support being directed at other more mutually acceptable projects - of which there is certainly no shortage.