Annual Report 2024

GENERAL

Rather amazingly, we have achieved what we set out to do since the AGM in May. Amazingly because both members of the team have been plagued by health issues and have been at half-speed for some of the time. The good news is that we are both back!

The other good news is that the first of the Red Reading Toolbox handbooks (*Books and Stories*) with its attendant Activity Book is at the printers and should be home with us by Friday. (A few hours before the next board meeting.)

*Just to remind you:*

*The first of the Reading Toolboxes is the red one, called Books and Stories, containing three handbooks. All of these are complete, we just had to raise the money for production costs and to print them. (This Reading Toolbox is for children of around ten years of age and the other themed red handbooks are called Bravery and Imagination.)*

With a huge amount of help from our friends in America, we have made great strides in this project, which has been the main aim of CBN for years now. (Donors who prefer to be anonymous but who know about our very sincere thanks.)

*Just to remind you:*

*The Reading Toolboxes are the way we hope to spread the work that we have been doing for nearly thirteen years now. There is already interest from a project in Soweto (see below) and we are working to establish a network in W Cape, which has always been our primary goal. As an NGO, we may not sell the Reading Toolboxes, but we can encourage donors to buy them for schools, libraries and other reading projects – with a portion of the funds generated going to the Children’s Book Network Trust to enable our other work.*

That’s the plan and has always been the plan. We just have to crash through to the next phase.

THE NEXT PHASE

Is to identify the partner, or partners, who will enable the spreading of the toolboxes to communities who desperately need them. Lesley still has hopes of WESGRO in W Cape, and we have strong support from two projects initiated by young Africans who want to do something *themselves* to improve reading in their communities instead of waiting for government help – which never comes. This is exactly the kind of project we want to support. The projects are *Do it yourself Libraries* and The *Soweto International Book Festival*, which is at the end of October 24. We will only be able to properly implement this connection in 2025.

PRODUCTION OF CBN MATERIAL

We asked for - and were willingly given - funding to get through the barriers with publishing the first handbook. This involved additional people with additional skills sets.

Production manager Toast Coetzer has led the project, managed printers and illustrator and adding considerable design skills, and

travelling into Cape Town for meetings.

Susan Abrahams illustrated the book and went beyond the extra mile to help us. She has done an outstanding job.

Our Printer, *Digital Book Printers* in Cape Town has given us excellent prices on both the handbook and an additional print runs of *The Time Trackers.*

ADDITIONAL HELP

We are about to employ Ruby Walne as an additional admin person on an hourly basis. She has shown how good she is while handling admin for LB privately and is ready to help us when we need her.

WORKSHOPS

All that needs to be said is that Wilien is in charge! She has done her usual outstanding job and workshops have proceeded without pause throughout the year. Thank you, Wilien. The next big one is on October 12th at Enlighten Education Trust in Zwelihle (Hermanus)..

**School Calendar Year Workshop Figures 2024**

Term 1 2024

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Venue | Amount ofWorkshops | Children Reached |
| Okkie Smuts Primary School | 7 | 56 |
| Stanford South | 7 | 55 |
| Enlighten Trust | 4 | 25 |
| **TOTAL** | **18** | **136** |

Term 2 2024

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Venue | Amount ofWorkshops | Children Reached |
| Okkie Smuts Primary School | 10 | 84 |
| Stanford South | 10 | 74 |
| **TOTAL** | **20** | **158** |

Term 3 2024

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Venue | Amount ofWorkshops | Children Reached |
| Okkie Smuts Primary School | 7 | 64 |
| Stanford South | 8 | 29 |
| **TOTAL** | **15** | **93** |

READING BOOK BOXES

Are capped at ten boxes circulating throughout Stanford South, but additional books are added constantly (from book sales and the excellent second-hand *Quirk and Leopard* Bookshop in Hermanus).

FUNDING

The good news is that we were awarded a grant of R226 000 from Douglas Murray Trust (DGMT). It is dated August 2024, but we have not yet received the agreement on which payment depends. Or the payment.

This is specifically for the toolbox project and will enable us to finalize the other Red Reading Toolbox handbooks and proceed with the green, and blue toolboxes next year.

We still have funding from Rotary Rottweil that will support the Stanford workshops for a couple of years yet. We are very grateful. This removes one worry in the funding situation. We have weekly workshops on a Monday. One at Okkie Smuts School Library and one at The Learning Tree, Stanford South that is led by Rachel van Rooyen.

FUND-RAISING

Will have to go on. The grant applied for from DGMT is for three years – the next two years depending on performance. It will be an enormous help, but not enough to cover everything CBN does.

Our two publications as fundraisers (*Poppy* and *The Time Trackers*) continue to sell and funds generated are held in a separate account and used to generate funds for more printing.

TRAINING

We have developed a training handbook and have several plans in mind for 2025 and expanding our local reach.

THE BOARD

Thankfully remains in place. LB had a meeting with Anthony and Ursula on the original date of this board meeting and were able to discuss all of the above – and more – to prepare for this Zoom meeting.

Lesley

Stanford, 1 October 2024