

**February 24, 2008**

On February 24, 2008, the Kgothatso Orphan Support Centre (Kgothatso) held an Official Opening Ceremony, at the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Botswana (ELCB), Gabane, Botswana where the centre is located. Organized by the centre's management committee and Gabane's Parish Council, Chairman, Mr. Maswabi donated a cow...so there was plenty to eat for all the participants! Church and Community Leaders attended and Chief (Kgosi) Pule spoke about the need for initiatives like Kgothatso and the community's obligation to provide support and financial aid to orphans and vulnerable children. The Key Note Speech by Mrs. Irene Kwape (Acting Chairlady of Botswana Christian AIDS Intervention Programme (BOCAIP)) was very informative and helped to motivate the community behind the centre's efforts. The children who attend the centre provided the entertainment with a play and singing, joined by the staff, which filled the hearts of everyone who attended. Orfund Foundation has been working with and supporting Kgothatso since 2006. During 2008 Orfund is providing funding of Pula 200,000 or approximately \$31,000. The majority of this funding will be utilized to pay salaries and provide nutritional support to the children.

Orfund volunteer Shirley Bookbinder, a social worker, and 30 year resident of Botswana, was joined at the Opening Ceremony by her husband, Len Bookbinder, who is a former employee of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the University of Botswana. She gave the following speech:

'I am indeed honored to share this special occasion with you as we officially open the Kgothatso Orphan Support Centre in Gabane. I am especially pleased that the community of Gabane and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Botswana are working together on this important project that will provide support to about 40 orphan and vulnerable pre-school children. The Orfund Foundation is a Canadian charity. We focus on supporting orphans and vulnerable children in Botswana because of: (1) the Government of Botswana's high priority to assisting OVC; (2) the strong commitment of Botswana's civil society including the extended family, village leaders and the business community to find and provide solutions; (3) the provision of financial support and expertise by a number of prominent institutions and organizations; and (4) Orfund's embedded position in Botswana society through political, business and social interaction over a 30 year period. Orfund's ultimate goal is to provide children with the necessary tools to realize their full potential. Education is the primary means of achieving this so most of Orfund's efforts are focused on providing pre school education and supplementing the primary and secondary education of the children. Activities, which support and enhance the effectiveness of educational efforts (such as providing basic necessities), are also seen as important.

Therefore, Orfund assists:

- The 'Flying Mission – Little Seeds Teacher Training Program' (train the trainer);
- The 'Holy Cross Day Care Program' in Old Naledi (Anglican Church);
- The 'St. Peters Day Care Centre' of the Anglican Church in Mogoditshane.
- The 'Kamogelo Day Care Centre' of the Catholic Church in Mogoditshane.
- The 'Stepping Stones International' after school kids program in Mochudi.
- And of course your 'Kgothatso Program' here in Gabane.

We like to stress that we expect our partners i.e. the congregations and the wider community to take up their responsibilities. Orfund works with community based organizations where it has intimate knowledge and strong relationships through personal contact.

It is important to acknowledge the ELCB for identifying the needs of the community and taking a proactive stance in addressing this need. In addition to donating the land for this project, the ELCB have been instrumental in providing funding for the buildings and providing oversight and staffing. In addition it is also important to recognize the leadership of the community for embracing this initiative and supporting the creation of a facility dedicated to orphan and vulnerable pre-school children. This facility signals our collective commitment to the children of Gabane and represents a significant attempt by the community to enable these children to reach their full potential. Going forward this child focused initiative will be successful due to the community's support and commitment to its children. We at Orfund are delighted with the opportunity to assist the community's efforts to provide support to its children. We look forward to a long and rewarding relationship with Gabane and the ELCB.

Thank you for the opportunity to assist.'

