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NEWSLETTER

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Dear Friend,

It has been an incredibly busy, sometimes chaotic and very rewarding six months at the Soweto Equestrian Foundation's riding centre.

An equestrian centre in the heart of the township of Soweto had been a dream of Enos Mafokate for over 25 years. Now it is a reality. We introduce equestrian sports to people who have never had that opportunity, we try to improve the welfare of the local working cart horses and we create employment by training people to make a living in



the equestrian industry. Here is an update on some of the highlights of the last six months.

The more that we make horses available to the children and young adults of Soweto, and the more they love it and the more that want to take part. We've discovered a huge pool of untapped talent and enthusiasm for all things horsey, even in the, sometimes cold, winter months.

Many, many thanks to the people & organisations who have supported and encouraged the Soweto Equestrian Foundation (SEF).



Our New Minibus has arrived ! **AVIS** Cares

Transporting riders and horses to and from the centre and competitions has been a major problem for us. Not any more! We were delighted to be presented with this fantastic minibus by Avis MD Wayne Duvenage at a ceremony during the 2009 Avis Derby. We are very lucky to have been given this fantastic minibus for a year and Avis have promised to help us acquire it permanently after that time.



What a difference having our own transport has made. We can now safely and reliably take riders and tow a horse box to events.

Having our own transport will

be even more important when we build up our links with local schools. The minibus has already been used to transport the vaulting team to the GHS Gauteng regional competition and the South African national championships. More of how we did at these two competitions below.



We are the South African Mixed Team Vaulting Champions

In a joint programme with the South African National Equestrian Federation, the Soweto Vaulters started an intensive training programme. Coaches Steffi Waidmann, Nicole de Villiers, Bongani Mvumvu and Chef D'Equipe Enos Mafokate have put in a huge amount of time and effort since the programme began in March 09. Our first target was to compete in, and hopefully win, the regional Gauteng vaulting championships in November 09. At a tense final, the team held their nerve and went on to win a very close fought competition to take first prize and to be awarded the coveted Gauteng colours. Well done to Khensani Maluleke, Ofentse Makgatle, Lesego Ngidi, Palesa Mthenjane, Thembi Mthenjane, Paballo Masilo and Karabo Mafokate and many thanks to Charmaine and Courtney Fraser for the loan of her fantastic vaulting horse "White Noise".



Having won the regional championships the team trained even harder and proudly represented Gauteng at the national championships in December. Half way through the competition we were



in second place but a strong final push saw the team come through to win and become the South African Mixed Team Vaulting Champions. It is a fantastic achievement for the team and their coaches that in just nine months they could have achieved so much. We could not have achieved this without the fantastic support of Arlene Mahon who kindly loaned us her fantastic horse "Quattro" at the last minute.





With the help of SANEF and GHS, we have now purchase a vaulting horse, “Vukauzenzele”, for the exclusive use of the team. Once trained, he’ll be moved to the Soweto Equestrian Centre. Though we are late entrants there is a chance the some of the Soweto team will win a place in the South African squad that will travel to the 2010 World Equestrian Games in Kentucky, USA. Now that would be something !!!

Soweto Schools Vaulting Programme



It has always been one of our key objectives to open up riding to people who would never otherwise have a chance to take part in horsey sports. Vaulting is the lowest cost way for us to do this. Most of the early training does not need a horse, with the use a vaulting barrel. and when the children have progressed many riders trained and compete on one horse. We want to build on the success of the vaulting team to extend our riding programme into the local Soweto Schools. Working with SANEF Schools, we hope to be able to place a number of vaulting barrels in those local schools that already have a gymnastics programme and to work with the school staff to train children to become vaulters. If we can interest enough Soweto schools, we could form a Soweto vaulting league.

Our Sand Riding Arena is finished

After many months of planning and quite a few false starts, we are very proud to have completed our superb 40 x 30 meter outdoor sand schooling and competition arena. The 140 cubic

meters of sand was supplied by Pennypinchers at a very special price and we are very grateful to Sidwell Nxumalo and PG Bison for the supply of the edging post that enclose the arena. While large trucks brought the sand to the centre, 140 cubic meters of sand takes some moving. Many of the riders and vaulters put their backs into the hard task of moving the sand and levelling the arena.



Before the arena, all of our training and riding had to take place in the field in an open area. This was far from ideal and at times the condition of the ground made it difficult to ride. We now have a safe, all weather surface where we can train our riders and hold small competitions in Soweto. Enos had his first ever ride at the Soweto Equestrian Centre in our new arena. In term of facilities we have water troughs for the working horses, club house, training room, tack room, stables, barn, student accommodation, paddocks, horses, tack and now a sand arena. Just under three years after we started, we are proud to say the first phase of the Soweto Equestrian Centre is up and running.





Soweto Trainees in the USA

Our first two students are about to start their one year placement in the USA under the “Communicating for Agriculture Education Program”. The students will receive a year’s paid training and practical experience in equestrian stable management at accredited training yards. After their studies they will return to South Africa and be given financial and practical help in getting themselves established in the equestrian industry. Though the programme in South Africa has been running for sometime under the guidance of SEF director, Brigid Harding, this is the first time that the Soweto Equestrian Foundation has sent students. We hope to send two students each year on this programme.



Trip to Europe – Summer 2010



We are very fortunate to have been invited by the French Equestrian Federation to send a team to the World Riding Club Tournament in France in June 2010. A team of six young Soweto riders will compete in pony club games against teams from all over the world in an exciting friendly competition. As our riders are not as familiar with the games as some of the other teams the French Federation have very kindly arranged intensive training in the week before the tournament and offered to meet the expenses of the team whilst in France.

Before travelling to France, the team will spend a week in London as guests of the Ebony Riding Club. As well as having a chance to experience London, it is hoped that the team will have a chance for some horse riding in some of the fantastic central London parks. Competition to be selected for the team will be fierce! **We’re looking for Sponsors to pay for the flights to and from Europe and kit.**

World Horse Welfare Update

After the great success of our first intake of students who graduated in 2009 we’re delighted that the second intake of students for the World Horse Welfare Farrier and Saddlemaker courses are doing well. Their next two week training module starts in January 2010. To help the Farriers keep their businesses going SEF has purchased a stock of shoes and clenches which they can buy from us as and when they need. Regular resupply trips are organised to the outlying areas to keep contact with the graduates and keep them well supplied.



What’s Next ?

In our short time in existence the Soweto Equestrian Foundation has built a fully equipped riding centre, won the South African Vaulting Championships, helped train Farriers and Saddlemakers, improved the conditions of the working cart horses, sent students to America and introduced over 700 children to horses. Riding is an elitist sport in South Africa. If we are to truly change this the next stage of our program must be to expand our riding school activities and give more local children, able bodied and disabled, and adults the chance to ride and care for horses. **To make this a reality we need instructors and helpers who can give their time and sponsors who can fund these activities. Can you help?**