

## Lesotho Update

Last week, our partnership with Motati School in Lesotho began to feel a lot more real, as we received our first package from our twinned school. In the package was a series of notebooks made by each class for the students here at Deep Cove School. Some books contained a story, others talked about their lives and about Lesotho, with many drawings and some photographs cut from brochures. These booklets were crafted with a lot of care and reflected a lot of pride in their school, their country and their culture. In many ways, they looked so much like the school projects that our own children work on, yet the conditions at Motati School are so very different from those here. The school has no roof and no windows, in a country where it rains and sometimes snows in the winter. The classrooms have no desks and no chairs and the children sit on rocks or blocks to study. And saddest of all, the country has one of the highest rates of HIV/AIDS in the world, so that many children are either orphans or looking after dying parents, and many live in poverty. The package also contained a small girl's school uniform that was full of holes. She wore this uniform every day and was so pleased to receive a new one thanks to the Orphan Relief Fund of Help Lesotho, to which we contributed with our Christmas Fair fundraiser. The chief of the village also presented us with a mat made by women in the village as a gesture of their appreciation. The package will be circulated throughout the school so that all the children have a chance to look at it. Each class will then produce a booklet to send to their friends in Motati School.

After we circulated Motati school's profile, we received a lot of feedback from parents wanting to know how they can help, and how we can get a roof on the school. We have contacted Help Lesotho to see what can be done, and they have told us that the government of Lesotho has promised a new roof for the school and Help Lesotho has made plans to speak to the Education Minister directly. They fear that there could be negative consequences if they are seen to give the school a new roof when it had been promised by the government. As the winter season is fast approaching in the Southern hemisphere, let's hope that this strategy will work and that we will see some results sooner rather than later. The roof was blown off the school a few years ago already.

The next project that Motati School would like to start is a small income generating project- selling produce. Garden tools, seeds and a small shed are needed to get started. The cost is estimated to be about \$3,000. We think that this money can be found in our communities of North Saanich and Sidney. The Deep Cove-Lesotho group is planning to meet some time next week to brainstorm for strategies and ideas. We have visions of expanding this project beyond the school to the community at large. We need motivated people to help us in this endeavor. If you would like to join us in our efforts, please contact Martine Lunke (656-5658; [martinelunke@uniserve.com](mailto:martinelunke@uniserve.com)) or teacher Barbara Menzies. Also, for more information on this project, check the new bulletin board across from the school office or the Help Lesotho website at [www.helplesotho.ca](http://www.helplesotho.ca). The letters from Lesotho by Peg Herbert are definitely worth reading. We will also be posting some information on the PAC website at [www.deepcovepac.ca](http://www.deepcovepac.ca).