

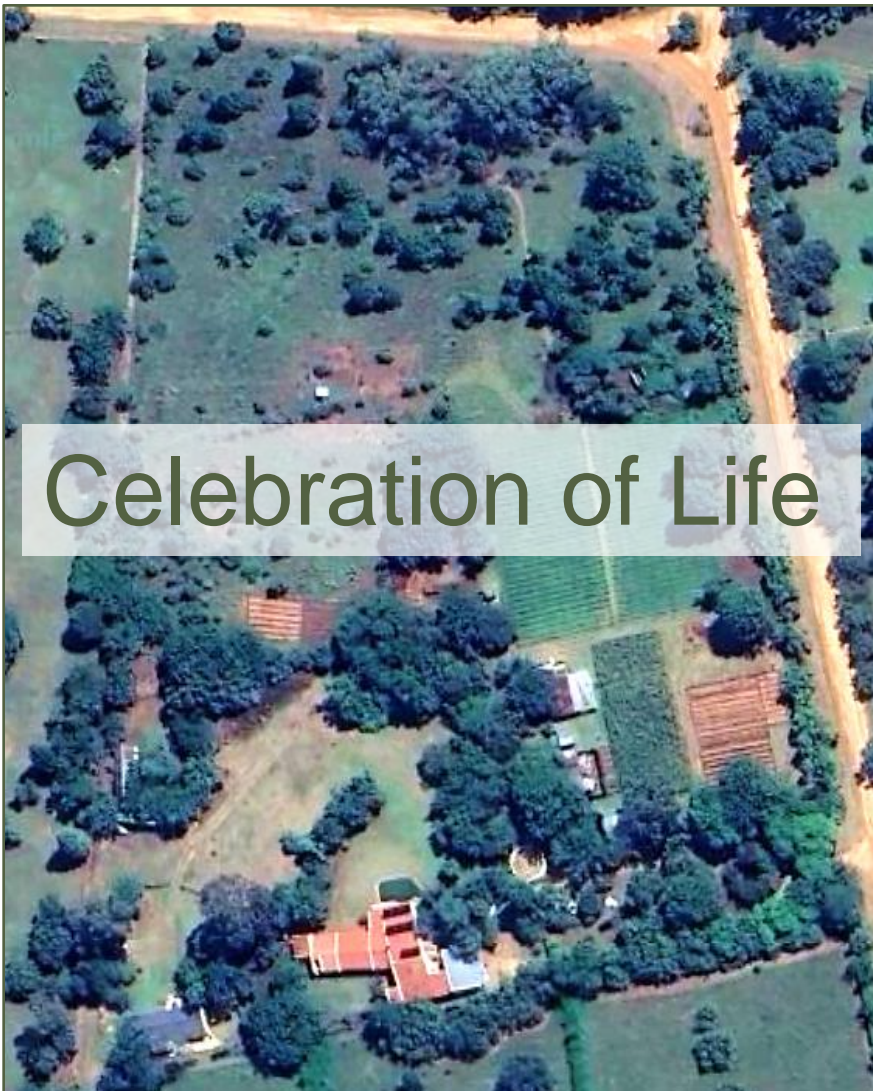
# The GOOD Times



15 August 2024  
Volume 1, Issue 3

## Special Interest Articles:

- Training
- Farm Life
- Schools Project
- Mandela Day 2024
- Interesting Numbers
- Tent Village



## Celebration of Life

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## When the Going gets Tough...

This month we are celebrating **2 years** on the farm and **6 years** since I resigned and left for KZN in **August 2018!** The last two years especially were very tough for us with many new things and “firsts”. Through everything God sustained us even despite our own mistakes and inadequacies. We broke many rules and learned through them.

One of the rules that we broke was: “*Start Small*”. We had too many irons in the proverbial fire and were running around trying to be everywhere and do everything.

Too many responsibilities and too little resources lead us to a place of discouragement and distraught. Some days I was at a place emotionally where I thought to myself - What type of person am I becoming?

We also learned practically how relevant the 4 principles of [Foundations for Farming](#) are – On Time, At Standard, Without Wastage, **With Joy!** To choose JOY and praise God when nothing makes sense, is sometimes the best and only survival skill we have - **Phil 4:4**



## Farm LIFE

We are living in unprecedented times. We need to live even closer to God as the world pulls stronger every day with convenience, pleasure, individualism and anxiety.

One of the reasons that we made the move to the farm was to be self-sustainable and teach it to other people. One of the things I felt God said to me two years ago was: *There`s one thing you are teaching but not doing. You are telling people to be self-sustainable, but you aren`t.*

We are now growing vegetables, maize and have chickens, pigs and sheep through God`s amazing grace. One of the principles of Regenerative Farming is that the more diversity you have above the soil, the more

microbial diversity there is beneath the soil. The 2<sup>nd</sup> principle is that animals must move. They need to be mobile and not static. Animals kept at one spot creates built-up of manure that leads to pathogens that will create smell, flies and destroy soil life. That however comes with many challenges.

We are working on a model that we can also teach to small-scale farmers out there. This takes a lot of creativity, planning and perseverance. The things that sometimes keep us going are the small miracles - a new lamb being born, new piglets, another sponsor that comes on board etc. **Gratitude** in our hearts for the small miracles makes life colourful!

## Tree of Life

The name of our Farm is Etz Chayim (ets cha-yeem). Etz Chayim is Hebrew for Tree of Life – The Word, Jesus Christ. We want this place to be a place of life where people can experience hope and life physically but also spiritually.

Despite that, we have experienced much death - dead animals, dead plants, dead dreams, emotional death, financial death....

The one day I was complaining against God, saying: Lord this is supposed to be a place of life, what`s happening? I felt God say: “True Life, cannot exist without death”. I am holding onto that, believing that after death, life will come. But first the wrong attitudes, mind-sets, beliefs must die, so that new life can come.

We had many financial challenges and a lot of our time and energy since we came here in August of 2022 went into “making it work”. To be able to pay for all the expenses of the property we have tried many things and are still trying but we need a lot of help and prayer. **Thank you so much** for every person who is already contributing in one or another way!





## Young Farmers Fun Days

*“Agriculture is our wisest pursuit, because it will in the end contribute most to real wealth, good morals, and happiness.”*

Thomas Jefferson

*“Education is the most powerful weapon we can use to change the world”*

Nelson Mandela

“*Buig die boompie solank hy nog jonk is*” – is such an important piece of advice we got from the previous generations. We attempt to combine agriculture with education by bringing primary school groups onto the farm and make them experience a day of farming: Harvesting mealies and vegetables, planting seedlings, feeding animals, riding a donkey, making compost, etc.

While we try to teach our children all about life, the farm teaches us what life is all about. When we

look at the world around us and the challenges we face, exposing children to agriculture from a very young age is a must. Our young farmers fun day embraces a holistic focus to the heart, head and hand aspects of farming.

Regenerative agriculture is a farming practice where we attempt to simulate what we see in nature on the farm. The fun aspect of farming is a big part of what we do, as children need to have fun and get wet and muddy while learning.





# Mentoring and Discipleship

Therefore, go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things, whatever I commanded you.

Matt 28:19

I had a very nice conversation a while ago with a wonderful couple, talking about church and ministry and just life with God. The man then said something quite remarkable to me about the church where they are involved. He said they always come back to the question: ...but are we making disciples?

We can get so busy in all the programs and events and structure, that we forget the main reason we are on this earth - to make disciples.

On the farm we really challenge ourselves to be busy with that all the time and its very much our DNA.

**Sharl Pienaar** started with *Men Around the Fire* meetings right after they got here two years ago. They meet every second week, talking about things such as a

biblical worldview, doctrinal purity and just sometimes “man-stuff”. The group exists mainly of Malawian nationals.

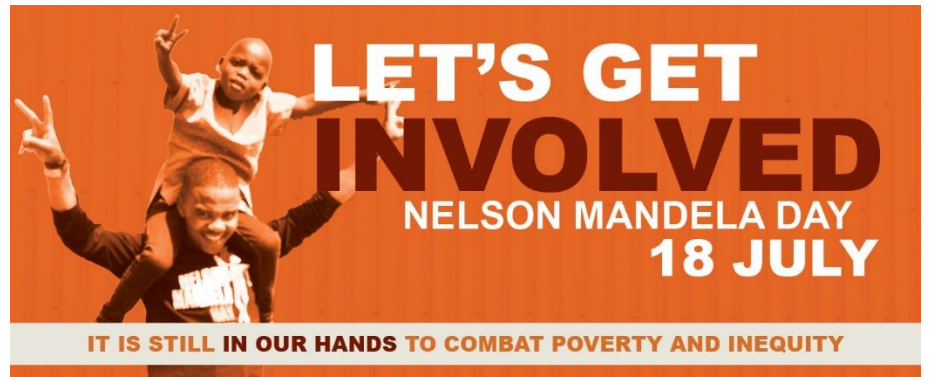
**Johan Woest** regularly meets and disciple’s men one-on-one on the farm also through his involvement with [The Character Company](#) where he mentors the Mentors.

**Michelle** is mentoring high-school students on a weekly basis on-line about the proper values of life. This program is called [Mentor On Demand](#) and also a program part of The Character Company.

**Willem Kelber** is a very good friend of ours who works with the Jesus Film at [Campus Crusade for Christ](#). He disciple’s the Christian leaders in the area so that they can disciple other people in the area after we show them the Jesus film on the farm.



# Mandela Day 2024



Every year on the 18<sup>th</sup> of July we celebrate Mandela day in South Africa. The idea on Nelson Mandela Day is **To Do Good**, which is exactly what we at **Yenzokuhle TDG** are all about.

We decided to spend our day by buying seedlings and establish vegetable gardens for two schools in our area. The one school was

*Nooitgedacht Primary* and the second *Kwena Molapo Secondary*.

We also got a wonderful donation from *Dave Leite* in Lammermoor who gave us one cube of compost for the day. We started with Kwena Molapo where we also educated the students about conservation agriculture and then

rushed to Nooitgedacht to establish 4 x 6-meter beds there. We planted Beetroot, Peas, Cabbage and Spinach. The experience was a wonderful reminder to stop complaining and get out there and make a difference.

See the picture below and click on the link [here](#) for the video.



# Foundations for Farming Training

This year so far, we were very busy with training courses, away and at home. Other organizations we currently work alongside with is [Cross Connect \(CCCO\)](#), [Beulah Africa](#), [Bethlehem Mission](#), [VillageWorx](#) and [Amos Agrimin](#). We are also very thankful to the [Butterfly Foundation](#) who also sponsored one training for us. In partnering with these organizations and other individuals we can do much more and reach more.

In the process of teaching, we are also learning how to do

things better to be more effective. People always ask us what our “success rate” is. It is very difficult first of all, because we are not outcome-based but process-based. We are also just the sower of the seed - The One who makes it grow is God.

We do however have formed a strategy based on the following three processes:

1. Readiness Screening and Selection Process
2. Quality Intervention
3. Follow-up Support and Accountability

If we can do these three things better the outcome is also better. We also rely heavily on partner organizations to help us in this process.



Etz Chayim / Butterfly Foundation: 21-23 May



Etz Chayim / EARN Training: 9 January



Etz Chayim: 27-29 February



Rhema Rain / Beulah: 25-28 March



Temba Hammanskraal / Bethlehem Mission: 4-5 June

← Jukulyn Shoshanguve: 18-20 June

# New Kid on the Block



We are always looking for people to join our team. It is quite a challenge because this person must be of a special kind: Love God, love people, love agriculture and have the skill of teaching and be of good character...

We met **Njabulo Mdidimba** last year at a [Food for Mzansi](#) conference. Over time I realized the miracle of our paths crossing because of how similar our visions are. We can now see how mutually beneficial this relationship is. He studied at [CPUT](#) and is doing his practical year with us. Hopefully he will join us full-time as he is a very important asset for us on the farm and in the classroom.



# Tent Village

The purpose of **Etz Chayim** has always been a farm for Research, Demonstration and Training (RDT). The first two years however, the struggle to create an income for all the shareholders consumed all our time and energy. We had to change direction. The process was not easy and pleasant – like bad medicine or a serious operation...

YTDG has a new board now with a big responsibility to steer the NPC in the right direction. God-willing we are also in the process of selling to an American company that will take over the majority shareholding of the company – Yenzokuhle Agri Investments.

The path was not at all what we pictured but we must trust it's the path that God intended. Over the following two months we will be very busy setting up a Tent Village at the bottom of the farm for the first Two-Week training course we will be hosting in October. We really need all the help and support we can get. Contact us for more information about how to get involved.



# What does the future hold?

## Calendar

20 Aug	Hammanskraal 1-Day
27-29 Aug	FfF 3-Day Training
17 Sept	Hammanskraal 1-Day
1-3 Oct	CCCO 3-Day Training
13-25 Oct	Faithful Steward Program (VillageWorx)
5-6 Nov	Hammanskraal 2-Day
9 Nov	FfF SA Conference
26-28 Nov	Bethlehem Free State 3-Day Training

## Thank you! Dankie! Ngiyabonga!

***4** I always thank my God for you and for the gracious gifts he has given you, now that you belong to Christ Jesus. **5** Through him, God has enriched your church in every way—with all of your eloquent words and all of your knowledge. **6** This confirms that what I told you about Christ is true. **7** Now you have every spiritual gift you need as you eagerly wait for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ. **8** He will keep you strong to the end so that you will be free from all blame*

*on the day when our Lord Jesus Christ returns. **9** God will do this, for he is faithful to do what he says, and he has invited you into partnership with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.  
1Cor 1:4-9 (NLT)*

Our hearts are always filled with humility and gratefulness when we think of all the love and support, we receive from so many people. It is impossible to thank every person by name, but I want to single out the

following people to not miss anyone:

1. Our Prayer & Intercession Group
2. Financial Partners and Sponsors
3. Friends and Family
4. Uvan and Mari-Louise Crous (Deep Edge Design)
5. Cobus Reinecke (CIIK Computer Solutions)
6. Board Members
7. Volunteer Trainers

## Prayer Requests

- Praise God for his Goodness and Faithfulness over the last 6 years
- Please pray that our **18A Certification** will be sorted out very soon
- Pray for God's presence through the Holy Spirit on *Etz Chayim*.
- His guidance and discernment in every decision
- His Provision and Protection.

## Video Library

- Mandela Day 2024 - <https://youtu.be/bqMWOVoblC8>
- YTDG Day 1 Training Promo - [https://youtu.be/K81Oz\\_rzqZs](https://youtu.be/K81Oz_rzqZs)
- YTDG Training Promo 2020 - <https://youtu.be/eE5bUT0QRKs>
- Why we do what we do (Maq) - [https://youtu.be/\\_OfzQuxf2hY](https://youtu.be/_OfzQuxf2hY)
- IWH Masakaneng July 2022 - <https://youtu.be/PVj5vGPjeOg>
- Suurman Dec 2021- [https://youtu.be/\\_sozbt8LN4g](https://youtu.be/_sozbt8LN4g)
- MunsieVille HopeCentre 2021 - <https://youtu.be/-kPtImtKrug>
- Busisa KZN Aug 2019 - <https://youtu.be/GdGr3OtoHHU>

## Interesting Numbers!

**754**

Sunsets enjoyed on Etz Chayim

**6**

Years on this Journey

**9**

Times we moved in 10 years

**3**

Number of Provinces we lived in

**36**

Beds planned for Training Centre

**47**

Francois traveled around the sun

**0**

Number of Times God let us down