

## BOOKS FOR LESOTHO INC.

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Mountains in Lesotho under snow. Rudi Botha. Used with permission.

## NEWSLETTER No. 21, MARCH 2021

### WHAT'S THIS?



During January, the pallet (left) loaded with empty cartons arrived at The Barn. The consignment came from Melbourne – generously donated by Chris McEvoy of Preschem Pty Ltd. Chris is a long-term supporter of Books for Lesotho and of the people of Lesotho. What happens to such a carton? Each one is carefully packed with books using every available space; then it is sealed and loaded onto a pallet (right) ready for despatch.



### WHAT'S THIS?



To the left: it's 8 pallets of books sitting in line at The Barn ready for pickup during February. They all left The Barn (right) on 03 February 2021 destined for the Transformation Resource Centre in Lesotho. This is the 14<sup>th</sup> shipment to TRC and brings the total number of shipments to 17 since 2007.

The usual number of pallets for TRC is 7.

What was the 8<sup>th</sup> pallet about? – read below...



### WHAT'S THIS?



This is the mysterious 8<sup>th</sup> pallet, with a story attached:

Lesotho is an openly religious nation. From my experience, almost every meeting opens with prayer, and often moves effortlessly into song. I was not surprised when on my last visit (now over 12 months ago), I was approached as to whether B4L could supply suitable books to a theological college. Such a shipment does not match the B4L goal of developing libraries in Schools, but it did match helping people in Lesotho with reading resources, while adding to an existing shipment is of no burden to B4L. The Board endorsed this special project. The image shows one of the B4L keen volunteer sorters and packers, Brian Webber. Brian responded to the request to support the library of the Morija Theological Seminary. It belongs to the Lesotho Evangelical Church in Southern Africa (LECSA), the main protestant denomination in Lesotho. Therefore, as a separate initiative, Brian sourced books from 3 Adelaide-based theological colleges and some private sources as well as securing donations to cover the costs of shipping one full pallet of books, consolidated with the load to TRC. Brian acknowledges the donors, especially Malvern (SA) Uniting Church for their support of this special project. Here is a link for further information.

[Lesotho Evangelical Church in Southern Africa - Christian Council of Lesotho \(ccl.org.ls\)](http://ccl.org.ls)

Latest news: More theology books have been donated, sufficient to make up another full pallet - now packed and wrapped ready to ship. Brian is now seeking funding to get the books to Lesotho, this time consolidated with the next shipment to the Rotary Club of Maloti. I think this is an amazing result.

## **WHO HAD THE INSPIRATION AND IDEA FOR BOOKS FOR LESOTHO?**

The person who can be credited (or is it “blamed”?) for having the idea of sending books to schools in Lesotho is Me Mosa Muso (pictured here with her husband, Lehlohonolo). I invited Mosa to tell her story for this newsletter in which we celebrate the sending of over 200,000 books to Lesotho! Here is her message to us all:



*My passion for reading started in 1969 when I was doing my Junior Certificate whereby we held reading competitions and prizes were awarded to the person who read the most books. The library was of a very good standard because the school was run by the Sisters of the Good Shepherd from Canada. This motivated me to work at the bookshop in (the town of) Mazenod when I finished my Matric. In 1978 I went overseas and lived in Sweden. When I left Lesotho one of the managers at the bookshop encouraged me to do Librarianship if I was to continue with my studies. Therefore when I arrived in Sweden I did that for two years. I came back to Lesotho in 1987. In 1988 I got a job in South Africa where I worked at the library at the University of the North and that's when my dream of involving students in the reading field was born. While I was working there I organised a reading competition amongst primary schools in the area which was held at the University's library. I came back to Lesotho when I got a job at the Transformation Resource Centre (TRC) in 1992. When I arrived at TRC I realised that there were a lot of materials such as journals, newspapers and magazines that were not being used. It was then I had a vision of involving high school*

*learners to make use of these materials to enhance their English and gain knowledge of issues around them. Lesotho has many schools that are situated in the mountains with no access to libraries. As a Librarian at TRC we took all these materials and distributed them to some of the schools for them to use. We did that in the district of Qacha's Nek and Quthing. I left TRC after 2 years to other adventures, then the whole project came to a halt.*

*Fate led me back to TRC in 2003, and two years later there it happened that Mr David and Liz Linn from Australia visited TRC for their own reasons. We talked about the interest of involving the Basotho children into reading but unfortunately there were no available books in the TRC library at the time and the schools did not have libraries either. We tried to come up with solutions to help address this problem. David and Liz then promised to assist me to reach this dream of helping unprivileged Basotho children who had no access to libraries. This was the birth of Books for Lesotho Project (B4L). From that year on when they visited TRC up to today Books for Lesotho has distributed 201,113 books and some teaching aids to over 120 schools and organisations working with juveniles.*

*It was through the good hearts of Australian people that they were able to collect these books yearly for Basotho schools. This was done in order to help Basotho children in the most remote areas to have access to books. As a pensioner now I am proud to have achieved my dream of being able to assist a Basotho child to have access to books despite where the schools are situated.*

*I hope this project will continue in the years to come until all the schools have access to books, regardless of their location.*

Thank you, Mosa

## **OTHER NEWS**

1. Payments by PayPal - Books for Lesotho Inc has established an account with PayPal Giving Fund. The Fund is a registered charity for tax purposes which then remits donated funds to your nominated charity. The link is on page 3 of this Newsletter.
2. A BRANCH OF B4L IN SYDNEY - The establishment of such a branch, B4L(NSW) moves slowly, mainly being held up by COVID issues.
3. SUPPLY OF BOOKS - Because books come in the door and then go out again, B4L is in continual need of suitable books. There continues to be shortage at secondary school level of novels and particularly non-fiction: can you help? Please ask at your local school, or friends or.....
4. MITCHAM 50-AND-OVER EXERCISE GROUP - Members of this group have been long-term supporters of B4L mainly through regular “small-change” donations. Since July 2020, donations have totalled \$565 compared with \$822.00 in the same period last year..

## INSIDE THE BARN

Here is the next offering from a volunteer involved with B4L, in this case Rob Langley who volunteers at The Barn (does all the running-around The Barn jobs, as per the image below) and is also a B4L Board member.

Rob writes: *Whilst shelving books which our skilled sorters have classified into their appropriate school year level, I often pick up a book which reminds me of Deirdre - my late dearly beloved sister - who lost her battle with ovarian cancer at far too young an age. It might be a book by Enid Blyton, Charles Dickens, Mark Twain or R.M. Ballantyne. Dee was seven years older than me and in the days before television, she used to read to my brother and me for hours. She would read a chapter from each of up to four books. She would read until she "lost her voice". This resulted in leaving me in a state of unbearable suspense causing me to "jump the gun" and read the books myself. It is to Dee that I owe my love of reading. If my volunteering at the Books for Lesotho barn in some small way contributes to children also gaining a love of reading, then I feel that I am honouring Dee's gift.*



## FINANCES

Straight facts:

Donations since 01 July 2020 = \$8,844.37 (9 months)


Same period last year = \$8,100

Budget for 2020/21 = \$14,203

### **Help us "Close-the -gap"... \$6,100**

In December 2020, B4L received a cheque from PayPal Giving Fund for \$733.48 (net after costs) from an unknown donor. We cannot trace the source of a donation made through Facebook/PayPal account, so we cannot say "thank you" directly. We hope, if you are a reader of this newsletter, you will contact us so we can say it directly. A very generous and welcome contribution.

**There are now three ways to donate – each one will produce a receipt for Australian tax purposes.**

1. The easy way for you and B4L is to donate through GiveNow.  
This is a secure online donation service: [CLICK here](#) 



2. Another easy way for both parties is through PayPal:  
[Click HERE to visit our PayPal Giving Fund page](#)  
Or use the PayPal QR Code to the right.  
You do not have to have a PayPal account to use this service.



3. Send a donation directly to our bank account:  
Account Name: BOOKS FOR LESOTHO INCORPORATED  
BSB: 035-044 Account No: 228285  
If you donate directly, and want a receipt, you MUST send an email to B4L with your details, the date and amount deposited.

## THOUGHTFULNESS

On 10 February, a kind-being called at The Barn at morning tea time along with a sticky Krispy Kreme doughnut for each helper. Thank you, Candice for your kindness which was delivered with a sticker from "Friends of Springbank Secondary College". Check them out: [Friends of Springbank Secondary College \(2\) Friends of Springbank Secondary College | Facebook](#)

## And, out of no-where came this message... after reading the label on one of the pallets ...



“Good afternoon, I'm Thato Moleleki from Lesotho, Southern Africa. I set up and currently work at one of the libraries you ship books to. I'm looking forward to help any way I can to make the whole idea of creating reading communities in Africa a success. On behalf of my country we are really grateful! Thank you.”

Thato tells me that he is a student assistant at the Methodist High School in Berea, a suburb of Maseru the capital city. We seldom receive direct feedback from recipient

schools, so this is a well-received message; thank you Thato. Because of the way books are currently handled in Lesotho, I am not sure what Thato can do to help the project. However, judging from the image he sent (shown above together with (right) a copy of the carton label) he is doing a great job in setting up the library. The next best thing he can do is to ensure that students have every opportunity to use the books, including introducing a borrowing system – which he may already have done.



## Do you recall the report on the community library that Ntate (Mr) Mothae Moletsane started?

He recently sent me a report posted by a local journalist... I thought you would like to read it:

*Local People Applauds Mpharane Community Library by a Staff Reporter*

*Life for members of the community in Mpharane village of Mohale's Hoek, Lesotho, will never be the same again. This after a community library, complete with a generous donation from Books For Lesotho (B4L), was made on 11 September 2020. Since then, members of the community in one of the remotest villages in the Kingdom of Lesotho, where access to electricity and good communication are out of reach, have been able to borrow books and reading material from the community library. Like many other areas in Lesotho, Mpharane is characterized by poverty and illiteracy among the villagers – but members of the community say they want to be at par with the rest of the country, and indeed the global world, in terms of access to information. Their pleas were heard when the Rotary Club of Maloti handed over five boxes of books that were shipped from Australia by Books For Lesotho to Mpharane Community Library. The Rotary Club of Maloti said it was proud to be in partnership with Books For Lesotho to distribute the books during its 'Basic Education and Literacy' campaign in September last year. The Coordinator of the Mpharane Community Library project, Mothae Moletsane, said the community was particularly grateful to Linn couple, founders of the B4L project for the donation. He said the library becomes among the first in the country to be spearheaded by members of the community who are making every effort to have it run and benefit everyone, in particular the youth and school children. Moletsane said apart from the donated books, the library also stocks newspapers that were donated as returns by some local prominent media houses such as Public Eye, Lesotho Times, The Post and others in Maseru, the capital. The library also stocks periodicals and reading material like government gazettes and hazards from various government institutions that are based in Mohale's Hoek town – about an hour's drive from the village through gravel road. Moletsane also said the community was grateful to the owners of the building that houses the library for letting it out at reasonable rental for community use. "Mpharane village is surrounded by about 12 primary schools and one High School and will therefore act as an information and resource centre for these communities. However, for the library and resource centre to be more effective we need more support from other donors and public entities," he said. Moletsane said the most urgent need at the library was to have it electrified through a government scheme project to communities or solar systems and other renewable energy methods. He said the last time that the committee that runs the library asked for a quotation to buy a solar energy system, the costs were too high to be raised from the members' subscriptions. He therefore appealed to local companies that deal with solar and renewable energy to consider this project next time they think about community social responsibility initiatives. "We are also appealing to businesses and other organisations in the country to assist us to*

*pay for the running costs of maintaining the building as well as looking after the volunteer librarian's needs. Once we have electricity we will be able to use computers and install the internet at the library to make it a one-stop all-purpose resource centre for the community, "he said. Apart from this, Moletsane said, the resource centre will be able to run its own fund-raising projects such as selling snacks and sweets as well as offering services such as typing, printing and photocopying to the community. It is estimated that there are around 12, 000 villagers within the Mpharane constituency and therefore such services will be readily received as the area is far away from the town. "If our plans of turning the community library into a multi-purpose information and resource centre are successful then it will become a pilot project in Lesotho. This will also help the youths who have finished school and are looking for jobs to search for employment and apply through the internet without having to go to Mohale's Hoek or Maseru," he said. On the other hand, Moletsane said the members of the community library committee are grateful for the support from local companies such as Blue Ribbon Bakery for the food and refreshments offered to villagers at the launch of the library last year. He also expressed his gratefulness to several government departments that came to the launch, including the ministries of Education, Health, Law, Justice and Police, Local Government and others, for their support.*

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Once again, at the start of preparing the Newsletter, I expected it would be a short one, but the news keeps rolling in – like the books do.

Thank you everyone who has contributed in whatever way.



David Linn  
Chairman, Books for Lesotho Inc.

