

Chicco Chissano

For some time Chicco was a regular visitor at Immaculata Hall Shelter at 17 Sturdee Avenue, Rosebank, where Fiona in particular, took him under her wing and suffered with him and for him "the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune"

Chicco is a Chissano and has a great surname.

Born in Mozambique Chicco came to South Africa at some stage.

We know only that Chicco is 49 and now suffers from paralysis and lived in his wheelchair in the park near the Rosebank Mall. He was completely incapacitated physically when he first arrived at the day care section of the Shelter. Kaya came with him - an amazing young man who though homeless himself, helped Chicco in every way possible. Rosebank people were good to Chicco and while he remained and was supported in the park during the day, Kaya would find a safe, warm nighttime nook for him.

But Chicco had only one plea - to get back home to Mozambique. With no documents to assist in the repatriation, no exact address of family, no contacts whatever, but with trust that miracles can happen, social worker, Fiona, contacted the Mozambique Consulate General on Oxford Road, a stone's throw from Chicco's park.

And Graca listened, truly listened.

Numerous phone calls over a few months, Graca set a date and time when a driver would arrive at Immaculata to take Chicco to the only place where his heart will find peace.

We worried about the Border.

We worried that the driver might not find the family,

We worried that no one would be in a position to care for Chicco.

We worried that he would still be homeless in a "foreign land"

We just worried!

Meanwhile, Fiona was arranging for new clothes, new slippers, new everything, and filling a golf bag - cadged from Angela's department - with all sorts of travel necessities. She and Chicco waited confidently.

Tuesday 20th May was to be the day of departure. Graca was working on it for sure. At 10h00 on the dot the driver arrived. Graca also arrived; we assumed she came to check that everything was in order.

Little did we guess: Graca would accompany Chicco to his homeland, all documentation at hand.

We bade farewell to a brave son of Mozambique and wished him well for the future.

It didn't end there. Fiona received photographs from Graca - an ambulance at the border to take Chicco to hospital for a checkup.

When he is well enough he will go to his sister who is happy to receive her brother.

What a lesson we can all learn from the Mozambique Consulate.

Chicco's namesake, President Joaquim, can be proud of the democracy he helped mould, proud of its Embassy and its Consulates in South Africa.

The story should be told. Pope Leo would love it. We all love it.

Sister St. John Enright.

SR ST JOHN ENRIGHT



Ambulance at the Border waiting on Chicco's arrival