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# SPALKE NEWS

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## Christmas Love - Looking Back

We hope you all had a great start into the new year! We seemed to have jumped into the demands of 2015 without much of a break. But first things first: Just before Christmas we celebrated



Christmas Love, a huge celebration for the people of 7 De Laan. The day was fabulous! Our neighbour sponsored a huge tent, his wife all the tables, chairs and decor. We found a good caterer who made a wonderful 3-course meal for a good price. Marco and the community leaders shopped for and wrapped an outfit and a pair of shoes for each child. On top of that each family received a food parcel and a broom set. The aim was to bless the people of 7 De Laan out of their socks and let them experience God's lavishing love - and it sure was a success! This was the first time in the history of this community that EVERYONE was

gathered at one place, ate together and got served by outsiders! We obviously gave a message of God's love and that his generosity towards us was Jesus, our Greatest Gift. Still today, weeks after the big day, people are talking about how special Christmas Love was and how overwhelmed they are of the selfless love of those who made this day possible. Here is a [3 min photo clip](#), that shows this beautiful day in a bit more detail. Again, a special and HUGE thanks to all of you who invested in this day and believed that it would make a difference in these precious lives!

## He makes the impossible possible...

So many things have happened in 7 De Laan in the last few weeks, it's too much to even start retelling here. Almost daily something tragic occurs in this community, things that shake us up and make us ask again and again "What do you have in store for this place, Lord?" We finally have the confirmation of a long lingering sense that 7 De Laan is gang territory. In fact, this tiny community is split perfectly half way between two rivalled gangs. This explains the predominant presence of crime and drugs. Most of the domestic violence and high rate of sexual crimes is yet another repercussion of gang activity. We are currently trying to network with the right people at the police, social services and the City of Cape Town and are also involving an ex-gangster for some insights on the best strategy (those are the best advisors anyway :)). At the same time people have started opening up in incredible ways to us, emotional and physical healing is happening and trust is growing. At the beginning of the year, I (Justine) have started going to 7 De Laan every Friday with my friend Sandra (whose husband René joins Marco on the streets weekly). We simply go and pray for the right conversations and godly timing. Each week we have had 2 to 3 very good talks where mostly the women and teenage girls just tell us their story and open up in a safe moment. We can go deep and often experience a lot of healing of

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9 not by works, so that no one can boast.

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Ephesians 2:8

hearts happening during prayer and God's Father Heart getting revealed bit by bit.

That's why we are not discouraged by the frequent negative news in 7 De Laan. Just as much as hearing that, we have God reminding us to see it through his eyes and to look at the - currently invisible - potential that lies here. The construction of the multi-purpose hall is another one of those "heavenly" perspectives. Almost 70% of the costs have been covered already. We are having good talks with the responsible officials at the City. It's not an easy process but God spoke to us in detail about this in April 2014 already, before we even knew what or where 7 De Laan is. That's why we are sure that the Lord will make this milestone possible too.

### ...and our Visa

We feel similar about our visa. It expires in about two weeks (on the 16th of February) and because we have constantly been given negative responses to our daily phone calls to Home Affairs we have decided to escalate the issue ourselves and let a very experienced immigration lawyer look at our case. Apparently, the recent decision of the Department was arbitrary and unlawful and there is a good chance for a successful outcome of a secondary application. This would not happen without its own hooplas, but it is the one possibility that requires the least amount of funds and logistical upheaval for us as a family. We are seriously considering to take this route, backed up by the law firm. We also choose to put this seemingly insurmountable challenge into the light of God's clear words for us. That we have an inheritance in this nation, a whole bag of seeds to sow still and that we are nowhere close to be done with South Africa. The poor shall be fed, the sick healed, the broken hearted become whole again and those with a marred picture of God shall meet their Father. Well, and we simply can't see any of this happen without a legal permission to stay on this soil :)

We would really appreciate your prayers. The stuff that's happening at 7 De Laan and with our visa exceeds our previous experience. At the same time we've never been that sure of God's promises either. We need all the prayer support and encouragement we can get to stand in the face of everything that is against us.

Blessings from

**The Spalkes**

Major thanks to Esther & Julien, who visited us for 3 weeks and - amongst other things - captured these moments in 7 De Laan:

