

**Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2005**

## **Christina Kiddie - Kimberly**

Our first AirBridge of the year is under the belt, better a little late than never. After a lot of phone calls to Kimberly police, Child Protection, Social Services and then Child Welfare, I was finally put onto the Children's Home; Christina Kiddie and Mrs. Freda Meiring.

Here's a gracious lady who has put her heart and sole into the running and maintaining of this home. They fall under Child Welfare whose funding covers about 48% of their needs, Freda has devised a number of ways to augment this income, and hopefully Rainbow AirBridge can contribute in some way to this task.



This is a well run home, offering children, a loving and caring environment in which to play, learn and just be kids, Freda and her assistants care for 30 children ranging in age from 6 to 18 years. We were all touched by the children and the home they have all created.

Thanks to Andre and Francesco for their aircraft and for piloting the first run to Christina Kiddie Children's Home; who will be a new recipient organisation in Kimberly. Ernie and myself went along to make contact and introduce our concept to Freda and the children. In broken Afrikaans I explained to all the children what we do, and how we go about doing.

We were treated to some delicious snacks and tea and given packs of biscuits and home made apricot jam to take back to our families, all made by the home and sold to augment their income. Very, very, tasty!

We had a pleasant trip there and back, the Kimberly strip includes two long and wide runways, 02/20 and 10/28, both well tarred. The airfield was unmanned, so after contacting Bloemfontein approach on frequency 119.4 we were instructed to broadcast intentions on the local frequency 118.6. Westward trips in winter should prove to be really smooth sailing.



The boys who met us at the airfield were keen to help offload and take in the aircraft.



The run to Kimberly was great, with the wind behind us we were clipping along at around 140-145 knots at times. The return leg was a different storey though. Francesco opted for a lower flight level (FL), 075; while Andre and Ernie went to FL 115. This move put them about 15 minutes ahead of us because of better winds aloft. Our ground speed at times dropped to 100 knots. Andre and Ernie also had a smoother ride and were required to dodge the tops of the clouds which Ernie described as magical.

Francesco's Cessna 182 carried rice, sugar, pasta, salt and toiletries, plus a small amount of cough syrup, colds and flu medicine, and pain tablets to the total volume of 125 Kg's. Andre in his neat Piper 235 carried rice, maize, and blankets to the tune of about 200 kg.

This is an organisation in need and we will be making more visits this year.

**Mike Ehrman**

