ISSUE

Newsletter of

embrace TALK

Editors Note

The New Year is already underway, with most of us having returned from a well-deserved holiday. Looking back, 2014 has been a busy year and we have certainly packed a lot into it, some of which we TALK about in this edition of embraceTALK.

We welcome a new staff member to our ACS-Embrace family and say farewell to those who have moved on to live their dream. If you missed our much talked about "Embrace Ladies High Tea" in August, we have included some "stylish" pictures from this fun, fabulous and entertaining event. We also share our experience at the Smart Procurement World Expo, in which we participated.

Our special feature focusses on our end-to-end Embrace ERP solution with the fully integrated "best of breed" Rental and Hire Module - going where no bolt-on has gone before!

We take great pride in presenting our case study on how Criterion Equipment drives growth, maximises revenue per rental and boosts profitability with the fully integrated Embrace Rental Module!

In 2015 we will continue our commitment to you and our people prioritising the passion and focus that sets ACS-Embrace apart from others.

"Whatever you do, embrace it with all your heart."

In closing, thank you for your continued support and we wish you a productive, prosperous 2015!

Jeanette



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Left: Viv Wright, Nomagugu Sitsha, Lars Haacke and Michelle Foster

Why You Need an Integrated ERP Business Solution

Questions are frequently asked about the benefits of having to learn a new system. The same set of commands and implementing and running a fully integrated ERP software menu structures are used throughout. solution as opposed to purchasing application software based on a best-of-breed "bolt-on" solution approach.

The simple answer is that a business solution is only as strong as its weakest integration. To this end, ACS has and continues to invest internal resources into developing and enhancing Embrace, ensuring it remains a world class, full-suite ERP software solution with fully integrated "best of breed" modules, eliminating the need for "bolt-ons" and "middleware". Some of these "best of breed" modules include Rental, Service, WMS (Warehouse Management), POS (Point-of-Sale), CRM (Customer Relationship Management), Emailing, Output Management (includes document management and archiving) and Web Services.

When you embrace a fully integrated ERP business solution, you effectively "cut out the middle man", eliminate data redundancy, connectivity complications, multiple user interfaces, as well as integration and interface risks.

Built on a robust technology platform, using a single data base and infrastructure. Embrace delivers the most comprehensive data, real-time, at the fastest processing speeds available. This is because all your critical data resides within one ERP solution, promoting data flows across your business for maximum speed, accuracy and visibility. This helps ensure real real-time information, which is critical to your business success!

Why embrace a fully integrated, full-suite ERP solution?

Integration – There is no need to integrate disparate 3rd-party "bolt-on" solutions which add significant extra recurring time and costs to an ERP project. This also prevents the "least common denominator" situation, which renders functionality in one area of the system unusable due to corresponding functionality and data not existing in other functional areas of the business

Full-suite solutions enable companies to take advantage of and implement version upgrades, as they become available, without the risk of invalidating an integration point between two separate systems.

and to use, enabling users to work cross-functionally without remain a best-in-class company.

Data Integrity - When common data is shared by multiple "bolt -on" solutions, data needs to be synchronised across multiple applications, which can lead to duplicate data, complex data integration issues as well as slow access to your most recent business information. Keeping the different systems in balance can be a time-consuming arduous task and when querying data in different parts of the system, users get different results, they quickly lose confidence in the overall system and don't know which figures to believe.

A full-suite, fully integrated software solution increases the overall integrity, stability, and usability of your ERP business solution. Users have complete visibility into the entire enterprise system and can use drill down tools to get to the heart of sales, performance and operational data.

Security - The more "bolt-on" solutions you have, the more security models your IT team needs to deal with, making it difficult to maintain security and privacy across the entire solution. Fully integrated ERP solutions ensure consistent. straightforward authorisations and user permissions for seamless security and privacy.

Maintenance Costs - The costs of maintaining different technologies, infrastructures, applications, data bases and middleware, guickly adds up, impacting your bottom line and when errors or imbalances between systems occur, it is difficult to determine which part of the system is to blame, often causing you to incur expenses with more than one vendor.

"Bolt-ons" are not maintained to work with the latest version of your ERP business solution. Also, a solution provider could change their complete data base schema from one software release to another which would disable all existing integration points. Additional costs are incurred when paying maintenance fees to multiple software vendors year after year.

With a full-suite solution, there is only one integrated solution to maintain, one vendor delivering end-to-end support as well as a risk free upgrade path, ensuring you remain at the leading

Usability - The full suite ERP business solution has a The bottom line is that integrated ERP business solutions are consistent "look and feel" throughout, making it easy to learn good for your business and your bottom line, ensuring you

Did You Know?

Embrace Includes a Fully Integrated Rental Module featuring:

- Multiple articles per contract
- Short or Long Term Hire of Fleet and other Assets
- Full Maintenance Leases
- Ad Hoc Rentals
- Billing based on Time and / or Unit Usage with multiple pricing models
- Complete Control of additional charges, i.e. Delivery Fees, Recovery Fees, Insurance, Consumables and Abuse.
- Labour Management of **Drivers and Crew**
- Birds eye view of fleet and Assets under Rental with full drill down capability
- Rental Planning to maximise Customer Satisfaction
- Rental Performance and **Profitability Tracking**

Embrace Rental Module – Drives Growth – Going where no "Bolt-On" has Gone Before!



Rental module is a cutting edge solution, delivering comprehensive, out-of-the-box functionality, providing a complete end-to-end solution to companies operating in the short and long term rental market.

Whether your requirements are full maintenance leasing or ad hoc hire, Embrace Rental is designed to cater for all your needs. Whether you are renting out trucks, cars, forklifts, televisions, photocopiers or printers, in fact, any type of equipment, Embrace Rental will help you grow your revenues, reduce operating costs and maximise asset utilisation.

Increase operational efficiency as all departments work off a single centralised system from quotation through to end of contract life, with complete visibility as you control the entire lifecycle of a contract.

Features include:

- Reservations
- Allocation of Articles and Crew
- **Despatch Control**
- Swaps and Replacements
- Article Returns
- Article Debriefing
- Invoicing
- Multiple vehicles per contract

Embrace Rental provides a clear view of all assets under rental. Availability recording, monitoring, enquiry and reporting all form an integral part of the solution.

The Embrace fully integrated, full-featured, flexible Users are able to set up new contracts or access and maintain existing contracts directly via the Rental Planning Board. With fast, problem-free contract processing, accurate information and streamlined communications customer satisfaction is assured. Multiple pricing models are available, including future pricing and automatic price escalations. pricing can be managed at an equipment level and at an individual customer level, using specific pricing or discount matrices, which include price, charges and free units.

> Resource scheduling is also supported for rental articles, crew members and drivers. The rental planning board provides clear real-time visibility of rental items, availability and location - for a single rental centre, or across multiple rental centres. Resources are linked to resource groups and resource groups can be linked together for easy access to information. All resources belonging to a group are loaded onto the Planning Board, including their availability, capacity and their current allocations.

> Management of drivers, crew and additional equipment, ensures control over all aspects of the rental contract with numerous notifications expediting your processes when contracts are due to expire or are ready for renewal. Fast, efficient hire contract processing in Embrace Rental accelerates throughput, increases revenues and improves cash flow.

System flexibility enables billing to be based on time,

additional charge items, such as delivery and recovery type or fleet type. Exception reporting highlights fees, insurance, consumables, abuse or over use factors. The system allows for both external billing to customers and internal billing between business units, with detailed revenue recognition within individual cost centres.

Billing is a continuous process over the life of a Rental contract, with the ability to merely update the current periods' usage and then process the next cycle of invoicing. The contract containing the relevant billing and article information is set up initially with each periodic invoice being raised against that original contract. No recapture is required for each new invoice, and any changes to the contract, where items may have been added or swapped are picked up and reflected in the next invoice for that contract.

Usage schedules are produced on time based intervals with the information provided being captured and billed automatically by the system on either a daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly or annual basis. Billing can be processed either on both an individual ad-hoc contract basis or batched by a number of

usage or both and caters for an unlimited number of criteria including customer, rental location, contract contracts where invoicing is outstanding to ensure that all revenue earned is invoiced.

> Tight integration with the Embrace Fixed Asset module and Service module ensures full visibility of service scheduling and fleet cost analysis. Integration with the Service module allows the Rental Planning Board to show where vehicles are unavailable or have been de-fleeted giving operations staff up to the minute information as to fleet availability.

> Full integration between Embrace ERP and the Embrace Rental module enables transactions processed in the Rental module to integrate immediately into the ERP system. Source documents and contract enquiries can be accessed quickly and easily, saving you time and improving accuracy. By leveraging the extensive power in the Embrace end-to -end business solution, the integrated Rental module provides clear, linked visibility across all rental, sales, service, invoicing, delivery and collections.



About Compact Computer Solutions (CCS)

CCS, an ACS-Embrace Partner delivers end-to-end business. solutions which include ERP, CRM, Hardware & Software, Virtual Postman, SharePoint, Disaster Management infrastructure. implementation, service and support, underpinned both by internationally-accredited methodologies and teams of experts.

CCS specialises the Manufacturing, Pharmaceutical and Warehousing, Construction, Agricultural, and Capital equipment sectors ensuring their clients achieve optimal value from the experience and knowhow needed to maximise the business benefits from their chosen systems architecture.

CCS strives to add tangible commercial value, to promote competitive advantage and enable business capability. Ensuring cost-effective value, dependable support and peace of mind, CCS fosters lasting professional long relationships and over the past 20 years have been retaining clients who continue to grow and succeed.

Why Embrace Rental?

- Embrace Rental is a "best of breed" fully A detailed article history rolls up into a integrated ERP Module, eliminating the need for 3rd party "bolt-ons" "middleware"
- Increase operational efficiency with all

 Seamless integration into departments working off a single centralised system from quotation to end of contract life
- Ensure accurate information and improved customer service levels and satisfaction
- Effectively and efficiently manage assets from acquisition through to disposal, through rental process, swaps and service requirements
- Enables informed business decisions by providing a clear view of assets under rental, including revenue generated, services costs and depreciation expenses

- comprehensive view by specific rental article or specific group of rental articles to assess and evaluate the fleet profile
- Embrace Debtors for invoicing and credit management
- Reduce time to invoice, receive payments faster and improve cash flow
- Maximise revenue per rental and boost profitability





Criterion Equipment – (Forklift Sales, Repairs and Rentals) – Relies on Embrace to Drive Growth, Increase Revenues, Reduce Costs of Operation, Improve Asset Utilisation and Boost Profitability!

The Company

Criterion Equipment, a wholly owned subsidiary of Invicta Holdings Ltd, is the sole distributor of TCM forklift trucks in Southern Africa. Supported by a network of Branches, Dealers and Agencies in all the major centres throughout Southern Africa, Criterion Equipment has become a dominant force in the material handling industry.

Renowned for its durability and simplicity, the TCM brand has become the product of choice in the market it serves. Servicing the TCM brand is comparatively economical, with all genuine parts being sourced directly from the TCM factory in Japan.

The Challenge

Prior to Embrace - Inefficient, Expensive "Bolt-On" Rental Module

Prior to the Embrace Rental module being available, Criterion was using a 3rd party "bolted on" rental package, which was cumbersome to use, expensive to manage and maintain and never really worked. Management lacked timely insight into rental inventory, financials and other important information, which delayed planning and business decisions. It was difficult to measure the lifetime profitability of assets. There was duplication of effort as employees frequently needed to manually enter the same information into separate systems, which resulted in erroneous data. "Only once integrated within Embrace did 'Rental' work properly" – Sean Meeling, Financial Manager.

Gaps in Previous Rental Fleet Management System and Service

With a fleet of 700, Criterion Equipment has several million rands invested in rental equipment. To ensure maximum return on this investment, the company needs to be able to manage these assets from acquisition, to service requirements, through to disposal. The lack of integration between the ERP, rental and service solutions, resulted in costly operational inefficiencies.

Inventory Optimisation and Procurement Challenges

The company maintains a huge parts inventory investment, in excess of R14 million, all of which are sourced from Japan and carry a 9 month lead time. Procurement needs to be efficient and accurate to ensure a 94% parts availability, without over capitalising. Inventory management and sales teams need to know the current inventory status, how inventory items turn over, fleet turnover and the availability of items.

Complex Contracts and Pricing Structures

Criterion Equipment needs the flexibility to extend, convert, change, or add to rental contracts while at the same time being able to efficiently offer different pricing structures per customer. There was a requirement to put better controls in place, track usage, abuse, credit status on all contracts and define "in process" rules for invoicing frequency of all contracts.

The Solution

A Single Solution with Integrated Rental and Fleet Management

The Embrace end-to-end business solution gives Criterion Equipment a real time 360° view of the entire business, streamlining and automating core processes, such as rental, sales, service, invoicing, delivery and collections.

Fleet Management

The integrated Embrace solution tracks depreciation and has enabled Criterion Equipment to review the performance and profitability of their entire fleet as well as individual machines. "We are able to manage all our assets from acquisition, through the rental process, swaps and service requirements, through to disposal." – Sean Meeling, Financial Manager.

Service Management

Embrace maintains a full history of all equipment, including warranties, service records, parts installations and location changes, which has increased operational efficiency. Future planned servicing requirements of the fleet are also tracked and monitored. "Visibility into detailed equipment histories enables us to plan services so as to ensure minimal interruption to the availability of machines for billable deployments." – Heinrich Fredrick, Branch Manager

Employee Time Management

Workshop employees record their hours, as well as the jobs and projects they work on. "We are able to track employee time in relation to revenue, costs and tasks. The workflow process prevents shortcuts being taken and ensures nothing falls between the cracks, to assist us in delivering exceptional customer service and meeting our stringent ISO audit requirements." – Sean Meeling, Financial Manager.

Rental Management

Through a single workflow driven interface Criterion Equipment are able to manage the life cycle of each and every asset and contract. Embrace provides a complete view of all the assets under rental, their availability and location. "Operational efficiency has increased as all divisions and branches are working off a single, centralised and integrated system from quotation to end of contract life." - Heinrich Fredrick – Branch Manager.

Customer Relationship Management

The drill down and integrated capabilities of Embrace enable sales and service teams to access complete customer histories with detailed updates on the equipment customers own or rent, their purchasing history and service requirements. "Embrace enables us to identify customers who have not purchased for a while, see when last they purchased, establish who has the relationship with them, take action and encourage them to purchase and renew their relationship with us." – Heinrich Fredrick, Branch Manager

The Benefits

"I believe that what differentiates Embrace from any other ERP solutions is that the Rental Module is fully integrated and the great support!" – Sean Meeling, Financial Manager

Maximise Revenue per Rental with Efficient Fleet Management

Criterion's fleet managers are able to track depreciation and review the performance and profitability of their entire fleet as well as all rental equipment by individual machine, model, equipment family and other criteria, enabling management to take prompt action to eliminate or improve machines or fleet sectors that have subpar performance.

"Almost immediately after going live with the integrated Embrace Rental solution, we started achieving tremendous bottom-line improvements in rental-fleet management and operational efficiency, which has made a huge impact on the business." – Brenton Kemp, Managing Director.

Inventory Optimisation

Criterion Equipment can now track sales with full visibility into all inventory issues, i.e. shortages, back orders, allocations, parts, damaged stock, swaps and write-offs. Long lead times make it necessary to carry a large stockholding. Tightly integrated procurement models, along with critical warning lists ensures that the company always has the correct stock, when and where they need it, minimizing customer downtime and allowing for cost effective and efficient service. Write offs are minimal and stock turns twice per annum.

Exceed Customer Expectations

The integrated solution has enabled Criterion Equipment to boost its capabilities and accelerate customer service with direct access to inventory and costing. Salespeople can verify inventory availabilities and customers' credit status on all contracts. When customers' exceed their credit limit, credit control is immediately notified and assists in resolving, enabling customers to keep their projects moving. The system is extremely flexible, making it easy to add to, change or convert a contract form short to long term, while catering for different pricing structures per customer.

Accurate Tracking of Work In Progress (WIP)

"WIP" is a critical element of the business and Embrace gives full visibility into all "open jobs", enabling service personnel to track the number of jobs that have been opened and their current status. All parts, outwork, consumables and labour are loaded, so that the costs, revenue and profitability of every job can be measured. "Embrace assists us in reducing the amount of capital tied up by keeping work in progress to a minimum. Detailed enquiries, flexible and comprehensive reports give us full visibility into these figures." – Sean Meeling, Financial Manager

Exceed Stringent ISO Requirements

Criterion Equipment is ISO compliant and follows stringent audit requirements. Being able to toggle between figures and descriptions, seeing what was recorded and the explanations, has assisted in making critical decisions. Embrace management reports assist in highlighting any

problems in the branches and in achieving accuracies and efficiencies in excess of 95%. "This is critical for us, as management bonuses and incentives are calculated based on performance and accuracy." – Sean Meeling, Financial Manager

Improved Cash Flow

Customers receive consolidated invoices for Criterion Equipment contracts and services, which helps eliminate confusion and ease their financial planning. The company effectively uses EDI (Electronic Data Interchange) for the delivery of these invoices and all statements, saving money on postal services and ensuring prompt payment. "Embrace EDI has helped reduce outstanding and over aged payments. We receive payment quicker, which positively affects our cash flow and that is important!"—Sean Meeling, Financial Manager.

Increase Sales and Boost Revenue Generation

The comprehensive mark-up matrix within the Embrace Price Book enables Criterion Equipment to sell individual parts at the most competitive and profitable price. Discounts and special pricing structures, per customer are calculated into the selling price. An incentive scheme has been implemented, whereby the operator who processes the most sales, earns the most commission and because Embrace can track every transaction to a user level, commission calculation is automatic.

Increase Operational Efficiencies

The integrated Embrace Rental solution has helped Criterion Equipment to eliminate time consuming tasks. "Life is a lot easier now, especially with accounts, allocation and invoicing. We never used to balance and wasted a lot of time trying to find the problem, but now our invoices are right, our collection is right, the cash comes in quicker and we balance! Our Return on Investment was almost immediate!" - Sean Meeling

Superb Support

Embrace is quick and easy to implement, simple to use, with minimal training requirements. Criterion Equipment is able to move new acquisitions onto Embrace within a month, with minimal disruption to the business. "We are very happy with the implementation and the on-going excellent support we receive from Compact Computer Solutions (CCS)" – an Embrace Value Added Partner.

"Embrace is cost effective to run, adds value and is not expensive to maintain. We would not stay on a package if it did not add value!"—Sean Meeling, Financial Manager



Ladies High Tea

Earlier this year the

ACS-Embrace ladies took the

opportunitea

To embrace and celebrate

everything that spells

W-O-M-A-N!

After exploring every possibilitea we hosted a Ladies "High Tea" And invited all our clients. with exceptional abilitea To join in the festivitea, embrace their feminitea And be entertained by world renowned celebritea actor, singer and self-confessed foodie,hilarious Harry Sideropoulos..... who took us on a fabulous journey of festive food, wonderful wine, magnificent music, song, comedy and mirth with a sumptuous helping of his decadent chocolate delight and some tips on how to gain weight in three easy steps, as he paid homage to ...THE WOMAN WHO ACTUALLY MAKES THINGS HAPPEN IN OUR SO CALLED "MAN'S WORLD".

"A strong woman is independent, knows who she is, accomplishes her goals, relies on no one, and can overcome any obstacle thrown in her way."

Jenna Bognar

Celebrating National Women's Day in Style



Glitz and Glamour as the Ladies "Fashion Police" Up; Team Turbo steps out; The winning table has it all - "Beauty, Brains and the Sex-Bomb"!

ACS-Embrace Exhibits at the Smart Procurement World Exhibition



September saw our Sales and Marketing Team participate in Africa's largest supply chain and procurement expo at Gallagher Convention Centre. The theme was "Collaboration".

We took the opportunity to "stand out" from the crowd and showcase our end-to-end Embrace ERP Solution, as being superior in functionality, ease of use, performance, price and support.

The team also attended some of the conference



presentations and gained valuable insight into which direction the supply chain industry is going.

From visibility to credibility, our presence highlighted that our integrated Supply Chain Modules meet current and future industry requirements.

Team Embrace TALK



Welcome

We take great pleasure in welcoming and introducing you to our newest team member, Nomagugu Sitsha. Noma joins ACS as our friendly Receptionist. Noma is single, an energetic squash player, who also enjoys dancing, spending time with friends and helping others. Determined to make a difference, Noma is involved in a number of outreach programs, providing assistance to young girls living in rural areas. Noma is also an avid reader, enjoys watching a good movie and being part of a "well organised and professional team." We welcome Noma to the ACS-Embrace family and know that her friendly voice and professional manner will continue to endear her to colleagues and clients.

Farewell

It is with a heavy heart we say farewell to **Kesia Adams**, our receptionist of 9 years. Always professional and polite, with a cheery and chatty personality, Kez created a warm and welcoming atmosphere for all ACS staff, clients and visitors. Kez is a true "Jack of all trades" and "master of all". From flower arrangements, catering, to coordinating events and "get – togethers" with colleagues, Kez did it all!

Kez leaves ACS to "cook up a storm" and live her dream as her true passion is "cooking" and is now, producing culinary works of art, impressing international ambassadors and their guests. We wish Kez every success in her new venture.



Retirement

We say farewell to Alethea Miller, who after 24 years of service, retired from ACS. Alethea joined ACS in 1990, as a developer in our Research & Development Department. She made a big impression from day one, arriving with "blonde hair and a tan", in her Mercedes Sports Car. We soon began to realise that there was no other like Alethea!

She volunteered to take over the support of Bins, Lots and Serials in Embrace and went on to assist in writing our Warehouse Management solution. Alethea certainly left her mark on Embrace and it will be a lasting one, just like the impression she has made on the many lives of those at ACS. We thank Alethea for her contribution to ACS and Embrace and wish her a long, happy and rewarding retirement. She will always be part of the ACS community.

FAQ

Q: I encountered an error message, now what do I do?

Depending on the severity, it is important to contact your company's Embrace support desk immediately when this happens. Do not end your session, close off the error message or log off. Support can often provide a quicker resolution if the message is still on the screen. Our support analysts may request permission to shadow your remote session to "see what you're seeing" in real time. That way, the analysts will have a better understanding of your problem. If assistance is not immediately available and you need to shut down, please first take a screen dump of your Embrace session and email it to your system administrator together with as much information as possible as to what you were doing at the time, including program name, branch, warehouse, customer, product, etc. as well as any unusual processing steps you may have performed.

Q: How many sessions can one user connect to simultaneously?

A: Multiple sessions. Your system administrator may restrict the number of sessions you can run simultaneously, in your user profile. If not restricted at a user level, access is dependent on the number of user licences available, as licensing is based on "concurrent" users.

FAQ Continued..

How do I change my password?

A: When logged into Embrace, users can change their passwords by accessing "Utilities" and selecting "Change Password". Please enter your old password (the one you logged in with) and enter a new The number of password. characters and format will depend on how your server is set up and remember that passwords are case sensitive. Please enter your old password, then your new password, then confirm the new password by entering it again, and then select *Update* to commit the change. Depending on your company policies, password may also expire automatically after a set time period and the system will automatically prompt for a new password during the login process.

Last Word

"It is what difference we have made in the lives of others that will determine the significance of the life we lead."

- Nelson Mandela

embraceTALK

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Outreach TALK

First Aid Training for Caregivers at Ikhwezilokusa Home

The caregivers at the Home need to have some level of first aid ability, while others who already have first aid experience need to improve on their knowledge and first aid skills. Minor accidents and medical emergencies can happen at any time and whoever is on duty needs to be able to take control of the situation and provide initial assistance. The Outreach Team organised and sponsored St John's Ambulance to go to the home and run the necessary courses. Caregivers are now better equipped to assist patients with injuries, those who have epileptic fits, and those suffering from other medical conditions.



Shade for Ikwezilokusa School

school grounds, for many reasons. One of the most important being, that shade provides protection from the heat and solar UV radiation.

Students were spending their breaks inside their classrooms in summer, as it was either too hot or , when it rained, too wet, to go outside. "Shade" would provide protection from the elements, as well as giving students an area to eat lunch, play and socialise.

Providing shade would also help extend school classrooms and make more space, especially when the need arose to combine classes or call a school assembly. Shade would also provide occupational therapists with an environment where they could have one-on-one time with students.

The school needed to provide accessible shade on the To assist and meet these requirements, the outreach team considered various options, such as solid roof structures, shade cloth structures, and natural shade and decided that a solid roof structure would be the most effective. It is a permanent structure, requires minimal maintenance and serves the schools' multitude of purposes, i.e. Provide "allweather" protection, additional classroom space, exercise space during inclement weather and can be used as a picnic or lunch area.

> The team organised and sponsored the structure, which went up in record time, amidst a lot of excitement, cheering and shrieks of joy. "Thank you ACS for what you have done and continue to do for our Ikhwezilokusa Home and School."

- Lillian Dyarvane, Project Director/Founder



