



Gumboots Foundation is growing up. It is now seven years since the launch of the organisation at SA House in London – during that time we have helped six different community-based projects, hundreds of individuals and have raised over R2 million. This is all thanks to YOU and the commitment of many volunteers and donors from SA, UK, USA and Canada. You have only to visit our current projects to feel the difference you are all making. **T H A N K Y O U!**

For more information or to become a Gumboots donor, visit our website www.gumboots.org.za or phone Jenny Prangley on 082 928 8806

Leratong Pre-School

Dedicated to the Gogos

This newsletter is dedicated to all the Gogos (Grannies) in the Leratong extended family who are struggling to cope against heavy odds – HIV/AIDS & poverty. They are doing the work on their own: there are no men to be seen; their daughters have died; they are bravely caring for the grandchildren and great-grandchildren. I visited two such Gogos – Mary Sethojane and Johanna Sefola – and their stories are similar and equally moving. Peggy keeps close ties with these women but is very concerned about their future.

“When I die who is going to look after my children?”



Mary with grandson Thabiso

Mary's story

This smiling, gentle, quiet woman lives in a small flat next to the school with her 3 young grandchildren – she lost both her daughters to Aids last year. Thabiso (in photo) graduated from Leratong at the end of the year.

Mary's life is full of stress: very little money; no foster-care grants from the government yet; medical issues with ARV medicine for one of the children; her own ill health with high blood

pressure and diabetes. She gets no support from her other children as they keep their distance from this HIV-affected little group. When asked what is the hardest part of her life, she answered, “My difficulties are when I am sick and if I die, who will look after the children?”

Johanna's story

I visited her in the family home near Leratong, where she looks after 6 grandchildren and 2 great-grandchildren (her own 4 children died recently). Johanna also takes in 2 other children from her yard during the day – and her only income is 2 small foster-care grants and R500 from the father of the great-grandchildren. Her grandson is still at Leratong. Like Mary (who is her friend) she has a smiling, accepting disposition, and also suffers from high blood pressure. When asked the same question, tears filled her eyes: “When I die who is going to look after my children?”



Johanna and her large family at home

As we left Peggy said, “Behind the closed doors, you don't know what is going on in these small homes”.

All that is needed to change these Gogos' lives would be a monthly food parcel of about R200 of mealie-meal, tea, sugar, soup and soap. Let's try to make a small difference in Mary and Johanna's lives.



Sigiya Sonke

A new energy has infused the Sigiya Sonke dancers since the opening of the renovated Dance Warehouse in November last year. They are all enthusiastic and energised and there has been lots on the go...

The events

The JHB Mini City Council event with dancing and a gumboots workshop for the children; two evenings at the Warehouse as awareness-raising events (see photo, right, of the group in their new outfits supplied by UK funds); and an event for Queen Rania of Jordan at the Sandton Library where she was reading to children from Alex (see photo below). A few other events are helping Jack and Beauty with keeping their heads above water since losing their jobs last year. They recently hosted a workshop for GIBS with Beauty catering for teas and full-on lunch at the Warehouse that was very successful.

In the holidays Jack had them rehearsing

every day – and then in the evening they all had fun watching TV and sleeping at the Warehouse. Zenzele has stepped up into a new role – not only is he a talented dancer and choreographer, but in his quietly confident and regal manner he is now MC at some of the events.

Study area

Thanks to ongoing donations from the UK, the study area has now been kitted out with computers, printer, worktables, books, magazines. We are busy making curtains that will make the place homely, but are still in need of furnishings for the chill-out space – anyone? anyone?



The study area in use at the new Warehouse



Pantsulas doing their thing in new outfits

A new energy has infused the Sigiya Sonke dancers

Mzee's story

Mzee is one of the dancers who has had the opportunity of going to the United Church School through a donor in the UK. Mzee says, "Since I started dancing this group has changed my life – it has helped me to improve my self esteem. The Gumboots Foundation has also helped in many ways – it has made my life simple by taking me to a new school that helps me to further my knowledge. I thank everyone in this group".

His parents are also very grateful: "We would like to thank Gumboots, Jack and Beauty to choose our son to have this opportunity to go to private school. We wish all the best for our son and this group to grow bigger than this. **Thank you God to have a father like Jack.**"



Mzee on left of the Queen, with some of the dancers



Other Gumboots & Associated Projects

THE KADEY HOME

Life is looking up

An amazing new double-storey "wing" has been created for the 7 Kadey kids – as a playroom, study area, and girls' bedroom. With all the dust and disruption over the last few months, it is now nearing completion and will make a huge difference in their lives.

In Peggy's wise words: "These kids are no longer orphans – they have a family, mothers, home, food, warmth, education and clothing. They are indeed blessed."



A new wing for the Kadey Kids

A window into Alex life

On arrival at the school and home this weekend, I had to fight my way through braais, tents, drumming and singing sangomas who were camped out in the carpark. They had been celebrating their graduation for 4 days with 6 slaughtered goats, chunks of chickens – and no sleep for poor Mpho and the Kadey kids.

On leaving, 4 sangomas in their bras, goatskins, beads and wraps went down on their knees by my car, mistaking me for one of their graduates leaving for Mpumalanga. Peggy said they were giving me a blessing (I hope) for my journey!

RATANG BANA

Ingrid Moloi is the angel who runs Ratang Bana (meaning "Love the Children" in Sotho), a non-profit organisation that we are hoping to become involved with. She is a social worker and orphan care co-ordinator, and during the last 5 years has initiated many successful projects. We are hoping to support the following ones (we already help the Similane family who were sent to us through Ingrid).

Red Roses Football Club

Ingrid got involved in 2004 when the existing club was going down the drain, and has managed to take the club to great heights with 92 children attending practices with donated kit. For many of them this provides the only stability in their lives.

Promise

Promise is a young girl whose mother died a few years ago. Ingrid has managed to get her into the Kensington Home that she shares with 60 other young girls. She is in great need of someone to take her under their wing for outings or shopping.

Jabu

Jabu is also an orphan who has been helped by an amazing sponsor who is putting him through a BCom. (now in his final year). However, there are the usual shortages: like food, clothing and transport money to visit his siblings in a government flat in Alex.

The Similanes

In the words of Trish, their Gumboots support person: "I go grocery shopping with them about every three weeks. Needless to say the list is growing as they get older, and now on the list is roll-on deodorant and hair straightener! They go regularly down to KZN to stay with Kululiwe's family. The English branch of the Lightfoot family visited the kids recently with gifts from Karen – see Mandla in his Manchester United football shirt – his pride and joy."

They have come a long way from when they were found hiding 3 years ago, having just seen their mother in her coffin, and terrified to go into their insecure house with its broken door. Today they are not orphans, they have a home, a mother in Kululiwe and they talk of their new "mother's" family as their own. Thanks to their donor!



A proud "Man U" Mandla with his sisters



Ingrid with her "son" Jabu

**Do you have any spare time or funds?
These mini-projects would really appreciate your support.**