

THE BEAT

Gumboots Newsletter

• April 2014 •

Gumboots
www.gumboots.org.za



It is election year, one in which we mark South Africa's 20 years of democracy. Our autumn newsletter contains stories of success and stories of discomfort that are so typical of life in Alex in our still-young democracy. For more information about Gumboots and ways to help, visit our websites: www.gumboots.org.za (in SA); www.kidlinksworld.org (in the USA); and www.gumboots.co.uk (in the UK).



LERATONG PRE-SCHOOL



Enraptured children - thank you Geeta and Karen

GEETA'S STORYTELLING AT LERATONG

Through Gumboots UK, the children of Leratong were given a real treat in January by storytellers Geeta Raj from the UK/USA (globalsleepover) and Karen Hart from SA (picsterbooks). Geeta and Karen have developed interactive educational stories to help teach reading skills in developing countries to kids aged 4-8. Immediately apparent to them was how they all connected through the visuals, sounds and stories even though they did not speak the same language. The teachers engaged in the storytelling process with them and enjoyed knowledge transfer and skills-sharing. And the children loved the day... a wonderful story for all! This was just the first visit for Geeta and Karen at Leratong: "We intend on sharing more storybooks and storytelling with the children and teachers, but are also committed to join the efforts to further support the wonderful staff and teachers at Leratong!"

PEGGY'S DREAM

For a long time Peggy has been counselling teenage girls in Alex aged 13-17. These vulnerable girls from disadvantaged backgrounds fall easily into a trap where they are exposed to drugs, sex, abuse, pregnancy and rape. Now Peggy has a dream to start up a home for about 5 to 10 girls where they can live safely without harm; where they have space to bond and become a family; where they can be taught life skills and values of life behaviour; and where they can learn to respect their bodies and know how to protect themselves. Peggy wants to plant a seed of responsibility, pride and accountability so these girls can stand up and say: "This is me - I made it in Alex." She believes that young women need to know their value, and she believes with all her heart that "if you teach a woman, you've equipped a nation." Thanks to a donation from Diane Lardy from Madison, Wisconsin, Peggy has a generous donation that will go towards setting-up costs of this dream... that will hopefully soon become a reality.



Peggy with Matsie, one of the new family members of the Kadey Home

Flooring and doors are in!



KADEY HOME RENOVATIONS

The Kadey kids love their new home now that the wonderful red flooring is in and the big doors allow the light to shine in. The Learning Centre is also complete and will soon be ready for the young learners.



Learning Centre

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SIGIYA SONKE

ADDITIONAL COACHING FOR THE GROUP



Megan and the dancers getting fit

Megan Erasmus has returned to help train the children twice a week thanks to funding from the NJL Foundation in London. Megan danced from the age of 5 and turned professional at 19, dancing, choreographing and teaching. She coached the Sigiya Sonke group for 3 months in 2012 with great results and is now continuing the training in good sound technique, helping to create strength, flexibility and fine-tuning of the body – all essential elements before any actual dancing can begin. Megan says, "It is sometimes difficult to get the most out of the young dancers. When you are hungry, your brain and body switch off. I am hoping to find a sponsor who will donate food for them during our sessions to help them with concentration and energy."

A PANTSULA STAR

Zimvo Njaju, 17, attends a private school in Bramley and is one Jack's pantsula dancers. At the end of last year he told Jack and Beauty that his father had lost his job and he had to return to a rural school in the Eastern Cape. Devastated and afraid of going backwards to an inadequate education, he wanted to be in Alex where he has the support and involvement of Sigiya Sonke, and an opportunity to make a success of his life.

Now, thanks to our UK donors, Zimvo is able to continue at his school and with his dancing. "I would like to thank them with my whole heart. They show they can take me somewhere and I appreciate that. Dancing helps me to forget my problems and takes me away from bad things, drugs. I won't disappoint them – I will be there for them."

Jack has given him the job of caretaker of the Warehouse with the responsibility of looking after it and locking up.



Zimvo - a dancer with enthusiasm and passion



Cheerful, helpful Matebogo

JACK'S NEW RIGHT HAND

Matebogo Nxumalo has stepped into Deli's shoes (Jack's daughter) – she is a wonderful support and helps to influence others to come to rehearsals. She says, "It all makes me feel special. I am glad to be giving back to Jack and grooming the little ones to be like me." Her involvement with the group is helping her to come to terms with the disappointment of not having the funds to go to MGI (the Midrand Graduate Institute) – she was accepted to do psychology this year and even attended lectures for a month, but there was no bursary or student loan available. This is the same for Puseletso Makhubela who also matriculated with Matebogo last year – she was hoping to do a BCom. This is the sad and desperate reality of gaining a university entrance pass but having your hopes dashed by lack of funds and limited capacity of our tertiary institutions.

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RATANG BANA



THE LEADERSHIP GROUP

The Young Entrepreneur & Leadership Initiative that was started last September by one of our UK trustees is continuing under the mentorship of Taryn, Helen and Lauren from Deloitte. The 12 youngsters meet once a month in the Learning Centre at Ratang Bana for 4 hours that includes a snack and lunch break. They have been building on their presentation skills, teamwork and basic computer literacy. While there have been some IT challenges, the group is enthusiastic, eager to learn and making great progress. Thank you to Team Deloitte for your commitment and assistance with the further education of these youngsters. Gumboots is providing three additional laptops with internet connection for the learning centre.

Helen with 4 students exploring the internet



Faith and Ingrid setting off to meet the Monola family



ADOPTING AN ALEX FAMILY

Ingrid has great hopes and plans to get more support for some of her child- and granny-headed families by finding individuals to "adopt" them. Faith Moyo is the first "adopter" of the Monola family, consisting of 2 young children (5 & 7) and their gogo. Faith wants to put a smile on their faces... an outing to a park, an ice cream treat, perhaps a bag of food, some laundry washed for them. Little things that will make them feel loved and special. And Faith knows that this will in turn impact on her too. Are there any other individuals out there who would like to do a small something to help a family in need?



SPONSORSHIP FOR LERATO LANGA

At the end of last year a young matriculant with two distinctions was unable to afford the registration for Wits University. Through an introduction from Gumboots, Jane Simmonds took Lerato (19) under her wing, but it was too late for the application.

However, Jane found him an internship at Vuleka Primary School in Dunkeld as a teacher assistant – and she pays him a generous monthly stipend. Lerato is now eligible to be selected for a bursary programme for a B.Ed at UNISA – and he would continue to work for them during that time. Lerato says, "I want to pass on my knowledge to the future of South Africa." A wonderful good news story. Lerato's granny is one of Ingrid's "gogos" who visits Ratang Bana regularly. And the win/win is that Jane is now doing her Masters in Public Health at Ratang Bana with the grandmothers. She says the horrifying statistic is that 65% of children are raised by grandmothers in SA – so their role is critical to the development, safety and stability of these children.

TRANSPORT IS TOUGH

There are 2 youngsters under Ingrid's care who have the means and results to attend their education facilities but who can't, simply because they do not have the money for transport (about R30 a day). Lehlogonolo Machabu, 18, is at Lyndhurst School in his final year; and Lurwayi Brighton, 19, has a bursary to a college. If anyone can help these boys to achieve their goals in education by helping with a small amount of transport money, you will be changing their lives in a big way.

PHETOHO EDUCATION

MATRIC SUCCESS



Gumboots celebrating the matric results with Matebogor, Puseletso and Mzee

Given their enormously difficult home situations, the fact that all three United Church School students passed their matrics last year, is an amazing achievement. Matebogor and Puseletso both at university entrance level and Mzee at diploma level. In John's words, "Like all of us who have been associated with these three children over a number of years I feel overwhelmingly proud of them, for which the involvement of Gumboots and its generous donors is made worthwhile."

A great quote from one of the Phetoho recipients, Zimvo Njaju, after the Santa Shoebox visit: "When you gave me the present I felt my heart dancing better than I do. Thank you very much for having such an impact in my life. Now I really believe when Mr Jack says 'a small thing can have a huge impact in your life' cause after the present I have become a very smiling person."

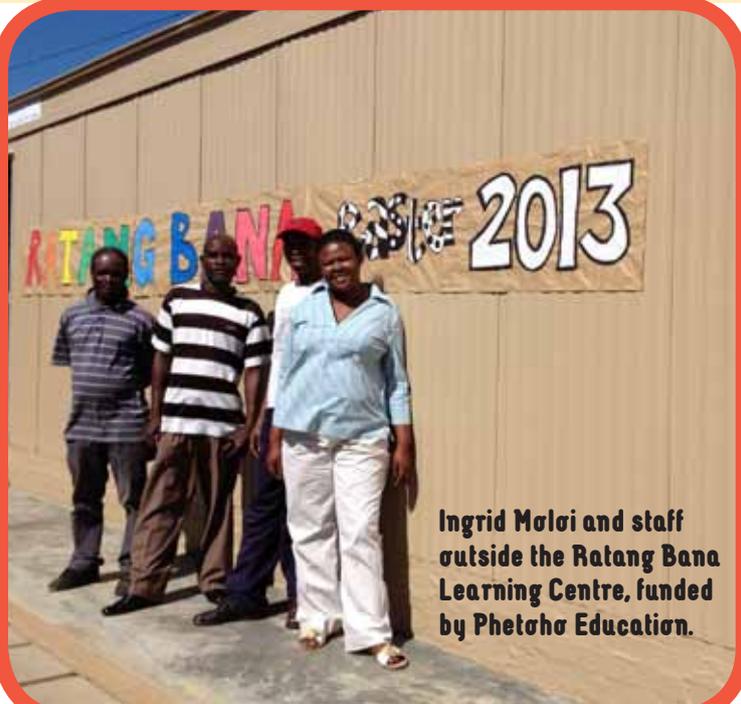


Lindo, Pinki & Paballo

THE LITTLE ONES AT UCS

During the half-term break I had the pleasure of catching up with three of the UCS children. **Paballo**, now in Grade 8, says "School is perfect, it's fantastic – the best thing is fun during break"! He is a keen dancer with the Sigiya Sonke group and is trying to encourage the other four to join him. **Pinky** (Grade 6) is reserved, beautifully neat and tidy, and a real sweetie. Both she and Paballo are having extra support in Maths, English and Afrikaans (always the most challenging subjects). **Lindokuhle** (in the EISH! cap in photo) is in Grade 2 and says "It's better than crèche"! Their parents and caregivers are very grateful for what Gumboots is doing for them.

Lehlogonolo (Grade 3) and **Itumeleng** (Grade 2) were away from Alex for the holidays, so were not available for a chat and photo. We have big concerns about Itumeleng – he is a very bright child, but something is wrong as his marks have plummeted to 30% and the school has reported that he arrives at school unkempt and hungry, and is falling asleep in class. We know that his mother has moved to Soweto and he is now living with an aunt where clearly he is not being looked after. Beauty and Jack are going to ask the aunt if he can move in with them for a while so they can watch over him and give him the care and support he needs. Their generosity and love is boundless.



Ingrid Moloi and staff outside the Ratang Bana Learning Centre, funded by Phetoho Education.

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UK and SA news links



USA – Kidlinks

Gumboots UK

Homecoming Revolution

Gumboots joined several southern African companies and organisations at The Homecoming Revolution London Expo in March. This was a valuable opportunity to connect with South Africans and individuals with a passion for Africa. It was inspiring to meet so many people willing to contribute their time and skills to Gumboots, whether in the UK or SA. And it was great to get the affirmation and comment from 702's Yusuf Abramjee's about Gumboots on the Homecoming Revolution page: "This NGO needs volunteers in Johannesburg. Great initiative."



Gumboots stand at the London Expo

The Caitlin Fund

The Caitlin Fund, managed by Gumboots, is continuing to help three bright and talented young women.

Zinhle Kollo, now in her 3rd year at Tshwane University of Technology, has passed all her subjects with above average marks. Her artwork has improved dramatically and she did a beautiful backdrop for the recent Sigiya Sonke anniversary event.

Vuyelwa Mtolo, at Rhodes University, has passed her first year subjects well – Law, Journalism, Anthropology and Computer Literacy. She is returning home to Pietermaritzburg for Easter but sadly her home got washed away in the recent heavy rains – one of the sad facts of life in South Africa. She was elected as a House Committee



Zinhle's mural - celebrating 20 years of Sigiya Sonke

The past few months have been an important time for long-range planning for Kidlinks. Three different groups of guests from Kidlinks' donor base have visited South Africa recently and have toured the Alex projects. All the guests were very impressed and will hopefully help to build support back in the US. Kidlinks continues to fundraise in the US through sales of donated second-hand items, applying for grants and organising the Annual Winetasting event in November. To donate in the US please visit www.kidlinksworld.org.



The Kidlinks craft stand brings awareness to the US public about the talents of South African artists

representative this year and still finds time for all her sporting activities.

Kamvililhe Mkhize is in matric this year and sadly her grades in Maths and Science have dropped considerably – although she is excelling in all other subjects. We will be paying for extra lessons this year, hoping this will help her achieve the necessary grades.