

THE BEAT

Gumboots
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Gumboots Newsletter

• April 2011 •

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Leratong Pre-school



The scene of frequent disastrous floods

Storms and floods

Peggy housed 18 small children at the school the other night when a massive storm caused the Jukskei to flood its banks taking with it many of the shacks that teeter on the edge. She found them shaking from cold and hunger, crying about their lost school uniforms – and they were given blankets and a hot meal, until their families collected them in the morning. This is an ongoing plight as the shacks continue to get rebuilt on the edge!

The school and Peggy's dedicated teachers continue to provide a safe haven for the children in the community.

Child-headed households

The scourge of the AIDS pandemic continues to take its toll and Peggy is seeing more and more children having to look after their siblings without the means to do so. More than half the children at her school are HIV positive, and 10 are from child-headed homes. Peggy wants to channel her focus this year in finding ways to help, such as forming another home to care for 10-15 orphans. Many Gogos are begging her to take their kids, as the extended family who could do this won't because of the stigma.

With Peggy's energy and drive, hopefully Gumboots can help her to achieve her goal.

The midday routine



The Kadey Kids

They are doing well at school and their reports said it all. On his coloured-in report, Buhle wrote, "I thank myself for this report. Granny [Peggy] my wishes is to pass this term with all my heart, I worked so hard. God bless me for this report".

Some of them are struggling with their medication, but are being closely monitored. And the home continues to be a loving family environment for the children.



The Kadey Family at home



Ratang Bana Child Support



The soccer boys in action

Making a dream come true?

I found Ingrid in her office on Sunday surrounded by bags (full of jumble), tables & chairs (donated for her "dream learning centre"), bicycles (that the soccer kids use to deliver food to the Gogos who cannot walk) – clearly she needs more space! And the focus of our meeting was around the plans and ideas she has for fulfilling her dream...

What she sees is a new larger office with a learning centre where "her children" can study looking out onto a food garden where the Gogos and soccer kids plant, pick and reap the rewards. The space she has in mind will hopefully be donated by the council through the Women's Forum.

It will be situated in the new part of Alex, near Ingrid's RDP house, near the soccer fields, plenty of space, electricity will be connected and water is free.

If this all goes ahead, Ingrid would need funds to buy the "building"; fencing; computers; cupboards; shelving; toilet.

Ingrid at the site – making it all happen



Thando's story

This story really touched my heart – Thando is a 21-year-old, well-spoken, gentle young man, living in a small one-roomed house. As an orphan, he was living in Nkosi's Haven – in desperation, a few years ago he tried to commit suicide by jumping from a building breaking his spine. After 3 years in hospital, he has learnt to walk and is back at Northview school, working hard and determined to get his matric in 3 years time.

But life is still tough – his 2 cousins who share his house are not working, they have the TV on late every night so he can't study, he goes to Ingrid every evening for supper and transport money for school. She pays this R500 out of her own pocket – "God gave him a 2nd chance. He needs to try to make life out of nothing in order to survive."

Thando says, "I'm very grateful but life is hard. I want to do community work later to help others".



Thando – whose younger brother is Siyabonga from the Hadey Home

Sigiya Sonke Dance Group



Hooray for Cartoon Network!

What's up at the warehouse?

The rehearsals and training continue in a dedicated way. Inevitably some of the older children have moved on, but the show goes on... five mentally challenged boys have joined the group and are doing well. And the younger dancers continue to be enthusiastic.

This month we took 20 from the group to watch Zenzele is his first performance with the Tshwane Dance Theatre. He loves being part of a professional ballet company and is coming on in "leaps and bounds"! We are all very proud of him.

Thank you to Cartoon Network (part of Turner Broadcasting Systems) for their generous donation of beanbags, TV and T-shirts – 120 happy children were totally absorbed by the cartoons on their new flat-screen last weekend!

Neo's story

Neo has been with Sigiya Sonke for 2 years and has taken over the role of Zenzele's solos, putting her heart into dance. "Dance has helped me to focus on my studies. I have been inspired by Zenzele and want to dance as my career". Neo lives with her brother and father (a taxi-driver), her mother has passed away. She is in Grade 10 at Alex High and would like to find a way to go to the Saturday dance training at Moving into Dance (where Zenzele was last year), as well as help Jack in the office like Nomsa did.



Neo, following in Zenzele's competent "dance steps"



The food garden

Bobo, a young unemployed man, living for 5 years in one of the rooms at the Warehouse, is happy to weed and work in exchange for a weekly food parcel. "It means a lot to me to work here. You can eat here from the garden. And you can create for others some food to take too".

Thank you Bobo

Ongoing needs

TRANSPORT is still one of the biggest expenses for the group. It costs R1 500 each time they travel.