

THE BEAT

Winter has been particularly fierce this year in Gauteng and so it is a time to think about those less fortunate who live in abject poverty: some in shacks; others without gas for heating and cooking; many without families to help them survive. Thank you to those who continue to give to our projects so that the lives of those we support can be a little bit "warmer".

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



Ingrid handing out food to the children

Ratang Bana

Feeding scheme

Thanks to the initiation of Gwen Sidelsky, some of Ingrid's child-headed households are now getting cooked meals delivered to Alex. Gwen started the ball rolling by cooking food for 4 families weekly. She then spread the word and now 65 wholesome meals and 3 large hampers are being delivered once or twice a week. Thank you to all those who give of your time and money to help make the lives of these little families easier. If you would like to contribute to this worthwhile cause, please contact Gwen (082 851 1509). There are many different ways to help: cooking; buying vegetables; hampers; making up school lunch packs.

Social grants

There are hundreds of families and children in Alex who qualify for Child Support Grants or Foster Care Grants and who are not yet receiving the much-needed monthly support. The problem is that so many children are born without birth certificates, and in later years it is almost impossible to gather all the necessary documentation. Once gathered, it takes an eternity to process:

- A Child Support Grant is given to any parents of a child under 18. They must prove that their combined income is less than R800, and they are then entitled to R260/month.
- A Foster Care Grant is given to the caregiver of a child who is under 18. They need IDs, the child's birth certificate, proof of income, death certificate of parents... and most of these are not available. But once proof has been provided, they are then entitled to R720/month.

We have been fortunate to find someone who is helping Ingrid to cut through the bureaucratic red tape.



Some of these enthusiastic soccer kids desperately need grants

Learning centre and food garden

Ingrid has now been granted the council-owned land very near to where she is now living. So we are now in a position to start fundraising to buy and kit out a container. This will house her office and a learning centre for "her children". Once this is up and running she can begin the second phase of her dream – a food garden where her children and gannies will help to plant and reap the rewards.

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Gumboots Newsletter

• August 2011 •

Gumboots
www.gumboots.org.za



Sigiya Sonke



The upstairs renovated dance area



Watch this downstairs space!

Dance Warehouse extension project

We have the funds from one generous donor to purchase the whole Dance Warehouse building. The first floor currently works as a dance-training and events area, kitchen, bathrooms, recreation space and small learning centre. The challenge we have is that the building has always housed illegal squatters and their removal has to be done sensitively. Progress is slow, but we have succeeded in moving out the panel-beater business, and at present are trying to find alternative accommodation for the squatters.

We have an architect who is excited about the project and there are great plans afoot. The vision is to turn the ground floor room into the dance area and multi-purpose recreational centre, and the first floor into a bigger learning and media centre. See the photos above... now watch this space!

Educational projects

We are currently in the process of setting up an educational bursary fund. Over the last 4 years we have been fortunate to have had individual sponsorship for 9 children to attend the United Church School in Yeoville. These children have done well and have all benefitted from this excellent school that offers them a platform to tertiary education that may not have been possible otherwise. Thank you once again to all those who have given them this opportunity. We have the following success stories:

- Nomsa doing further studies in Maths and Science at a college in order to get into the Tshwane University of Pretoria to do a nursing degree next year (in memory of her mother).
- Delisele who is getting As at Rosebank College in her tourism diploma.
- Zenzele is a trainee at the Tshwane Dance Theatre with professional contemporary dancers. He has danced in Midsummer Nights Dream at the Civic Theatre and in other performances at the Market Theatre.

We already have substantial seedfunding for the new bursary project and are applying to UK Comic Relief for further funding.



Four of the dance group who were/are at the UCS Yeoville – reaching for the sky!

Leratong Pre-school

Sheena

The Leratong "family" sadly lost a special person in April. Peggy's beloved daughter Sheena died very suddenly. The funeral was attended by many of Peggy's friends and family. Anthony Pranglely represented Gumboots and had this to say, "Sheena has been the backbone of Leratong since its foundation. Many were guided by her wisdom, experience and insight into the dynamics of Alexandra. Sheena had a wonderful sense of humour and an angelic singing voice. We will always remember her and her significant contribution to everything that has been achieved. We honour her memory by continuing to support the important work of giving children a headstart in life. Hamba Kahle Usisi."

Sheena was a support to all of the teachers

One special teacher

A dedicated Mpho

Mpho Mailula has been a teacher at Leratong for 11 years – and her dedication straddles two essential areas: she is one of the house mothers of the Kadey Home attached to the school; and she is the class teacher of 35 of the 5-6 year-olds. Of those, 75% are from granny-headed homes. Mpho says that it's hard dealing with children from poverty-stricken families as they come to school in winter cold and hungry, How can you teach a child like that?

So what is the daily routine at Leratong after the gates open at 7am? Mpho says the first thing we do is give them porridge; they all play till the first morning ring; then the theme of the day is implemented; then they do puzzles before storytime with discussions around how they feel – often with a health or lifeskills message; a hot lunch is served, a 2-hour rest, then tea and bread. The grannies or caregivers fetch them up until 5pm, and we send them home with veges for the rest of the family. Some often have to spend the night as nobody comes to fetch them!

Her final words: "I like to give love to these kids today, so that we will have better leaders tomorrow."

Where does your money go?

There are currently 145 children at Leratong. In order to survive, the school needs to have 50% of the parents or caregivers paying fees of R150/month. But there are many who either cannot afford to pay or apparently choose not to. This makes it extremely difficult for Peggy to budget and run the school. But under these impossible circumstances, she does a grand job and the children continue to be loved, fed and educated under the care of the 6 teachers. Gumboots donations and generous support from our associate funder, The Kadey Charitable Family Corp, pays for the children who are unable to, and for their food and the teachers' salaries.



Sleep time!