

THE BEAT

Gumboots Newsletter

August 2013

Gumboots
www.gumboots.org.za



SIGIYA SONKE

VISIT FROM ABROAD

In May, Sigiya Sonke was visited by a group of young people from Bulgaria bringing with them a unique type of "sports theatre". The children were shown innovative ways to help them to appreciate the arts through movement and acting. They were delighted by it and will continue to build on these fun ideas, raising their awareness and standard of dancing. They thanked the Bulgarians by showing off their own artistic dances and demonstrating an exchange of cultural skills, impressing the visitors greatly.

The impressive young group from Bulgaria



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Jack with one of the future dancers

THE GROUP LEADER

Jack and his team continue to produce fantastic results in spite of him not having been at all well during the last few months. He has also had very bad luck when one of his taxis went up in flames – fortunately there were no injuries to the children. He says he is feeling tired and wanting someone young to step into his shoes. But the parents, supporters and children all say: "No Ways!"

GAUTENG LEGISLATURE

Sigiya Sonke is not only about dance. An event that helped them towards this goal was their participation in a workshop around youth development entitled "Youth are the Future of Tomorrow". The talks centred around issues such as the Government Structure, Bursaries, The Constitution and Legislative Framework. They were treated to breakfast and lunch and found the whole workshop very informative.

MAPANTSULA COMPETITION

In June the Sigiya Sonke pantsula dancers had the opportunity to show off their amazing skills at the Gauteng Dance Mapantsula Championships at the Pretoria State Theatre. The nine boys (16–22 years old) took part in two rounds before they finally reached the finals. With an awe-inspiring, beautifully choreographed dance, they convinced the judges to award them first prize (and an amount of R8 000). Fantastic work guys! The junior group have also been dancing well – dancers from 13–16 years came 2nd in a Church Youth Group competition.



Jack and his mapantsulas - well done!



RATANG BANA

GIBS INITIATIVE

Ratang Bana (and Leratong) were invited to a function at GIBS where seven groups from different countries "adopted a project". The idea was for each country to promote their project with slides and talks in the hopes of convincing the judges that theirs was the best – and thereby winning the R4000 prize. Ingrid's country was Holland and they decided not to show any slides (which horrified Ingrid as she wanted her special children and beautiful food-garden to be represented), but they instead asked her to just talk about the work she does. As usual her presentation was inspiring... and ultimately led Holland (and Ratang Bana) to victory (and GIBS then doubled the prize-money!) Leratong Pre-School came 2nd so we are thrilled that two of our Gumboots projects benefited from this initiative. Well done!

THE US STUDENTS AND THE PLAYGROUND



An example of what the students are going to create for the new playground

It has been a summer (in the US) of preparation for the August student trip to South Africa to build a playground at Ratang Bana. The students of CalPoly, San Luis Obispo have developed a wonderful long-range plan that includes graphic

images of what the play space will look like as well as a working drawing that can be used to develop future phases. On top of this, they have raised funds to help build the project.

Kidlinks has also been raising money by collecting donations from garage sales, sending out e-blast type fundraising letters, networking and writing grants. The students will be working alongside the volunteers at Ratang Bana and they cannot wait to see you all again!

MANDELA DAY



The gogos and children waiting for the celebrations to begin

The Centre was once more a-buzz with supporters wanting to be involved in their "67 minutes community time" in honour of the 67 years Madiba gave to community work. To be involved in any of these initiatives is a very moving, *ubuntu* experience. Some of the activities were: playground building; painting; preparing/cooking lunch; talks and eTV filming. As always I came away feeling happy-hearted and excited about the action and improvements at Ratang Bana.



A helping hand with planting seedlings

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LERATONG PRE-SCHOOL



The current workspace in use by the Kadey Kids

LEARNING CENTRE AND LIBRARY

A new space is being converted into a learning centre and library. This is housed in the old "bottom school" where the Kadey Kids live so they have the advantage of this facility too. It is also available for the Leratong school-leavers who are now in primary school so that there is a quiet place for them to do homework and assignments on computers, and get assistance with projects. It will be up and running in the new year, but for now there are desks, tables, chairs, books, 2 computers and a photocopier. The community is grateful to Moss Kadey for the enormous support for this venture.

ADMIN AND IT SUPPORT



Pheto, thanks for all the support!

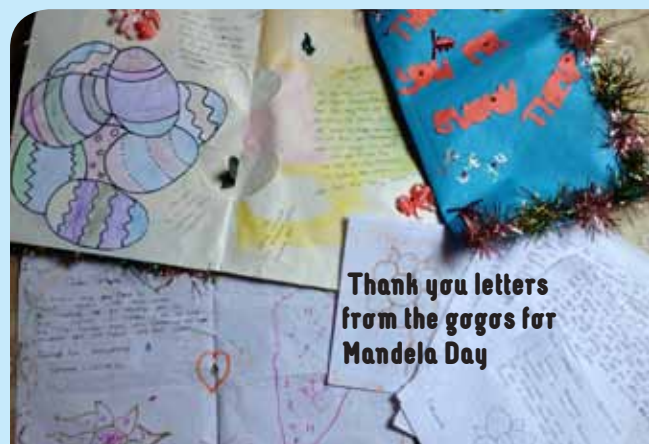
Pheto Hlatswayo is a 27-year-old young man who is helping to support the Leratong "family". Originally from Mpumalanga, Pheto came to Joburg to study IT. He met Peggy at church and they agreed for him to help with admin in the mornings and the Kadey Kids's homework in the afternoons. He is also helping set up the Learning Centre and says, "The most important thing is education. I want to accommodate more children and to introduce a culture of learning and responsibility, so that they will learn to give back when they leave school."

MANDELA DAY



The children singing and dancing in celebration

With Nelson Mandela in hospital, his (95th) birthday this year was marked in an even more special way. The usual "67 minutes" were given to community work to mark Madiba's 67 years of service to his country, but for many centres, like Leratong, this hour extended throughout the day. Eight companies visited the school to do their "minutes" and to say happy birthday Tata. There was singing, painting, food and vetkoek all day. "Food for Africa," Peggy said, "and 33 gogos who look after their grandchildren came for breakfast, braais, groceries and blankets. We need to find a way to recognise and acknowledge these unseen women for making the world a better place for their children. They educate, clothe, love and feed them, eeking out a meagre living by selling small things like chicken feet, so let us thank them – they are the rock on which the community is built." One of the companies brought food parcels for the 41 children whose homes are childheaded. Thank you!



Thank you letters from the gogos for Mandela Day



PHETOHO EDUCATION LEARNING CENTRE

We are happy to say that the Learning Centre at Ratang Bana is up and running – thanks to the funding from Gumboots UK. The centre now has electricity, 4 computers, desks and chairs, as well as a safe and secure environment in which to study. We are awaiting the installation of wireless internet. The library shelves and books will be moving into the centre and a quiet reading space will be created. We are looking for mentors who will be able to assist the children with homework and projects.



Making a difference to children's education

THE PHETOHO EDUCATION SUPPORTED CHILDREN

The five new children at the United Church School have all settled down well in their very different school environment. Whilst the benefits of this high-quality education are obvious, the transition from township schools to private institutions is challenging. The earlier the children make the transition, the better the outcome. The three children who are in Grade One are all doing very well. However, the reports of the two children who are in higher grades are struggling, particularly with English, Afrikaans and Maths, indicating that the basic groundwork is missing. They are receiving extra lessons and we hope they will pick up in this second half of the year. But it is a learning curve for Gumboots and perhaps in future the Phetoho learners need to be sourced directly from the early primary-school phase.

THE OLDER PUPILS

We are holding thumbs for good results as three of the older children go into their last term at UCS and begin their matric exams in a couple of months. Hopefully they will all make the grade that will afford them a better platform from which to find worthwhile employment.



Matebogo and Mzee, 2 of the UCS matric students

Thank you to all those who have contributed towards the Phetoho Education Fund that is making it possible to assist in the further education of the children. They and their families are very grateful for what you have done to change their lives.

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UK and SA news links

YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS AND LEADERSHIP CAMP

A one-week course will be run at Ratang Bana's new Learning Centre in September. Twelve children (aged 14-16) will be invited to participate. Vivien Hunt from Gumboots UK and EvaLotta Wickström, a leadership developer and facilitator from Sweden, will come to South Africa specifically to run the camp. It is funded by the Entrepreneurial competition held earlier this year where teams from the UK, Spain and Sweden competed against each other to make the most money from £1 or the equivalent in one month. Lessons learnt from the competition will form the foundation of the camp together with new leadership, communication and entrepreneurial skills and tools. We plan to make this an annual course.

"GIVE AS YOU LIVE"

The UK Team has signed up to "Give as you live", an online charity fundraising scheme. UK-based online shoppers can support Gumboots Foundation (UK) every time they shop online at no cost to themselves. Thousands of brands including Amazon, Play.com, John Lewis and Expedia have signed up to donate a percentage of every online purchase made to the charity of your choice. UK supporters can sign up on the Gumboots page <http://www.giveasyoulive.com/join/gumboots> – where it is possible for you to help Gumboots at no cost to yourself.



Mark and his intrepid group

MARK CYCLES FOR GUMBOOTS

Earlier in May Mark Allibone and three friends set off to cycle 1067 miles on a sponsored cycle ride from Land's End to John O' Groats – the most-southerly tip of the UK to the most-northerly. "It was easily the best thing I have ever organised and taken part in," says Mark, "– not just the ride, but the effort of the whole team to get ourselves from A to B every day under our own steam through everything Britain could throw at us. We met some remarkable people. I found a mobile phone en route and finally got through to the owner and posted it back – for my efforts she donated £50 to Gumboots!"

Mark raised a total of £ 2895 for Gumboots – we are hugely grateful for all your efforts.

THE USA PLAYGROUND

For this wonderful initiative, see under the Ratang Bana project page.



The CalPoly students have arrived in SA and will begin work soon on the Ratang Bana playground. Watch this space in the next newsletter!



The cyclists on top of the world!