

THE BEAT

DECEMBER 2015

Gumboots

www.gumboots.org.za



Siyabonga – Enkosi – Ke a leboha – Dankie – Thank you

It's time to celebrate the festive season and the end of the year; it's time to go on holiday – and it's also time to think about others less fortunate. Gumboots Foundation and our Alex projects are deeply grateful for all your continued support. We wish you season's greetings and safe journeys. If you would like to give time or donations to Gumboots, please visit our website (www.gumboots.org.za) or phone Jenny Prangley (082 928 8806).

Leratong Pre-school

An aerial shot of the mass of shacks on the banks of the Jukskei River – a fire and flood disaster in the making.



FIRES AND FLOODS

Peggy has been involved once more with the typical crises in Alex – two fires recently each burnt down 30 shacks leaving hundreds homeless. She had 20 mothers and children to stay, sleeping on the school mattresses, finding them food and helping until Disaster Management found them a new space. Peggy feels frustrated that the shacks are erected too close together, and the shack-dwellers don't take responsibility for their Primus stoves and candles.

The annual rains bring floods with subsequent loss of homes, belongings and sometimes lives ... and once again there will be a crisis. Peggy would like to set up a Disaster Management Centre stocked with blankets, tinned food and clothes, so that in the event of these crises, there will always be immediate support.

THE TEACHERS

It has been a tough year for the staff at the pre-school with Nina and Zodwa being very ill and needing to be at home and at hospital for long periods. This has put an extra strain on the other teachers to absorb the children into their classes. Peggy is very grateful for their hard work and commitment. We wish them a speedy recovery.



SANTA SHOEBOX

One of the most joyful events imaginable is the presentation of the Santa Shoeboxes. The organisation packs up personalised boxes for 100 000 children in South Africa and three of our projects were on their chosen list this year. Each box is packed to the brim with clothing, stationery, toys, toiletries and treats. Just look at their faces to see the joy.



"Let's see what you've got!"



Sigiya Sonke

A VISIT TO THE BALLET

In September the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, one of the best contemporary dance companies in the world, came to Joburg. When they last toured here in 1995, the Sigiya Sonke dancers performed for them outside the Civic Theatre. So it was with huge excitement that Vivien Hunt (one of Gumboots's trustees) managed to get 60 complimentary tickets. The kids met at the Warehouse at 8.30 am to be sure they wouldn't miss the double-decker bus that was due to leave at 12.30! And Beauty provided breakfast for all. They were unbelievably well behaved and totally captivated – for some of them it was their first experience of a live show and hopefully this will have inspired them to pursue their passion for dance.

Excited audience!



SANTA SHOEBOX AT THE WAREHOUSE



Hooray! Thank you Team Shoebox!

Fifty excited children collected in anticipation of the arrival of the Santa Shoebox team. First they were entertained by playing a clapping and singing game, and being musical and good dancers, they caught the rhythm and magic quickly. Then the shoebox moment arrived ... as they simultaneously opened

Snack time



their personalised boxes, the room became electric with their shouts of elation. After they had snacks and juice, they sang to the team and performed a traditional dance. It was a very moving morning. I wish the people who filled those boxes with such care and love could watch the recipients' faces.

ENTERTAINING ST MARY'S CRÈCHE

Eleven little five-year-olds in red T-shirts sat in quiet anticipation; the mothers in their traditional outfits waiting patiently for the sound system to get sorted out; the fathers outside turning copious amount of chicken and boerewors on the braai; and we as visitors were warmly welcomed as we stepped into a busy backyard and inside the small room of St Mary's Crèche to watch the Sigiya Sonke young dancers entertain the children's Graduation to Grade 1. This was their very first performance and Jack was very proud of them.

The graduants waiting for the dancers to perform





Ratang Bana

Jane promoting the blankets at the "Women of Influence" event



THE BANA BLANKETS

The grannies of Ratang Bana are finding a way to assist their incomes through an innovative project initiated by Jane Simmonds. They are handstitching picnic "Bana Blankets" that Jane helps to market and sell – and the proceeds go directly to the creators of the blankets. One of those venues was at a breakfast in September for "Women of Influence" that was attended by two of Gumboots's project leaders, Peggy and Beauty (Ingrid was unable to attend). May this Bana Project go from strength to strength to help these hardworking women.



The grannies outside the Ratang Bana library

Times are painful and tough for new "granny" Julie



GROWING, GROWING, GROWING

The Ratang Bana food gardens have grown three-fold since the centre began in 2009. In October Rand Water visited them and erected a shade cloth garden and planted out vegetables with training for the gardeners and advice about mulching. They donated a water tank and pipes, as well as water itself. In addition there is a new shade cloth garden and steel poles donated by friends of Gumboots.

In spite of our drought, the gardens are all thriving and every day Ingrid is able to sell SPINACH FOR AFRICA!



THE SAD STORY OF FAMILY NKOE

Granny Nkoe had been looking after her grandchildren in a one-roomed house after their mother died: three little girls of 11, 6 and 2.

Three weeks ago she died and Ingrid went from church to church to raise enough for the documentation and the transport to take the body back to Lesotho. She also contacted the granny's sister, Julie, to look after the children who were by now desperate, dirty, and without food and clean clothes.

"At times like this, the job is too much," said Ingrid. "There is no help from the government. We have been applying since 2009."

On meeting Julie she was sad and resigned: "My main problem is that I can't buy the children what they need – food, clothing, shoes, soap. I have no job. To start with I said 'how can my sister do this to me?' But now I accept."

The Nkoe family is a recipient of Gwen's feeding scheme where families receive a cooked meal once a week from her volunteer cooks. She has found a donor to help with monthly donations for the family. Our grateful thanks.



Phetoho Education



Nomisa on duty!

NOMISA – GOOD NEWS STORY

Having completed her ambulance and fire-fighting courses with honours, Nomisa been employed by the Ambulance Rescue Service as a volunteer. If her performance is good, and I have no doubt it will be, they will employ her full time. Nomisa is always so grateful to Gumboots and her sponsors: *"To Gumboots Foundation – touching a life is the most magnificent achievement that is what you did for me. I thank every individual that contributed in this wonderful foundation that is committed in changing lives. May God bless you."*

ST MARYS PRIZE-GIVING CEREMONY

This year Gumboots had six young girls attending the St Marys Outreach Programme on Saturdays. Realistically we cannot expect a 100% success rate – the children come from disadvantaged backgrounds with challenges at every corner; there are family issues that require them to miss classes and attend funerals; and studying can sometimes be impossible. We have had some outstanding successes and a few failures.

The prize-giving was a moving and rousing ceremony ... after the National Anthem, the Grade 9s sang and performed; and then two of our students were awarded prizes: Thatohatsi (top of maths and excellence in management science) and Pamela (excellence in english and economics). Sadly three of the six will leave the programme but we have two really promising girls beginning next year: Nyeleti Shlengi and Lilithle Magolo have shown commitment and promise and their last school reports were excellent. Thank you to Jonathan and Eleonora Carr for their generous funding of these two girls.



The new 2016 students



Congratulations Thatohatsi and Pamela!

THE CAITLIN FUND

The students receiving support from this generous fund are: Vuyelwa Mtolo finishing her 3rd year at Rhodes, studying journalism, linguistics and anthropology. Now just 1 more year of study to complete her BA journalism; and Kamvilhile Mkize passed matric last year but her maths and physics grades were too low to study at Rhodes, so she has used this year to study and improve her grades and will reapply in 2016.



Newslinks Abroad

UK



The Christmas Fair

FUNDRAISING IN THE UK

Gumboots UK have completed their end-of-year fundraising activities, specifically for the Phetoho project to send students to the St Marys Outreach Programme. Trustees Angela Dyer and Karen Beard organised their annual Christmas Craft Fair in Birmingham – artists presented in glass, wood, textiles and ceramics; they had African crafts purchased in Johannesburg directly from the makers; some up-cycled upholstered stools; and a great range of house plants in pots. It was a very successful evening. In addition to the UK end-of-year fundraising efforts, the Big Give has just added a further R100 thousand to their funds! This all translates into an amazing total for the Alex projects. Well done Team UK!



Angela's beautiful handmade cushion covers

USA

KIDLINKS NEWS FROM THE US

When Ingrid Moloi visited Madison Wisconsin this year to speak at the Agroecology Symposium at the University of Wisconsin, discussions ensued between her and Kidlinks to identify the critical needs of Ratang Bana. Transportation for supplies, food parcels, garden products, etc. was recognised as the most immediate need.

So Kidlinks volunteers have been very busy raising funds to buy a truck or bakkie for Ratang Bana. They had a plant and garage sale and a very successful crowd fundraising drive via the website "Go Fund Me". With the help of a favourable dollar-to-rand exchange rate, they have raised enough funds to purchase the vehicle, with a little left over for licensing and running costs. The plan is to find a vehicle in December. This is an incredible achievement! In addition, a group of volunteers from the US and UK organised by Kidlinks, will be visiting the Alex projects in February 2016.

Ingrid is over the moon. She still talks about her visit, "I still miss America – we were so spoilt!"

Congratulations to all at Kidlinks!



Ingrid with the US Team