



Depicted above is a microcosmic stark reminder of the wealth gap in South Africa. And Gumboots is grateful to all the donors for helping to make the lives of the children we support a little bit easier. If you would like any information, call Jenny Prangley on 082 928 8806 or visit www.gumboots.org.za.

Leratong Pre-school

LERATONG'S ROLE IN THE ALEX COMMUNITY

In 1990, the Rosebank Union Church leased some council buildings to create a pre-school, the main aim being to build a safer community by taking the children off the streets and helping to feed and educate them. Peggy was the first principal. During the unrest in 1992, it was unsafe for the church to continue their work and the school was handed over to Alex for Peggy to run. There were 140 children, mostly poverty stricken or from child-headed households.

It was then that the Joy for One programme was born where individuals were encouraged to "adopt" a child, pay for their education and assist the other family members. Interestingly, two of Gumboots's projects came as a direct result of the Joy for One programme ... Peggy met Ant Prangley and introduced him to Jack who was running the Sigiya Sonke dance group; and similarly she met and introduced Ingrid who had initiated a small support group, which grew into Ratang Bana as we know it today. And so Gumboots became involved in the support of all three of its current supported projects.



Fun times for the whole school at the zoo recently

WINTER PLEA

The annual hardships are once again hitting Leratong and the community ... the children come to school with flu as there is nowhere else to leave them; some don't have warm clothes or shoes; there are not enough blankets for rest time; and one little boy, Thami, lost everything in a shack fire last week due to a faulty paraffin stove. Thami Sithole is 4 years old in Dimakatso's class – it was when she saw burns on his ear that she learnt of the fire. His mother and her boyfriend live in the informal settlement opposite



Thami in a place of safety

the school, but despite the social grant, they chose not to send him to school. Fortunately his granny has helped out with the fees and food and Thami is now catching up on lost time.

Dimakatso says she wants to run workshops for parents to they can learn about the advantages of pre-school. She says that the majority of them are very disinterested.

A FEEL-GOOD DAD STORY

The classroom door burst open as a smiling dad, Leslie Tloubatla, arrived to scoop up his youngest son, Onkarabile. Four of his five siblings have all been through Leratong. Leslie says he strives for happiness: "I try to put my difficulties in a small box – and I only open it to resolve one issue at a time". What joy he brings to the school and his family each day.



Proudly in front of his son's art

The welcoming entrance



Peggy says that a single "Joyful Seed for One" multiplied into thousands of lives in the Alex community being impacted. Thank you Peggy: "We see you – we appreciate you."



Sigiya Sonke



The dancers' finale

PANTSULA PERFORMERS

Some of the dance group attended an Afro-Latin Festival recently in Braamfontein, Joburg. The founder of the festival, Catherine Peter, had this to say: "It was an opportunity to showcase the cultural diversity in Afro-Latin music and dance, bringing together people of all walks of life. Welcoming the kids from the Gumboot Foundation gave our guests and artists from across the continent and beyond an opportunity to witness the energy and transformative power of modern African street dance, specifically pantsula. The group was outstanding in their show and interaction with festival attendees and brought a true slice of South African soul to the event."



Vibrant pantsulas

CONNECTING GUMBOOTS' PROJECTS

A few months ago a special day was spent at the Ratang Bana Centre, getting together with the Sigiya Sonke dance group. The dancers put on a great show and a lovely speech was made by one of them thanking Gumboots and the donors for their costumes. We caught up with some of the alumni dancers and other Gumboots' sponsored kids, and there was enough boerewors rolls for the swelling crowd of at least 70.

Jack and Beauty in the courtyard of Sacred Heart School



POTENTIAL COLLABORATION

Sacred Heart School in Observatory operates a project for refugee children. They provide access to quality bridging education (Three2Six school) that supports them in integrating into mainstream schools (they attend school from 3 – 6pm). In the school holidays, they run special programmes and we are hoping to organise a dance workshop for Jack, his facilitators and some of the dancers to work with the refugee children. This would be a win-win for both groups, helping our Alex kids to learn to relate to refugees, and vice versa.

In explaining to the coordinator of the Three2Six School about how his Alex children benefit from coming to the Sigiya Sonke dance group five times a week, Jack said: "It keeps them off the streets and they come to dance their heartaches away!"



Ratang Bana

The six 'safe house' kids with Ingrid



A TEMPORARY SAFE HOUSE

Sometimes there is no choice but to set up a safe space for abandoned children. One such house has been hastily created at

Ratang Bana for two little sisters, Mbali and Thandi, whose granny died in their tiny shack. But very quickly, the need extended and Ingrid has found herself housing six young children in a far from ideal small brick room that was once the Centre's library. One of the kids is 13-year-old John, whose family has all died. The other three are siblings: Abongiwe (a girl of 14), Lukhanyo (a boy of 12) and Nhlanhla (a boy of 10); when their mother died, their alcoholic father took over but there is no food or care and he forces them work at a shebeen.

Gumboots has equipped the room with bunkbeds and a bed for Daphne, the 'house mother'. Social services are aware and are trying to find an alternative.

RATANG BANA CONNECTS WITH PLAY AFRICA

Early this year Play Africa invited some of the volunteers at Ratang Bana to share in their vision to create a place where children, families and the community can come together to learn, play and dream. This was an opportunity for the volunteers to experience interactive, hands-on exhibits and to take back ideas with them to assist with supporting the children at the Centre.

Response from the volunteers: "We 'turned' to be the children, and through play we can now understand their happiness. This all helps us to support our grandchildren in play. And we now understand what happens when an abused child is given a doll and she then hits, strangles and stamps on it!"

Volunteers join with some of the Play Africa team



REST IN PEACE ANNAH

We introduced Annah Mosesi in our last newsletter – a courageous young girl who was brutally attacked, leaving her with severe injuries and the loss of an eye. A generous donor agreed to fund the fitting of a prosthetic eye and she was well into her recovery programme in January this year. But it wasn't to be ...



Annah surrounded by cheering volunteers

She suddenly became very ill but still managed to walk bravely into the hospital, suffering we later learnt from advanced meningitis. She quickly lapsed into a coma and died only four days later. A sudden tragic end to her young un-lived life ... she was only 21. There was a beautiful service for her where the family, Ingrid and all the volunteers paid tribute with moving speeches and rousing hymns. I am grateful to have played a small part in her final journey.

Big hooray from the watering cans!



SATURDAYS AT RATANG BANA

This was such a 'feel good' moment for me to watch 25 or so kids running around with watering cans and keeping the winter food garden growing. Ingrid asks them to help in the garden and to pick up rubbish in return for food. A weekly occurrence, from 9am to 3pm, the crowd grows to 450 or more as lunchtime approaches. When the Alleluya Ministry Church people arrived, they all queued up in an orderly manner for the soup, bread and hot meal. Well done Ingrid – a great initiative!



Phetoho Education

We highlight below the lives of three young women who all started out at the Sigiya Sonke Dance Group and who are now doing well through their dedication and perseverance. A large part of their success is thanks to Jack and Beauty for developing in them a sense of self-confidence, positivity and belief in themselves. And thanks are also given to the donors and sponsors.

I RECEIVE SUPPORT AND LOVE



Thatohatsi Makgotlo is a confident 18-year-old young woman, a far cry from the tiny girl we first met at Leratong pre-school in 2003. Her brave, honest words speak volumes: "Losing my parents was not something I was prepared for and sometimes things have been very tough, but through the Leratong Joy for One programme I met the Gumboots family. I can say now that I have more love than any other child I know. This has come from different sources:

Thato, going places

"Through Jack at the Sigiya Sonke dance group I learnt about fun and responsibility; through Peggy, while living at the Kadey Home, she showed me life from a different dimension, teaching me that it's not about where you're from but where you're going; through the St Mary's outreach programme and the teachers I have been motivated and encouraged; and I have also been given the family that I never had ... I want to make them all proud of me.

"My mother dreamt of becoming a lawyer and that is one of the reasons that I would like to follow that path next year. I am very grateful for the life I have."

DEDICATION AND PERSEVERANCE

Matebogo

Nxumalo has been dedicating her time with children in

Alex helping to teach them to read using PhonoGraphics, a method she studied last year. She has found the level of reading to be atrocious (even in Grade 7 many cannot read simple 3-letter words) and wants to make a difference in their lives.

"I want to help educate the kids and change lives in this township by eradicating socio-economic issues, like teen pregnancy, crime, drugs, poverty. I want the youth to stand up and help their younger siblings to prevent them falling into the same trap they are in."

We are hoping that Gumboots can help Matebogo reach her dream of being a teacher. We have approached the Sacred Heart School and are discussing opportunities for her to volunteer at their primary school ... and ultimately to help her get a bursary to study towards a teaching diploma/degree while assisting at the school.



Matebogo is passionate to help young children in the community



SUCCESS FOR ZINHLE

We applaud **Zinhle Kolle** for her perseverance, hard work and painting skills as she has graduated with her degree in Entertainment Technology, majoring in Scenic Painting Techniques. This is a great achievement as she has had challenges with travel, accommodation and changes to her thesis project ... all beyond her control. We have watched her grow into a quiet but self-assured young woman and she is always very grateful for all the support that Gumboots has given her.

Zinhle shares her joy at her graduation with Ade and John Lightfoot



Newslinks Abroad

USA

The neat, organised tools in the new toolshed funded by Kidlinks at Ratang Bana



Kidlinks is currently in the midst of our fundraising season. Starting with our Fourth Annual Kidlinks Plant Sale fundraiser, this event was a huge success! We doubled the amount we normally raise by changing the date to match peak planting season in Wisconsin. We are now working on the next fundraiser – a South African-style braai which will be held on 21 July to celebrate Nelson Mandela Day (14 July).

Mackenzie, our student intern, is preparing for her trip to South Africa to work with Ratang Bana for three weeks in August. Her work will be centered around developing a report on the work of Ratang Bana that can be used for fundraising purposes. She is also planning several workshops for girls after school. Liza will be also be returning to work with the Ratang Bana gardeners on soil fertility, new techniques for growing crops and orchard pruning.

UK

The Gumboots UK trustees are sad to say goodbye to Vivien Hunt a founding member of Gumboots UK. After 16 years as a trustee, Vivien has decided to move on. She has made a huge contribution both to raising Gumboot's profile and fundraising in the UK, but also to working directly with women and young people in Alex. Thank you Vivien, we will miss you.

David Lightfoot and Margz Green, both long-term volunteers, have been appointed as new UK trustees. We still have one vacancy and particularly need someone with IT skills. Contact madyer@blueyonder.co.uk.

Gumboots, like every other charity and business in the UK, is bound by the new European Data Protection legislation which came into being on 25 May 2018. This means we have to get each individual's permission to communicate with them. They have been overwhelmed with emails about this matter and the reaction of many has been to delete them. Sadly, this means we lose contact with many of our supporters.

On a more positive note we are once again beginning work on this year's Christmas Craft Fair and applying to the 2018 Big Give campaign.

Vivien, helping fit donated ballet shoes



THE CAITLIN FUND



Kamvelihle – full of appreciation

Kamvelihle Mkhize is really enjoying her Agriculture course at Durban University of Technology, passing last year with five distinctions. She has joined ENACTUSMUT, a non-profit entrepreneurial organisation helping to bring about community change. She recently wrote: "I would like to again emphasise my appreciation for the love and support I get from you and everyone involved in Gumboots and the Caitlin Fund".

Vuyelwa Mtolo, studying journalism internship at the Natal Witness in Pietermaritzburg, is finding the world of work tough but rewarding. Her story will

be published on the Gumboots UK website. She too is thankful for all the help she has received from Gumboots and the Caitlin Fund, especially from South Africans who have given her practical, financial and moral support.

The Fund is happy to be supporting Mbali and Thandi Ndlovu who live at Ratang Bana with food, uniforms and other essentials (see story on their page). We have successfully raised almost £1 000 from a 70th birthday party. Many thanks for your generosity, which makes it possible for more young women to reach their potential.