

THE BEAT

JUNE 2019

www.gumboots.org.za

Gumboots



Thank you for your ongoing support. Please call Jenny Prangley for any information on 082 928 8806 or visit our website www.gumboots.org.za.

Leratong Pre-school



CHILDREN'S ACTIVITY CLUB

The Activity Club is a new initiative this year, the funding being raised through the UK annual online fundraising campaign run by the Big Give Christmas Challenge. The Big Give finds philanthropists, companies and donors who will match some of the money raised by charities through their campaign. These are called Charity Champions. Reed (an employment agency) was the Gumboots champion and matched £1 250 of the £7 695 total raised. The rest of the money was generously donated by Gumboots trustees, regular donors, friends, proceeds from their annual craft fair and gift aid on UK taxpayers' donations. Gumboots SA is very grateful to all concerned as it has enabled us to offer monthly outings and activities to two of our Alex projects. Huge thanks to all.

VISIT TO THE ZOO



The first of the Leratong Activity Club outings took place on a beautiful warm autumnal day in April. 40 animated children arrived at the Joburg Zoo by bus. Many of them had never seen wild animals before. Even the scuffing of the piles of autumn leaves was fun – doubtless a new experience for the kids as sadly there are few trees in Alex. It was astonishing to see how well behaved they all were ... walking in line, listening to their teachers, keeping the noise down. They loved the whole experience and we are all so grateful for the Big Give initiative!

CHALLENGES FOR THE TEACHERS



Dimakatso with her sleeping kids

Dimakatso, the teacher for the 5 – 6 year olds, talks about some of the challenges facing the teachers: "We deal with children from different backgrounds with different languages. This means they behave differently and we have to know how to handle them and create a conducive learning environment for them all. Their ability to learn is quite different too so as teachers we need to apply different techniques to reach them all and make learning fun.

"Most parents don't understand that we have a programme to

follow each day. If they bring their kids after 9am, you have to leave the class and attend to them – getting the children to settle down and focus again is not easy. The teachers also struggle with the two-year-olds with potty training because at home the parents don't do it; they just put nappies on to avoid the mess.

"Apart from all that, we love what we are doing and always encourage the parents to be part of our learning environment." You are an amazing group of teachers and we applaud your dedication!



Nina and her two-year-olds



Sigiya Sonke



SCI-BONO MUSEUM

In March, as part of the Children's Activity Club, we took 20 budding scientists to Sci-Bono, a children's interactive museum offering exhibits and workshops in science, technology and maths.

It was a "fiery" success, particularly in the science workshop! They spent a few hours learning and exploring a whole new avenue of ideas.

Thank you to the UK team for helping to raise the funds that enable these outings to take place.



Eish! Didn't expect that!

Zenzele, Beauty and Jack. Watch this space!



ACROBRANCH EXPERIENCE

Sigiya Sonke's second activity outing this year was to Acrobranch, an aerial tree-top adventure park where they are harnessed up to ziplines, obstacles and walkways. A great experience for these nimble, fit dancers. Some found it quite tough, others couldn't get enough of it ... but there was a general feeling of huge achievement while relaxing afterwards for refreshments (see top of page 1). Having had a science/brain activity and now a physical/exercise one, the next will be a creative painting experience.



Scary, exciting and team-building stuff!



COMMUNITY YOUTH PROGRAMME

At last a plan is in place for the Sigiya Sonke dance group. Since their Warehouse burnt down three years ago, the group has been dancing in Jack and Beauty's yard; this has been a generous compromise on their part, making their home space available every day.

Finally, a piece of land has been purchased ... the initial plan is to build a resourced dance facility for the group, and ultimately to develop the site into a fully fledged community youth centre, catering for dance, music and education. We are all so excited to begin!



Ratang Bana



The cabin takes shape



Johnny proudly shows off his certificate

THE SAFE HOUSE

The new wooden cabin was finally erected at the Centre so as to be able to split up the boys and girls who are temporarily being given shelter and a safe space. At the moment Johnny Maponya, 14, is the only young boy in the cabin, which he shares with a lovely house mother Tebogo Makola. Thank you to our sister organisation Kidlinks in Madison, Wisconsin, for the funds raised to make this new shelter a reality, Johnny is settling in well to this new life and new "family". His marks at school have improved and he has just been awarded a certificate for the top performer in Creative Arts! His life has been totally changed by Ingrid and Ratang Bana.



Mbali, on her way!

MBALI NDLOVU'S HAPPY NEWS

Mbali is off to Durban this month for two weeks on a school trip! She is one of the best students at Emfundisweni Primary School and two children have been chosen to join other kids on the educational tour.

They'll be going down by bus and will visit factories and the harbour ... and hopefully the beach. Thanks to the Caitlin Fund and a kind donor, Margaret Coates, we were able to buy her all the clothes and toiletries she'll need to kit her out for this exciting new adventure.



URGENT HELP NEEDED

The Centre has reported that there is a desperate need for support for a young, disabled boy of 9 years old, Obina Makhubela. His 29-year-old mother cannot get a job as she needs to tend to Obina all day. His father, a foreigner, cannot be traced so there is no support from him. The mother does have a disability grant but the R1 780/month doesn't go far. He cannot walk or talk, is an epileptic and has to wear nappies.

The family are in dire need of financial support in order to buy food, nappies, blankets, clothes, especially socks. Any help would be hugely appreciated.

Obina at home



Phetoho Education

ASSISTANT TEACHERS

We are very proud of two of the dancers from the Sigiya Sonke dance group that have graduated to teaching assistants at two excellent schools. They are thoroughly enjoying their new roles and Gumboots is happy to be able to help support them in this regard. They are both applying to study for their degrees in teaching so that they can reach greater heights.



Matebogo ready for action!

MATEBOGO AT SACRED HEART

Matebogo Nxumalo started this year as an assistant teacher for Grades 1 – 3, sometimes taking the class with guidance from the teachers who are all very supportive. She helps some children on a one-on-one basis with reading using the PhonoGraphix technique that she is trained in. Once a week she also teaches the kids in the ThreeToSix Refugee Programme at the school, helping with reading and English. Matebogo is hoping to start next year doing a part-time degree in teaching at UNISA.



"Anyone? Anyone?"

THATO AT THE UNITED CHURCH SCHOOL

Thato Makgotla is assistant teacher at UCS for Grades 7 – 9. She only finished school herself at UCS last year and says it was initially quite scary being in the staffroom with her previous teachers ... but says, "I love the fact that I am able to really relate to the kids as I know them all. And I'm loving the learning and discovery. It's good fun, and I'm being taught a few tricks about planning lessons well in advance." Thato is hoping to do her B.Ed at NW University later this year as an "Open Distance Learning" student. UCS will fund her studies. Well done!

SCHOOL SUPPORT FOR THE PHETOHO CHILDREN

Allocating of donations and funds is always a careful balance, and one of the areas of Gumboots support goes to school fees, uniforms, stationery and books.

All of the Sigiya Sonke dancers benefit in this area, and some of the children in Ingrid's Ratang Bana Centre.

Young dancers proudly kitted out for the United Church School





Newslinks Abroad

UK Our annual Christmas Craft Fair in November is our biggest event and this year we are once again looking for makers of quality handmade items. Feedback from last year's event suggested we have more items for children. So following this advice, and concern about the impact of the clothing industry on the planet, UK trustees Karen and Angela are now creatively recycling socks and old clothes. Inspired by a visit to a project in South Africa making hand-knitted soft toys and sock monkeys, we are hoping to turn people's discarded items into funds for projects in Alex. Fundraising is getting harder and we rely heavily on our regular donors and are always looking for new donors who will commit to a monthly sum. If you are interested, visit our website www.gumboots.org.uk or contact angela@gumboots.co.uk.



Sock monkeys and bunnies – some in shwe-shwe – hoping to leap off the shelf!



THE CAITLIN FUND

Once again, another good year for the Fund as the young women who have benefitted from it continue to grow and expand their horizons. After a year doing an internship at the *Natal Witness* in Pietermaritzburg, Vuyelwa Mtolo, with the help of the fund and Gumboots, was successfully interviewed and has left to teach English at a college in Taiwan. She is settling into her new life and role but has found the cultural differences a bit overwhelming.

Mbali and Thandi Ndlovu continue to perform well at school and we are looking forward to supporting them going forward (read under Ratang Bana for more happy news). The Caitlin Fund is also about to forge further links with an organisation in Pietermaritzburg, Siyabonga, to support two young girls on an ongoing basis.

USA Kidlinks has had a very busy spring in Madison, Wisconsin. We have just completed Phase 1 of our 2019 fundraising season, starting with a garage sale, where supporters donated household items for us to sell to neighbourhood shoppers. This is a great outreach event to build support and to fundraise, raising over \$1 000.

We have also just had our 5th Annual Plant Sale and each year the sale grows in popularity. The bitterly cold and wet weather did not deter shoppers and we raised over \$2 000. Thank you to local nurseries for their very generous donations of plants, the remaining trays of which will be planted in our local garden project with youth from Briarpatch Youth Services (<https://youthsos.org>).

Enthusiastic Briarpatch kids in the garden

