

## Casework: Individuals & Families

In the couple of years we have been working with children and youth headed households, we have witnessed how important family is to these young people. The way they look out for each other at all times. Yes things are not always rosy and perfect as far as relationships are concerned, but in the middle of it all there are always those moments where we are blown away by some of the sacrifices these young people make in order to take care of each other.

There is a young person who has been saving money for registration so that she can continue with her studies. She doesn't have a stable job but she does a few jobs there and there. Last year she did a business course that was offered in the community for free and during her internship she got paid and she was saving that money to be able to go to school this year.

Towards the end of last year their couches got really bad and they had holes in them. One day as they were sitting in the house they heard a funny noise coming from inside one of the holes in the sofas and they realised they had a snake in the house all along hiding in one of those holes.

She decided to buy new couches for her family home. Then she explained to us that her family's safety comes first and she will save more money to go to school but she had to make this sacrifice for them because her sister has young children and those couches were a health hazard for the whole family.

This might sound as a simple story of priorities but to me it made me think really deeply about the young people that we work with. There are so many sacrifices that they make that we don't even know about so that they stay together as a family and even in the absence of their parents that hasn't destroyed the importance of family and looking out for each other. The resilience that these young people keep showing is always an inspiration for us to keep walking alongside them till they reach their goals.



## Community Projects

### Children's Afterschool Club

Our Children's afternoon club has been continuing every Monday at 3. This term we decided to go for the theme of taking care of yourself. We did nutrition, fitness and safety. We had fun going through different information about food and water. We called in our in house fitness guru **Mama Phumi**, she runs soccer clubs for Mpower so fitness is her thing. She came ready in her shorts and had a very wonderful fitness session with us at Kids Club. We also tackled the issue of safety in children and what they can do or not do to stay safe. The theme for this term is leading to a theme we will have next term of taking care of others and our environment. We are looking forward to exploring more ways with the children of how they can take care of others but also take care of their environment.

### Siyakudumisa Group - Reported by Bongwiwe

(this group is sponsored by St Thomas Church, Musgrave)

This group of girls still meets every Friday at 13h30. This year we are doing Hero Book with them. In the beginning we were worried if they will grasp the concept of Hero Book and understand what it is about. To our surprise they love it and it has given them an opportunity to express themselves and a safe space to share their dreams and their fears.

We are so proud of the change that we see in them and the confidence they have gained. Even simple things like standing in front of the people and speaking without being paralysed by fear is a huge step for them.

## Community Projects - (cont.)

### The Beading Club

(reported by Mama Phumi)

The beading club continues this year every Tuesday at 15h00 and we are looking for more opportunities to create wonderful creations for people outside our community this year. We want to get this group to a point where it makes its own money to create and teach others more. The focus is no longer Zulu beads only now we are also looking at other type of beads as well.

We are also looking for other people who can come and donate their time at Mpower to teach this group new skills in creating something beautiful. Last year we recieved different type of beads and they have given us different ideas of the types of bead-work we can create. In this group we learn from each other and we let creativity flow.

### Hambanathi Group

(reported by Nonny)

The Hero Book continues in Hambanathi, although it's very challenging. Most of the young people that joined the group are also doing matric some of them play sports. For me this is a lesson that working with the community is not easy and if there are challenges you don't give up you try and find other ways to deal with it. This is also a good thing to model to the young people we work with that the nature of life is that like that, you just have to try and find different creative ways of dealing with things everyday but you do not give up.

My other work with the Hambanathi community is to assist 10 families with toiletries. So I had a vision because I saw how they lived and it reminded me of when I grew up that sometimes I wouldn't even go to school because there was no soap to wash my shirt or even sanitary pads. With the help of Umhlali Methodist Church members I am able to deliver some of these necessities to these families every month and at least the dignity of these young people is restored.

### The Voice Club

This group started with the bang this year, it happens every Tuesday at 14h30. We had new young people who joined our group for the first time. We started right away with the process of Hero Book. These young people are outspoken and they are not afraid to express themselves. We are always interested in the views of the young people as we learn a lot from their voices.

We cant wait to finish the Hero Book and move to another exciting process of action. We can see that these young people are geared up for action but we have encouraged them to take Hero Book as gift for them to do something for themselves that will help them see clearly where they want to go in future and then venture out to go out there and help others.

### Nkobongo Group

This group finished the journey of Hero Book last year. So this year we started a new programme with this group. The group has moved on from doing Hero Book into another exciting space of Narrative Theatre. This is a follow up from the Hero Book process. Now that the young people are aware of the obstacles that young people face in their lives that prevent them from reaching their goals, its time for them to dig deeper and find out more and see how can they tackle a particular problem in their community.

We are there to listen but to also walk alongside them and support them as they venture into action. This term we were exploring the topic of Whoonga a drug that has destroyed so many young people's lives. Instead of feeling helpless and hopeless what can these young people do to make a difference regarding this? Watch the space as we continue with this journey with these young people of Nkobongo as they tackle the big scary monster called Whoonga.





## Leadership Skills in Cato Crest Primary School

This term we had the privilege of doing a leadership skills workshop with Cato Crest Primary school prefects. It has been our wish to somehow do more at the school. We saw this as a way of empowering the young leaders of Cato Crest Primary school.

This workshop was a way for them to get to know each other as a team but to also realise what a leader is supposed to be like. Not only that but to also understand the importance of treating each other with respect regardless of who they lead. The workshop was a success as the young people really engaged so well with each other and their educators. What really stayed with me was seeing the educators sacrificing their time and staying after school for this programme and the way they showed support to the young leaders. This made these young leaders feel important and supported.

In the coming terms we are looking forward to having more leadership workshops with the young leaders. We are looking forward to hearing more about what they want to improve in their lives and in their school to make it the best that they want it to be. We will be continuing with this programme for the rest of this year. We thank the school for giving us an opportunity to contribute in this way in the life of the school, not only with this particular programme but with all the programmes that we run at the school.



### Word from the team:

Our passion is what gives us energy and the drive to continue do the work that we do in our communities. The young people that we work with keep inspiring us to go forward.

At times there are challenges that we come across along the way but just like we have encouraged the young people we work with we find tricks and tactics to go around the obstacles that we face. We model to the young people that life is not easy at times but that doesnt mean you give up, you get up and try again.

We thank our sponsors and friends for the continued support that we recieve. It is such a priviledge being able to contribute into our society in this way. Martin Luther King Jr Once said, " If you can't fly then run, if you can't run then walk, if you can't walk then crawl, but whatever you do you have to keep moving forward."

That's what we continue to do, we keep moving forward step by step to empower the young people of our country to be agents of change in their own lives and communities.