

Ubuntu

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Photo taken by a Human Rights volunteer of a Refugee mother at Youngsfield refugee camp with her baby born at the camp just 3 months ago.

Projects Abroad South Africa Newsletter Vol. XIII

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Staff News Update

Visitors and New staff members in the South Africa office

Page 2

Projects Abroad Human Rights Office

Read the updates on the PAHRO

Page 3-5

Freedom Day Election Day

South African election update

Page 6

Dirty Weekend

Volunteers help paint a container

Page 7

Donations

Thank you to volunteers for their generous donations

Page 8

Recipe Corner

Read about South African recipes!

Page 9

Volunteer Stories

Volunteers tell stories about their experience in South Africa

Page 10

Social Events

See the fun happenings in Cape Town

Page 11

Volunteer List

See who is coming and going, accommodation and more!

New Staff Update



We would like to extend a warm welcome to Lucinda Evans, our new member of staff! Lucinda will be assisting in both the Newlands Office and the Human Rights Office, as Assistant Manager and Social Manager.

Lucinda has done years of community development work in the Lavender Hill including working with youth programs, women's empowerment, rape and domestic abuse crisis counseling, skill based workshops with unemployed men and women, and much more! She was a host mother for Projects Abroad and coordinated volunteers in the Lavender Hill Community. We look forward to having her a part of the team!



We would also like to extend a warm but delayed welcome to Jason Davis, who became a part of the Projects Abroad South Africa Team in February. Jason assists with travel inductions for new volunteers as well as weekly and weekend socials. He studied electrical work and enjoys playing soccer, learning automobile mechanics and enjoying Cape Town's nightlife!



Inside the South Africa Human Rights Office

Written by Natalie Kiwajko

45 years ago Helen Lieberman was a recent university graduate who entered the workforce during the apartheid era in Cape Town. Due to her strong academic achievements she was put in charge of the black ward in a local hospital. It was there that Helen saw first hand the injustices and decided to make a difference. During her time at the hospital she started to sneak into the townships in order to give her patients proper treatment. As the word spread Helen began renting a living room space illegally, then it was a small apartment, after that she began buying property to turn into senior care homes, crèches, preschools and foster homes. Today, 45 years later, Ikamva Labantu is one of Cape Town's leading non-profit organizations, employing about one hundred and supporting a little over 1,000 people in Cape Town.

Ikamva Labantu, or “The Future of our Nation”, is unique in that it is managed by the local people. They work with women and men from almost all the large townships – from Guguletu, Langa, to Nyanga and more. A large part of the projects are headed by local “Mamas” (close to 200 women). These women take in orphaned and abandoned children that are given to them either by social workers or policemen. If an abandoned child is found Ikamva Labantu assists in finding out any necessary information to give the child a valid identity and papers. The goal is to raise these children and give them the tools to be self-sustainable, with an education and possibilities to continue their studies or find decent employment opportunities.

The elderly are also being cared for in a number of ways. The elderly homes are open during the day and give their visitors food and drinks, since many of them live off the R1,040 pension money that they receive once a month. In addition the women and men that go to the house are taught to farm so that they can cultivate the majority of their herbs, fruits and vegetables. This is not just economically intelligent, but is also extremely helpful for their health, since it often is one of the only physical exercises that the elderly get. In addition, the women learn to sew hats, placement mats and coasters using recycled plastic paper. This does not just keep them busy, but it also is a means of additional income for them.

During our visit to Ikamva's projects in Guguletu we had the opportunity to visit their multipurpose Rainbow Building. There about 150 children are attending the crèche, they have recreation rooms, a computer room and currently they are trying to build a doctors' surgery to give the residents their some much needed medical attention.

Speaking to the founder and others involved with Ikamva Labantu it seems that everyone is still working to achieve their goal of working together with communities to develop self-reliant and sustainable community-based organizations to facilitate positive social change and will only set higher goals in the future which have the strongest possible effects within the communities.

Projects Abroad Human Rights Office

Refugee Children's Day to the Beach!



The Projects Abroad Human Rights volunteers organized a Beach Day for the children from the Youngsfield Refugee Camp. Many of the children are coming from war torn countries such as the Sudan, Somalia, Congo, Burundi, etc, and have never experienced the beach before! It was a very

special day for both the refugee children and the volunteers. The children thoroughly enjoyed getting to see life outside the refugee camp, playing in the sand and the water, and being normal kids!



Projects Abroad Human Rights Office



Bonnytoun House Dance and Drama Show Rosalind Russell

A big round of applause to both the boys from Bonnytoun House and Rosalind Russell for an absolutely wonderful Drama and Dance production on Easter Sunday! The 100+ young teenage boys involved in the production have committed various crimes involving drugs, abuse or theft and are placed at Bonnytoun House juvenile detention center in order to go through rehabilitation and transformation. Ros was a rock of support at the school and put 100% of her efforts into making the production a success. It was very special to see the boys' family members come watch the performances and the boys were thrilled to be able to show off their talents.



Blanket Drive for Refugees

A big Thank You to the volunteers at the Human Rights Office for the Blanket and Food donations to the refugees at the Youngsfield refugee camp.

The Refugee Camp provides no food, hot water or electricity to the refugees, so obviously this make the living conditions atrocious for the people living there on a day to day basis, unable to return to their original communities for fear of xenophobic attacks. The blankets and food will be much appreciated by those who have next to nothing. Thanks for all the hard work and for helping those struggling.



Freedom Day - 27th April



Freedom Day is a very special day in South Africa's history as it marks the 1st post-apartheid election held in 1994, where any South African irrespective of race or culture, was able to come to the polls to vote for their country's government. Freedom Day is celebrated throughout the country as a public holiday in remembrance of the first democratic election. Many South Africans are very proud of this day and the progress the country has made after years of racism and oppression.

Election Day - 22nd April



The winner of the 2009 elections is the African National Congress (ANC) for its 5th consecutive win since South Africa became a democracy in 1994. Jacob Zuma will be the country's next president. ANC supporters are celebrating around the country for the first Zulu president to take office. There has been much controversy surrounding Jacob Zuma due to previous trials for rape and arms deals. Zuma has promised a commitment to bettering the lives of South Africans and intolerance of corruption in government.



Dirty Weekend

Where Rainbows Meet



Many thanks to all the volunteers who gave up their Saturday to help paint the container for a new Entrepreneurship/Business project in the Vrygrond community, run by Mymoena Scholtz . The program will encourage women in the community to start their own small businesses such as sewing/crafts, selling baked goods as well as a Soup Kitchen to provide food for people in the community that don't have enough to eat. Thanks to Mymoena and the volunteers for all their hard work!

Donations



Jackie Edelman's Book Donation

Thank you to Jackie for her generous book donation to the Fairview Primary library! Principal Mr. De Wet, teachers and students are thrilled to have so many new books! Thanks to your home school for making the donation!

Recipe Corner

Tomato Bredie

Ingredients

1 kg beef or shoulder of mutton
 2 T (30ml) oil
 1 T (15ml) butter
 2 t (10ml) sea salt
 ½ t (2,5ml) freshly ground black pepper
 2 onions, chopped
 6 ripe red tomatoes (one tin of tomatoes)
 1 x 70 g tin tomato paste
 1 t (5ml) sugar
 ¼ t (1ml) chilli powder
 ½ t (2,5ml) paprika
 3 gloves garlic, crushed
 1 t (2,5 ml) paprika
 3 cloves garlic, crushed
 1 t (5 ml) mixed herbs
 1 ½ cups (375 ml) chicken stock
 3 potatoes, diced
 1 T (15 ml) potato flour or maizena



- 1) Cube the meat. Heat the oil/butter mixture in a big, heavy-bottomed saucepan until the butter discolours.
- 2) Add the meat in batches and stir-fry until brown. Remove each batch with a slotted spoon and keep aside. Season the browned meat with salt and pepper.
- 3) Brown the onions in the remaining oil. When golden, soft and glazed, add the tomatoes, tomato paste, sugar, chilli, paprika, garlic, herbs, water and stock cube. Bring to a slow simmering boil.
- 4) Add the prepared meat. Simmer the bredie very slowly for 2 hours. Add the cubed potatoes and continue simmering for another half an hour.
- 5) Thicken the gravy with a little potato flour mixed with water. The bredie improves with keeping. Prepare a day in advance and leave to mature in the refrigerator.
- 6) Reheat and serve with fluffy steamed rice to which a handful of chopped parsley has been added.

Volunteer Stories

Volunteer Stories are a way for our volunteers to write about their experiences in South Africa, whether it be a funny occurrence, cultural misunderstanding, travel or leisure, story anything! Living in a new place, far from home, there is bound to be comical encounters and interesting insights gained from learning about new cultures and ways of thinking. Also, upcoming volunteers are encouraged to introduce themselves and tell us a little bit about what you expect out of your time here in South Africa!



David Barnes, Journalism Volunteer at Daily Voice

The call comes in. A double-decker bus has just exploded in downtown Cape Town on Adelaide Street. The editor quickly looks over at me and tells me to cover the story and to hurry. A camera man is already by my side and the rush down the 5 story building's stairs ensues. Outside it is clear and sunny and the cameraman assures me that he knows the intersection where the explosion happened. We turn our heads east and in less than 1 second he knew he was wrong.

A large black cloud of smoke engulfed the sky about 12 blocks away. People all over the downtown area stopped in their tracks and just stared upward. It is a rush against time for us. We have to get there before the fire is extinguished. We have to get there before the witnesses disperse. We need to catch the fire fighters in action. We need to capture all of the emotions of the crowd around us. We need to cover the story while it was happening....and not when the story was over.

Running with a pen and pad is not that hard but a camera man who is carrying heavy and expensive camera equipment is another thing.

Traffic has totally stopped and people get out of their cars to see what is happening. The streets and sidewalks are now packed with people in bewilderment. A very large amount of spectators circled the bus and fire fighters where in the middle. It is a circus. The bus was a ball of fire and smoke. Not one thing could be saved from this inferno. The flames were so large that nearby traffic lights melted away and trees were burned.

I quickly go around the area and just try to soak everything in. I quickly gather myself however and start to scout the area. I had to find out what happened, was anyone hurt, where was this bus coming from and where was it going, find the police for a statement, find witnesses and people who were on the bus.

Everyone was scattered but I had to get to everyone. A group of reporters circled a witness and I joined to hear the story. There was a witness who gave me a play by play of how the explosion went down right next to the police car. The bus driver did not want to give me a statement but the police filled me in right there on what had happened from what they had gathered. I would get a complete statement from the communications officer once more facts were gathered after the storm.

The bus had an internal explosion from equipment malfunction. It was not a projectile explosion but it caused a fire and slowly but surely the whole bus caught on fire. Everyone got off safely and no foul play was expected. The bus came from Johannesburg and its final destination was here in Cape Town. On the run to the fire we had no idea what to expect. People could have been on the bus and serious injuries or even deaths could have happened. Foul play could have been involved and serious questions, issues, and actions would soon ensue. Every day is something new and you don't know what you will get into next.

You can't be at that many places in the world that you can have these types of experiences. I will treasure the education, experience, and the adventures I had in Cape Town forever.

Weekend Trips and Socials



This month's highlighted Wednesday social was a final Full Moon hike up Lion's Head with Cape Xtreme before the winter season begins! Volunteers braved the steep climb up Lion's Head starting at about 5pm and made it to the top just as the sun was going down. The Full Moon was so bright that it lit the pathway down to the bottom.

Another fun activity was the Volleyball and Soccer Tournament hosted by Cape Xtreme! The Projects Abroad Team played tough and worked our hardest, but did not come out with any prizes! We still had a great day of sunshine and exercise though!

