

"Ubuntu is very difficult to render into a Western language... It is to say, 'My humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up, in what is yours.'"

-Archbishop Desmond Tutu, in his book *No Future Without Forgiveness*.



What's Inside?

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| 1 | SOUTH AFRICA INSIDE and OUT |
| | Meet the New Staff |
| 2 | New Office |
| 3 | South Africa's History |
| | New Care and Community Projects |
| 4 | Angels and Starfish |

- | | |
|----|------------------------------------|
| 5 | Moving Day for Angels and Starfish |
| 6 | Rainbow Educare Centre |
| 7 | New Host Families |
| | ▪ New Volunteers in September |
| 8 | New Conservation Projects |
| 9 | Volunteers' Account |
| 10 | Volunteer Contact Information |

Meet the New Staff!

Dana Myers is the new Country Director for South Africa. He started as a Care and Teaching volunteer for Projects Abroad in Swaziland and Barberton in the northern part of South Africa, and has since taken over the role as Director, creating Cape Town as a new destination point for volunteers and overseeing the conservation project in Botswana on the Legodimo game reserve. He holds an undergraduate degree in History and Education from Washington State University and a Masters in Intercultural Youth and Family Development. He has done extensive travelling throughout Europe and Africa, taught high school for three years in Hawaii. He loves to surf, hike, camp and rock-climb!



Alyssa Myers is the new Desk Officer and Social Manager for South Africa. She is responsible for being in contact with volunteers before their arrival as well as helping to get the Cape Town projects up and running! She is also in charge of organizing social events for volunteers to get to know one another and get to know Cape Town a little better. She holds an undergraduate degree from the University of Montana in Cultural Anthropology. She studied at the University of Cape Town for two semesters where she worked in the Khayleishta townships tutoring high school students. She loves to surf, hike, camp and rock-climb (surprisingly all of which with Dana!), as well as cook and practice yoga.

The new **South Africa Projects Abroad Office** is up and running in the Letterstedt building right off Main Road in Claremont, Cape Town. The office is in a central location close to the Cavendish Mall, train station, minibus taxi routes, Internet cafes, banks and the post office! Feel free to come in anytime for questions, concerns or if you just want to relax on the couch with a cup of tea and research travel trips with our extensive guide book collection and if a computer is free you are welcome to use the internet! Remember that any packages/mail sent from family members or friends will be sent here.



Historical Background of South Africa

South Africa is a country of drastic contrast, where wealth and poverty co-exist, possessing state of the art medical facilities and a 25% HIV/AIDS infection rate, modern infrastructure and millions living in shack dwellings, a place of development and progress, but simultaneously a large population who still are unemployed, who do not have enough to eat or proper education.

South Africa's troubled history is the reason these drastic contrasts exist. Like many other African nation's, colonialism and the white superiority mentality that was brought to the African continent determined the racial divisions and oppression that native South Africans as well as imported slaves from countries such as Madagascar, India and the West Indies have endured for years.

Since the early 1900's, the white, Afrikaaner Nationalist Party enforced a policy of institutionalized racism, called "apartheid", meaning "separateness" or "apartness" in Afrikaans. This policy declared that the entire South African population should be systematically separated into racial categories; White, Coloured, Asian, Black, etc. An individual's official racial category determined where he or she could live, work, socialize, shop, travel, etc. The Nationalist Party made it a strict point to allow the white population the best jobs, land allocation and rights and the rest of the population was given significantly worse jobs, housing and human rights.

The Nationalist Party's policy of apartheid was bound to fail, and fail it did. Opposition and resistance to the government's inhumane and unjust law system began to arise in the early 40's, and political parties formed with the sole purpose of creating a government where all South Africans were considered equal, despite racial profiles, ethnic backgrounds and language. The leading opponent of the National Party was the political party called the African National Congress or the ANC, of which Nelson Mandela quickly gained leadership. The ANC based its resistance on non-violent protests such as bus and business boycotts, burning of pass books and peaceful marches beginning with the Defiance Campaign of the early 1950s.

Following the Sharpeville Massacre in 1960, where 67 unarmed black marchers, including women and children, were killed during an anti-pass march, the political climate of South Africa began to shift rapidly as the apartheid system's inhumanity, police brutality and nation wide violence gained international attention. The militant wing of the ANC, Umkhonto we Sizwe or "Spear of the Nation", began using violence and warfare as the past peaceful tactics had proved unsuccessful. South Africa was declared in a state of emergency during the 1980s as the economy plummeted, violence was widespread across the nation and international countries placed trade embargos on imports and exports until the apartheid government recognized that a severe change was needed for the South African people.

Following the release of ANC leader Nelson Mandela after 21 years of imprisonment in the historic Robben Island prison, President FW De Klerk of the Nationalist Party made negotiations for the first ever democratic election in South Africa's history. Thousands of voters of all different races and ethnic backgrounds came together as the "Rainbow Nation" and cast their vote. The ANC party won by a landslide and Nelson Mandela stepped into power as the first black leader in power in the history of South Africa. De Klerk and Mandela were both honoured with a Nobel Peace Prize and drafted the first democratic constitution that has forever changed the future of the Republic of South Africa.

Moving Day for Angels and Starfish to the Sijonga-Phambili Community Learning Centre



With a ton of help from the four volunteers at the Angels and Starfish crèche - Anna Von Holstein, Nicole Steffes, Cameron Vea and Nicole Brown - the crèche at the Sgwentu Family garage has been moved to the nearby Sijonga - Phambili Community Learning Centre. This centre aims to provide improvement in the level of education and enhancement of practical skills for previously disadvantaged adults.

There are 303 current students and 14 part time teachers. The Centre offers training at all academic levels and a limited selection of skills training courses

such as Agriculture and Arts & Crafts. The Centre runs these courses during the evening time, which allows the crèche to operate in the same space during the daytime. The children come at 8:30 or 9 in the morning via the Sgwentu Family VW van and normally will stay until 3:30 in the afternoon. The new space at the Centre allows for a lot more room for the children to enjoy play time, as well as space for naps, meal time, diaper



changing and structured lessons and reading stories. The Sgwentu Family is delighted to gain a new location for their crèche, for the children and their teachers and volunteers. With the new space available in the home where the crèche used to be located, the Sgwentus will be converting their current crèche to allow them to host more volunteers.



The main challenge now is to find a permanent structure for the crèche near the Sijonga - Phambili Community Learning Centre, allowing a mutually beneficial relationship where parents attending classes could have their children looked after at the crèche. Prospective agreements are under way, so watch this space for more updates on the Angels and Starfish crèche! Thanks to all our volunteers who took the time after working hours to help with the move!

Rainbow Educare Centre



The Rainbow Educare Centre has been in existence for the past couple of years with the sole purpose of giving small children from the surrounding community of Vrygrond and Grassy Park a place of safety and comfort from the social issues that are overwhelming in this area of Cape Town,

such as domestic abuse, violence, crime, unemployment, poor education, rape, HIV/AIDS, alcoholism and drug use. The Educare Centre is a central and meaningful place in this community; it allows

parents from the surrounding area to have peace of mind that their children will be well taken care of, safe, given food and a warm blanket for nap time. There is always work to be done at the Educare Centre, whether it be fixing a leaking roof or painting the sign in front, there is always something to do! Volunteer Lisa Nellipuzha has been



working in the Centre for almost a month and has been a central figure in teaching the English language through song, reading stories

and simple writing exercises. Lisa is a certified Geography teacher from Canada whose skills have been invaluable to these children. Not only has she been teaching, but she has also learned a bit of Afrikaans, slowly but surely, the dominant language in this part of Cape Town!



News and Updates

...bits and pieces of information of happenings in South Africa

New Placements and New Host Families

Many past volunteers have said that the best part of their experience was their host family stay, where you are literally immersed in the South African way of life, eating new foods, listening to new music, doing what the locals do! Here are some of the new families in Cape Town!



Mike Cormack lives in Marina de Gama outside downtown Cape Town, where volunteer Lisa Nellipuzha stayed for her one month working at the Rainbow Educare Centre. Mike is an avid athlete, boasting over 15 Cape Argus bike races! Healthy and happy man! We love him!



The Joseph Family lives in Rondebosch, a taxi bus ride away from Long Street, and they have been hosted our two August volunteers Tiphonie Buisson and Rachel Head, they are marvellous hosts with big hearts and a love for their home city of Cape Town!!

Attention Projects Abroad Volunteers!!
Habitat for Humanity Build Dates

Saturday	1 st September
Saturday	22 nd September
Saturday	29 th September
Saturday	6 th October



If you are interested in one of the Habitat for Humanity Build dates, please contact:
Dana Myers
0741036585
or
Alyssa Myers
0741919939

New Conservation Project and Staff in Botswana



We are excited to introduce our new conservation project, located up on the Botswana side of the Limpopo river border with South Africa. The name of the camp and reserve is Legodimo, which is the Tswana (local tribal language) for “paradise” or “where God is”. This reserve is deep in the “bush”, the closest town, Selebi Bhekwe, is 160kms/2.5 hour drive away where volunteers go once a week to shop for groceries, supplies, visit the internet café and maybe have the option to go out to eat or to the pub.

The Legodimo Reserve is thick with vegetation and wildlife. Volunteers see all kinds of highveld wildlife such as elephants, kudu, impala, baboons, crocodile, water buck, porcupine, duiker steenbok, countless bird species, and occasionally, depending on the season, lions, hippos, rhinos and leopards.

The conservation projects are vast; volunteers work consists of Elephant ID/Tracking, soil maintenance and erosion repair, road clearing and building, tree wrapping, cabin and grounds maintenance, bush clearing of alien plant species, making species lists. Volunteers also have the opportunity to visit other parks in South Africa, to do similar work, or to learn how to use GPS tracking devices to find Lion or African Wild Dog.

Gerritt Prinsloo is the mastermind behind the Legodimo conservation project. He grew up on a farm in Bilansberg South Africa where he raised 200-300 snakes with his father. His passion for the outdoors and wildlife led him to study Nature Conservation at the University of South Africa in Pretoria. He has been a ranger/guide for five years for numerous parks and reserves working with school groups and tourists for weeklong trips. He is well equipped with the knowledge, experience and enthusiasm for the conservation project management and is excited to impart his wisdom to Projects Abroad volunteers.

Harry Kent is the Desk Officer for the conservation project in Legodimo. Originally from Goring in Sussex, Harry worked at our head office in the admin department for nearly two years before heading off to the conservation project when it began at the end of July. Harry is a child prodigy tennis player, who has given up this hobby to make the most of travelling to South Africa to work on this project. Harry is responsible for answering all volunteers’ emails before they arrive, and making sure you are all ready for life in the bush!

Volunteers Account

The following articles are contributed by volunteers and ex volunteers, sharing their experiences while at their placements and not so rough guides on how to make the most of your time here in South Africa.



Minibus Taxi Adventure

By Rachel Head

Red Cross Children's Hospital

Coming to South Africa was a big adventure for me and I planned to do many exciting things such as hiking Table Mountain, diving with sharks and visiting Robben Island but above all the most terrifying and exciting thing I experienced within my time in

Cape Town was catching the mini-bus taxi. Mini-bus taxi's are normally a white VW van, you will notice these vehicles straight away as they normally have, as a fixture, a man leaning out of the passenger side window shouting various destinations at you. You cannot miss them!

My first experience of the mini-bus taxi was in my first week in Cape Town. Me and a fellow volunteer were feeling particularly brave and made the decision to get a lift into town. Flagging a taxi down is easy, you just kinda wave your arm about in the air although I do believe there are different signals for different directions (I haven't figured those out yet). It is a strong possibility that you may get 2 buses trying to get your custom so just make a dash for the nearest one.

When you climb inside do not be surprised to find the conductor urging everyone to move up in their seats to let you sit down, these vehicles are never full and they will endeavour to cram in as many people as is humanly possible to do. They also drive at what feels like 100 miles per hour but that just adds to the excitement!

At some point in the journey the conductor may tell you to get off and to get onto another bus, this is completely normal as some of the buses only travel so far but there is always a connecting bus waiting for you.

This is by far the cheapest and most convenient way to travel in South Africa (about 5R for most journeys) if you can stand the pace. Just a couple of tips for anyone wanting to travel this way, do not catch one of these after dark, watch out for pick pockets and be aware of being the only female in the taxi – if your unsure wait for the next one.

So my advice is just bite the bullet and become accustomed to this unique way to travel, it is a great way to meet local people and if you are ever unsure of what you are doing or where you are going you can guarantee there will be someone sat right next to you who is willing to help.



Rachel experiencing a traditional Xhosa hand cleansing ceremony