

Vuyani News

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 3

JULY 2011

- Foster Home for abused & abandoned Children
- Love, Care & Discipline
- Education
- Life Skills
- FAMILY

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Anything worth having is worth waiting for..... Gavin

Louw

Gavin Louw who was instrumental in forming the bond between Samara and Vuyani, wrote these almost prophetic words on a T-shirt of one of our Vuyani children at last year's Samara soccer training for less privileged children from Graaff-Reinet. Sometimes we get frustrated when things at Vuyani don't go faster, but when we stop and look back we can see that we were not ready at that stage for some of the things now being entrusted to us.



Vuyani moving forward

NEW BOARD

Only after Moira left did all who are involved with Vuyani realize just how much work she was shouldering on her own. Moira has left a huge void which we are trying to fill. Moira we miss you!!!

However, Vuyani have had to move on The first important step was to re-organise the Committee into the new VUYANI SAFE HAVEN BOARD. We now have a fully functional Board which meets every month and each one on the Board has a portfolio and knows what is expected from him/her.

Chairperson, **Harold Steven-Jennings** is a local farmer with a civil engineering back ground. He has been chairing Vuyani meetings, interacts with relevant Government departments

and oversees the strategic level decisions. **Catherine**, Harold's wife, has an arts background and is a keen gardener. She handles our Thank You's and other administration tasks. She is busy compiling a full list of all friends of Vuyani, local and overseas to keep in touch.

Treasurer, **Elaine Stanley**, is a trained accountant of Stanley Accounting services. Stanley accounting services has taken on Vuyani's books and has over a period of a month reduced the two year backlog to nil. All necessary documents were sent to the Receiver of Revenue and Elaine discovered that while we still do not have the NPO no. we do have a valid tax exemption no. which may be used by donors sending donations to Vuyani. Elaine and her husband Arland are very active members of The Assembly of God church, an-

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other great supporter of Vuyani.

Mandisa Mandla is the newest Board member. Mandisa loves working with children and has experience in the theatre as well as having done work for "Love Life". Mandisa is busy studying further through U.N.I.S.A.

Kay Coetzee, our art lady, is still on the Board despite a setback to her eyesight. She adapted to her handicap so swiftly and is continuing her marvelous work with the children's Income Generating Project.

Other Board members are **Frikkie du Plessis**

and **Magreet Koers**.

Riana v.d. Ahee is Vuyani Safe Haven's manager. She is accredited to do counseling and vocational guidance and did a course in Play therapy. She sees to the day to day running of Vuyani and Thanduxolo, oversees the caregivers and liaises with the Board and Social workers. During the very difficult time when Moira left and the new board was established, Riana and Werner had to shoulder all the responsibilities of running Vuyani. This has been a very difficult time for her and we are very grateful to have someone of her

integrity at the coal-face.

Werner Olivier, a computer boffin, has been a rock on which the home has depended for so much. Sadly, Werner has just informed us of his immediate resignation from the Vuyani Board. His own business at this point in time needs his undivided attention. His help has been invaluable in guiding the new members of the board and setting up our Business Plan and fb page. We are very sorry to lose him, but fully understand and wish him and his wife, Ann, the very best.



Kay hands over a hand painted tablecloth to Werner done by her and the children of Vuyani.

NEWSFLASH: *VUYANI SAFE HAVEN HAS FINALLY BEEN REGISTERED AS A NON PROFIT ORGANISATION (NPO). ALL DONORS CAN NOW BE PROVIDED WITH TAX COMPLIANT RECEIPTS, IF REQUIRED.*

CHALLENGES FACED BY THE NEW BOARD

1. The ongoing battle for funds from the Provincial Dept. of Social Development
2. Creating a private income stream - R20,000 per month, just to run Vuyani.
3. Salaries for our caregivers - R12,000 per month. We are paying the minimum wage for a very difficult job and we are going to have to increase the wages in the near future, if we hope to keep our staff.
4. Funding for a Cluster Foster Home
5. Funding for Community Center for Crechè, remedial classes and Skills development for older children
6. Upgrading our webpage to:
 - represent all the different aspects of Vuyani Safe Haven and
 - a Pay Pal system for overseas donors to make donations easier
 - a Friends of Vuyani forum
7. Formatting systems for each portfolio to hand over to a new Board member when someone resigns

Now to the more pleasant events of the last three months!

SURPRISES: GIFTS

Our bigger boys at the Thanduxolo house received a computer from Smart Octopus. This will be such a great help. We still need a volunteer to help our children grasp the mysteries of the IT world.



The Youth group from the local Assemblies of God visited Vuyani with gifts of blankets and balloons and fun things for the children and spent an entire after-

noon interacting with all the children. Afterwards some of these wonderful young people still keep on coming to visit our children at Vuyani. This winter is exceptionally cold and we are so grateful for the blankets.



VISITORS

We regularly receive wonderful visitors from overseas at Vuyani. This is largely due to the exposure Vuyani receives from Samara Private Game Reserve. Thank you to all the guests of Samara for visiting us and for the gifts and donations that you brought the children and also for the donations that you keep on sending from overseas.



Recently, the Gallard family, who were visiting Samara, brought their family to Vuyani and interacted with our children.

VOLUNTEERS

These lovely Orange tops were the trademark of a group of students from Scotland who had just finished their final school year and were visiting Samara with some of their teachers on the Volunteer project. They set aside a whole day to visit Graaff-Reinet and help our bigger boys at Thanduxolo to plant out some 200 onion seedlings as well as tidying Aunt Lena's garden. They decided beforehand to also pay a visit to Vuyani and brought very useful gifts and educational toys for our smaller children. Before they left they donated a generous amount to Vuyani for some much needed maintenance work.



Love a child and grow their future

VISITS

VISIT TO SAMARA – report by Catherine Steven-Jennings

There was great excitement at Vuyani when Steve Steynberg's 3ton tarpaulin covered truck pulled up at Vuyani on Sunday morning. Mattresses were loaded to make for a comfortable ride. Lots of laughter and teasing as children and caregivers clambered up into the truck. Only, the babies were left behind with a caregiver to look after them.



Hayley and Alwyn and the team of young volunteers at Samara had a wonderful line up for the children. While the younger children coloured in animal masks and went for a game drive, the older children were taken out into the veld, where they planted carbon gobbling spekboom, and built rock

gabions across badly eroded streams. The rock packing really got the boys going and we had to drag them away to go and have lunch.



While we waited for lunch at the Manor, the Samara team had laid on games next to the pool. The children had a wonderful time on the huge lawns and had worked up a good appetite by the time lunch arrived.

The young people spending time at Samara either as volunteers or writing their PhD's were all so kind to the children and I do not think they realise just how much an outing of this kind means to them. I want to say another very big thank you to Sarah Tompkins, Hayley and Alwyn for their continuing interest in and assistance to Vuyani.

SAN PARKS HOLIDAY PROGRAM

Our children were most fortunate to take part in a week long program run by SanParks this holiday. They were fetched each day at Vuyani by two very capable ladies and learned a lot about the environment. They also went to the Valley of Desolation and the Game Park where they saw most of the game to be viewed at the Camdeboo National Park. THANK YOU SAN PARKS FOR THIS WONDERFUL INITIATIVE!!!



SOCIAL WORK



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Goodbyes....

Some of the children are placed permanently in our care, but most children once removed from their parents, stay at Vuyani for about 3 months before being placed back in the community. The

social worker will always first try to place the child with a family member, an aunt or grandmother before considering an alternative family.

When a suitable placement is found, the children will spend a day and later a weekend there. Over a period of time the child is then integrated into their new home. The Social Worker will spend some time with the child and the new family, to ensure that the child is well cared for. When an older child is to be placed, they are consulted on their preference of placement.



These two boys have been in Vuyani for about 6 months. In that time both their father and their mother died. Fortunately, their aunt came forward to take the two boys into her home. Our two boys are thriving in their new home with their cousins and aunt and uncle looking after them.

Our caregivers get very attached to the children placed in Vuyani and it is never easy to say goodbye to a little one with

whom you have formed a special bond.



Here is Veronica and little Spa (nickname) and his maternal aunt who is going to foster him. We only found out the day of the court session that he already has two sisters living with this aunt and they couldn't wait to welcome their little brother to their home.

HEALTH:

All children admitted to Vuyani come from impoverished backgrounds and some were exposed to sexual abuse and therefore need to be tested for TB and if necessary HIV.

When removing a child a Social worker or Police inspector will try to get the Clinic Card (Road to Health card) from the parents. If we are unable to obtain the child's medical information, children under the age of 5 need to be immunized again.



Vuyani's Caregivers spending hours of waiting each week with children in hospitals or clinics

We have a clinic bus provided by the

Camdeboo Municipality, who visits our children monthly to perform immunizations and see to minor ailments. In between our caregivers have to take any sick child to our nearest clinic.

We have one child with HIV and one at this stage under treatment for TB. Three children finished a 6 month treatment course for TB and are thriving and growing.

EDUCATION:

All our children are enrolled at a suitable school as soon as possible after they are placed in Vuyani. We have 2 boys, Lemmie and JC, in Khanyisa, a school for **Special Needs**.

They receive Occupational therapy and learn skills, but are also helped academically as far as they are able to progress. The school has a sports program and the children compete regularly against other children with special needs.



We have one boy in **Grade R**, Sethu, who has received Occupational therapy and Speech therapy for over a year. He was far behind and has had many behavioral problems. He is coping much better now and is his teacher's little star. She is so proud of him, because he is always first to finish an assignment.



We decided to place some of our children back in Grade 1, because they have missed so much school through the neglect of their parents and even though they were in Grade 2 and even Grade 3 they couldn't

read or write or do simple arithmetic. Fortunately the **Primary schools** attended by the smaller children give us good support. Now we are reaping the benefits. Our big group of *Grade 1's* (7 in all) is starting to read and can all write their names. We have 3 girls of 15 who are so behind in school that we'll have to start them on a new program next year. They need to learn skills, e.g. needlework or cooking and IT. They will not be able to finish their matric and we have to assist them in finding a suitable job after school.



We have two boys in a local **High school**, Charleston and Craig, and we urgently need a mentor to help them after school with assignments and homework.

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Little Monwabisi came to Vuyani six months ago as an undernourished shy baby who couldn't even sit by himself. He received Occupational therapy and with the love of our caregivers and the older children he has developed into a sturdy confident boy who is the first to greet all who visit Vuyani. He is on par with all his developmental goals and was walking just after he had his first birthday. He is also starting to talk.



We don't send our pre-schoolers to a crèche, because they are still so vulnerable and may be abducted by their par-

ents from whom they were removed.

We have a class assistant who does perceptual development with the little ones under guidance of the Occupational therapist.

However, we really need to start our own nursery school, but need funding for salaries and equipment. We've made contact with a group in Cape Town who support the development of Montessori schools. If we find funding we will be able to open a crèche for our Vuyani children and maybe other Foster children in the Community. We already have 2 qualified Montessori teachers in Graaff-Reinet who want to get involved in Vuyani and be part of our vision for the future.

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NEW VISION FOR VUYANI SAFE HAVEN

“When Passion Fires the Soul.....Impossibilities Vanish”.....Gavin Louw

During this last year we moved slowly from short term placement of children (3 - 6 months) to more long term placement, namely a Cluster Foster Home. Children can now remain at Vuyani till the age of 18 and even to 21 years if they are still studying.

However, the need for a Place of Safety for neglected and traumatised children is still essential. Nearly every week children and babies are brought to Vuyani by the police, Social workers or the community. Very few people in the community or near family are capable of taking care of these children. Under the new Children's Act we will need to register as a Child & Youth Care Centre directed towards vulnerable children under the age of 12 years. We want to keep the main Vuyani Safe Haven house for this purpose.

For the Cluster Foster Home we will need about 6 small apartments/cottages for Foster families (a “Mother” with 6 children) with a central laundry, kitchen and hall.

We are currently conferring with the Camdeboo Municipality for a piece of ground next to Thanduxolo (the house for the bigger boys) to develop into a Cluster Foster Home and certain unused buildings across the road to house a skills development, art, performing art, remedial classes, crèche, etc. We will report on this development in our next Newsletter. **If you are interested in getting involved in this project we can send you more information.**

THE NAC FLY AWAY



THE NAC FLY AWAY to Graaff- Reinet will be remembered as one of the highlights of 2011. Imagine 35 beautiful small aeroplanes landing one after the other at our rural airport. The day was chilly and bright and the aircraft were set against the backdrop of the mountains as they came in to land. Each pilot had been given an arrival and landing time and there was a great deal of rivalry to keep to the right time. The enthusiasm and camaraderie amongst the pilots and their passengers was infectious.

Various activities had been laid on for our visitors by the Tourism Association of Graaff-Reinet and they did a great job.

For Vuyani THE NAC FLY AWAY was to be a very special event. Every year N.A.C do a "FLY AWAY" to a different town in South Africa. They have a special dinner, in our case in the town hall, for the local dignitaries and the chosen charity - this year Vuyani Safe Haven.

The children of Vuyani sang and danced for the visitors. The sweet voices of the girls singing a gentle hymn and the boys doing a boisterous gumboot dance to expert vigorous drumming got the evening going.



This was not just another party for the rich and famous. The members of N.A.C and their clients dug deep into their pockets as the American auction got under way...



Marnus Ochse from Samara announcing the Grand Prize for the auction, donated by Sarah Tompkins, owner of Samara Private Game Reserve

How Gardner van Niekerk, our intrepid auctioneer, kept up with what was going on can only be put down to long years of experience. In addition there were individual donations of furniture, a washing machine from Martin Banner, CEO of N.A.C., and an amount of R20, 000 from someone who did not wish to be named. The final result was a staggering R147, 000 (give or take) raised for Vuyani. I don't think anyone could quite take it all in at the time. What an evening. Certainly one we will not forget. A very humble thank you to all who contributed to the success of the evening.

Vuyani's Board, together with a team of NAC, decided on a project list to utilise this big Dona-

THE NAC FLY AWAY

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tion in the best possible way. A percentage was used for equipment, e.g. beds, tables, chairs and carpets. A percentage went towards food and running costs and with the rest we are still busy with renovations on the home and a safety gate with intercom to be installed.



Our little ones sitting at their own small table and chairs and eating from enamel bowls - everything bought from the money funded by the NAC Fly Away.



New beds arriving at Vuyani

Thank you NAC!!!!

Update your Details

Please update your details so that we can keep in touch with you.

Either post/email/fax the following back to us.

our children.

An email address is preferable, but please send your postal address if an email address is not available.

Thank you!!!

Your support means the world to

Name:

Postal Address:

.....
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.....

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VUYANI
Safe Haven

**Vuyani Safe Haven/Foster
Home**

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