



Project Gateway Newsletter October/November 2009



Greetings!

Greetings from Pietermaritzburg, South Africa! At present we are revelling in the beautiful displays of colours blooming on the trees and plants, and the Jacarandas have been just amazing.



Spring is just about over and summer is pretty much here! As a one-year volunteer at Project Gateway from Canada, these marvellous sights particularly impact me!

Project Gateway was established in 1992 with the vision of being a gateway through which the poor and disadvantaged enter hopeless, and leave with hope.

Exactly how that vision is worked out changes as the needs of the country and its people change, as the AIDS pandemic makes ever-greater inroads into the community, as funding and

physical support vary, and as we develop our own skills and perceptions – but the focus remains constant.



For the last few months Project Gateway has been busy in the areas of public education and involvement, training (internal and external), and with learning more about increasing trauma and dangers in society.



Public Education and Involvement

September 24th here in South Africa is Heritage Day, where citizens are entitled to a family holiday day, to spend with their families celebrating their heritage (and the heritage of the people in South Africa is indeed vast and varied!)

On Heritage Day itself, Gateway Christian School held its annual Fun Walk to raise funds towards its school buildings.



Public Education and Involvement



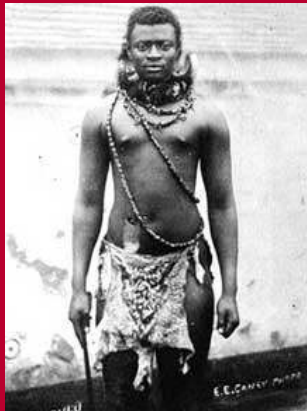
Because of the volume of applications for places at the school, we need to have an additional Reception class and an additional Grade 3 class in time for the next school year starting mid-January 2010. Another toilet block for the learners is also essential. Project Gateway operates on the principle that, wherever possible, beneficiaries contribute to our endeavours. We were therefore heartened on

the Fun Walk day that so many learners and families participated. They bought tickets and met in the school yard to participate in a 5km walk around the outside of the Project Gateway grounds. After the walk they came back to the school grounds to purchase breakfast and take part in many fun activities such as face painting, jumping castles, lucky draws, and

perhaps have a much needed foot massage by a professional representative – all of which were fund-raising activities. Friends and staff also attended and supported the event and we are very grateful for the interest shown. A total of R3,636.05 was raised!



Old Prison History Night



On September 25 the Tourism staff planned and organised an "Old Prison History Night" which was excellent and well attended by members of the public. It began in the Old Prison Café (OPC) (which in the days of the prison was the Boiler Room and Kitchen) for coffee and a muffin, and then proceeded to the Chapel where we were treated to our very own Project Gateway Choir who sang beautifully and also performed some Zulu dances, dressed in stunning traditional Zulu clothing. Two former prison inmates, with different experiences because one was a Political Prisoner during the apartheid years and the other not, opened our minds

so wide with stories about their time spent in prison here at Project Gateway. Interestingly enough, the freedom activist has contributed extensively to the reconstruction of the New South Africa by his involvement in local Municipality management and other bodies. The other ex-prisoner has been on staff at Project Gateway since it started! In particular, he identifies personally with the homeless in our city and oversees the Project Gateway Sunset Overnight Shelter (SOS). We watched a video, which he narrated, showing how he escaped from the prison - although he was recaptured and returned to prison!

The second, very different aspect of prison history went back much further in time. Mr. Louis Eksteen, an Afrikaans man who is Curator of a Museum in Northern KwaZulu Natal, shared with us about King Dinizulu. King Dinizulu is a major figure in colonial history and the slides shown by Mr. Eksteen showed us the architecture and dress of those times, as well as the political activities and imprisonment of Zulu leaders.



Anniversary Dinner

On October 30th Project Gateway hosted an exquisite three course fundraiser dinner marking the 18th Anniversary of Project Gateway. Eighteen years ago, the keys of the old prison were handed over to Project Gateway, and 'Unlocking Potential' began. The hall was beautifully and professionally decorated, with black, silver, and red drapes covering the walls and ceiling; tables draped in black cloths, accented with either tall candelabras or vases of red roses, and hanging from the ceiling were two chandeliers. Included in the function

was a motivational guest speaker, Brad Sadler. Brad was convicted of fraud and corruption for an amount R50 million and sentenced to 4 years in prison.



Brad shared about the fraud he was charged with, his experience of



prison life, and the impact it had on him and his family. In a nutshell, his message is that "all our actions have consequences, for better or for worse". Another highlight of the evening was the incredible live cabaret.

Because of considerable sponsorship in many aspects of the event, the full R100 for every ticket sold went in full towards breaking the cycle of poverty and providing empowerment opportunities for the poorest of the poor in our communities. To everyone involved, including the hard-working staff, congratulations and well done! A total of R17000 was raised.



Training

Staff at Project Gateway have been busy attending courses on human resources, fundraising and Action Coach training. Our HR personnel volunteer has been informing us as to what Human Resources (HR) is, and she is making plans to teach interview techniques to our volunteer staff many of whom from our local community, having been trained and empowered during their work with us, will at some time be entering the job market.

We have in the past received funding from the Community Chest Organisation which raises funds from the corporate sector, and then distributes the funds to NGOs (Non-Government Organisations). Project Gateway has been a recipient since the mid 90's. One of our most skilled and experienced staff members, in saying thanks to Community Chest and without cost to them, ran a high-level course on how to raise funds, including essential but often overlooked aspects

such as reporting back to donors, and monitoring and evaluating their operation. Some staff have also trained under Action Coach, which is a programme designed to help business owners assist their staff in support, guidance and encouragement. Senior staff are coached and they in turn have been coaching the rest of the staff in various aspects of best business practice, such as financial, marketing, team building and staff issues.

Increasing Trauma and Dangers in Society

One of our staff members recently attended a seminar on the increasing problem of 'Human Trafficking.' Human Trafficking has become a problem not only for people living in poverty but also others who are trying to better their lives, with 'opportunities' being offered to them which lures them away from their families and homes. Children, women and some men are being promised opportunities such as sport camps, employment, education, etc. Tragically this often leads instead into unlawful factory work, prostitution, and domestic slavery in private homes. These people often have to eat, sleep, and work right in these factories with no contact to family, with similar abuses when trapped in a suburban home. They just simply disappear!

A recent example of this was a group of boys from

Durban, lured away from their families to attend a Soccer Academy in Cape Town. The people met with the children's parents, handed out supposedly legitimate pamphlets, received children's identification documents, and the children left thinking they were going to Cape Town. The parents were advised not to contact their children in order to help them to adjust to new surroundings. By the time parents tried to make contact, the organisation and children had vanished.

It is never the intention of Project Gateway to "reinvent the wheel" – if a problem is being adequately addressed by organisation we have no need to replicate their work. But, to help prevent Human Trafficking, we as an organisation need to be informed, and empower our own staff and contacts in prevention against these horrors. We can be part of the care and the solu-

tion by relationship building, by guiding victims and/or their families to those who have the experience and expertise to help them. We need to bring awareness that there is this great problem on our own door steps, keep our learners in school and not at a loose end, empower them with knowledge of what is taking place, and nurture in them a sense of self-worth and a future of hope so that they will not fall prey to these enticements.

Obviously, the mission of Project Gateway has not run its full course. But everything we do, together with those in partnership with us, brings a little light at the end of the tunnel.



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