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ROOMS WITH A VIEW



From decrepit and unsafe, this is the story of how the community came together to transform two unusable classrooms into inspiring learning environments.

Teaching space had always been an issue at one of our local schools, Sea View SSS, so their recent expansion to having grades 8 and 9 (as well as the previous grades 10-12), meant that space was even more desperately needed and a move was made to renovate two classrooms that were unfit to teach in. Tim Hutchinson, one of the teachers at the school, put together a plan with the principal and his colleagues to get the community involved, using a selection of students to conceptualise what they wanted these classrooms to look like and then to do the physical renovations under the supervision of a few skilled labourers. He then approached Jabulani, requesting that we provide an avenue for money to be donated and used effectively.



The project morphed and adapted as the days progressed. Initially it was to be a competition between two student teams, but to Tim's delight, the students actually worked better together than when in competition! When the renovations took longer than the anticipated three days, the students put in more than was expected of them, even insisting on working through their weekends to get the job done. Where there were once two lifeless brick structures, there are now two bright inviting classrooms, with windows, doors, repaired roofs, floors and ceilings, fresh paint, shelves and a veranda. They even have lights and electricity which city schools may take for granted but which is not always readily found in rural schools!

The project gave the opportunity for Tim to build meaningful relationships with the students who were involved, which was a particular highlight for him. Seeing people own the idea in the community was also really motivating; this included Tim's colleagues, members of the student governing body, the school's groundsman, and local professionals who sacrificed their time to help install ceilings and fix roofs, drive to town to buy materials or support the project through advice and prayer. The overwhelming amount of financial support that came through cannot go unmentioned. The estimated budget was R50 000 and in just a few weeks, this target was reached through the generosity of people all over the world - it's inspiring to see people getting behind education! For Tim, the final highlight was seeing what it has done for the teaching space.

Hard work

The main aim behind the project was not just to create more infrastructure but also to encourage teachers to take ownership for their classrooms. Where the norm in rural schools is for students to remain in one classroom while teachers move from class to class, slowly the change is taking shape as teachers start to move into classrooms and take ownership of them. "It has been one of the most important system changes since I started teaching at the school in January 2013" says Tim. He can now mould his

teaching and learning environment and personalise the space. On a recent weekend, one of the students who had helped on the project joined Tim to install some shelves they made from old wooden banana crates. Tim mused that "there's something dimensionally different about a classroom with shelves and books in them. You don't realise how precious these things are until you've been without them for so long".



DISCOVERING OUR POTENTIAL TO...

1st December 2014, World AIDS day saw the ARV team out on a mission to continue raising awareness of HIV. Their mission site was Zithulele Hospital's gateway clinic, Pumulanga, where Jabulani's Facility and Patient Support Coordinator on the ARV Programme, Chwayita, educated and motivated the crowd with a rousing talk. Coupled with the incentive of T-shirts for the first 20 people who tested and key rings for the next 30 people (incentives kindly provided by the Donald Woods Foundation), this led to 53 people making the brave decision to learn their status. As it wouldn't really be a Zithulele event without the appearance of cake, the Project Trust volunteers put their baking to the test and there were delicious cupcakes decorated with icing AIDS ribbons for all who tested.

Another auspicious event took place in December, specifically for our teenage patients. This group of patients is sadly a very high risk group, as they deal with the complexities of becoming teens, and as they sometimes for the first time emotionally and cognitively deal with the implications of how they contracted the disease and the consequences it will have for their entire life. These challenges bring with them the risk of defaulting medication and when coupled with the fact that many will be becoming sexually active too, they become a very important group of

patients to support. As such, we have tried to start tailoring the support we give our children and adolescents, to maximise what we can do with limited time and resources. With the title of "Discover your potential to...", we aim to give our patients high quality healthcare while also helping them understand and work towards achieving their potential to just about anything; their potential to adhere to medication, their potential to become a leader in their peer group, their potential to finish their schooling, their potential to help address stigma in their community; whatever fits their own personal situation.

As part of this tailored support, we held our first non-clinic event for our teens, where the intention was for them to spend some fun time together, to meet the team in a non-work context, and for them to start giving thought to living up to their own potential. After a lunch kindly provided by Ngwanguba Store, they pitted themselves against each other in the chocolate game, and amidst laughter got past some self-conscious barriers to pass the orange neck-to-neck and the balloon stomach-to-stomach! Using a donation of T-shirts and fabric paints from the Discovery Fund, who fund the majority of the HIV programme, each teen let their creative juices flow while painting their own shirt with the slogan "Discovering my potential to...".



Displaying their painted T-shirts



World AIDS Day

FROM NEGLECTED AND DISTRESSED, TO SUPPORTED AND SMILING

Neglected and needing support, Ntombi* was a 9 year old orphan who was living with her 17 year old sister who had a baby of her own to look after as well. When Philani visited Ntombi, she was malnourished, not attending school regularly, defaulting chronic medication and experiencing some health concerns as well as living in an unsafe environment.

Although registered for a Child Support Grant, the money was going to another older sister who was not even living with Ntombi and so none of this money was being used to support her. While Philani intervened to address this complicated social issue as well as work with the team at

the hospital to ensure that she received the required medical attention, Jabulani's Relief of Social Distress Fund was able to supply some much-needed interim support through which Philani were able to buy Ntombi and her sister the required school uniform, as well as provide food and transport for her to come to and from the hospital to collect treatment. Over the year, Philani have continued to work closely with Ntombi's extended family to ensure that her welfare is taken care of, and supporting them as necessary. As is often the case in situations like this, it was moving for all involved to see Ntombi's transformation from neglected and distressed to supported and smiling!

* Not her real name

AT A GLANCE

PROUDLY GRADUATING

The kids from Zithulele and Khanyisa Pre-schools proudly graduated on the 8th of December 2014. There were 25 kids and their parents who were all dressed up... and had somewhere to go! The kids enjoyed the opportunity to show their parents what they learned at school during the year, with both pre-schools performing a few songs and rhymes with their teachers. Younger kids received a "certificate of attendance" and an invitation to continue at the pre-school next year, while the older kids received a "graduation certificate" to say that they are ready to go to grade R. With all the challenges of attending pre-school regularly, these children did well to achieve an attendance rate of 75%. After proudly receiving their well-earned certificates, the parents gave presents to their kids and everyone enjoyed a well-cooked lunch while the music played and people danced. Thanks to all the parents and teachers who worked hard to make the year, and the function, a big success.



Proud graduates

A NEW SEASON FOR THE GARDEN PROJECT

After the owner of the land where the Masikhule Garden was based requested his land back, Jabulani's Notandekile went on the search for a new site and was offered a piece of land by another member of the Mthaleri community. Jabulani worked with community members to identify ways in which members would maintain not only the produce of the garden, but ownership of it too. A model was developed whereby each family pays a membership fee of R50 per year and if a family does not maintain their plot, a different family is given the opportunity to join the project. Jabulani provided the materials to fence the garden, tools and the initial seeds and Nontandekile assists and advises them on a weekly basis. Close to a natural spring and with each family responsible for 30 square meters, the garden is making a significant difference to the lives of 14 families.



The New Mthaleri Garden