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TOGETHER WE SUCCEED

Whether formal or informal, centred around funding or an exchange of resources and skills, or purely just for support and enabling, partnerships are critical to the success of an organisation such as Jabulani. One such partnership is that which we formed with the Embassy of Japan in South Africa. Prior to Jabulani being founded, the People of Japan donated a lot of equipment to Zithulele Hospital in 2006; equipment that was crucial to the hospital’s ability to grow and develop at that time. Now the Embassy of Japan in South Africa has funded Jabulani to secure medical equipment to the value of R1 million, including therapy equipment, spirometry, a ventilator and more. Partnerships like this smooth the way for Zithulele Hospital to fulfil one of their core values; providing quality care to their patients. What a privilege to be able to contribute to quality healthcare, even when from the non-clinical side!

LEAPING TO NEW LEVELS

Schools around our area still struggle to deliver engaging learning experiences due to numerous challenges. For those learners who are eager to invest in their education independently, the lack of infrastructure and lack of funds for educational resources in families’ means that they are unable to easily access the needed and desired resources.

Though our community library opened in 2011, change is slow and there still isn’t a thriving reading and learning culture in Zithulele. Our ‘Librarian Stars’ and Black Art Society’ groups may just be the key to this changing. The ‘Librarian Stars’ is a group made up of nine primary school learners who have regularly attended our afternoon Zithudlala Learning through Play programme. They are particularly committed and eager
participants who were selected because of their interest in the library and reading, and their willingness to share their learning at home. One member has been running a ‘mini-Zithudlala’ at home since she started attending in 2017, sharing what she has done at the library with her neighbours. These learners have begun building personal, portable library collections to be shared from their homes. The learners have to meet set requirements to get more books for their collections – they need to take proper care of their books; successfully show comprehension of and be able to re-tell the stories; and record who they have read the stories to at home.

The ‘Black Art Society’ is a Jabulani / Axium Education collaboration and is so far made up of six high school learners who were existing library users. Since August, they have been attending the weekly ‘creative sessions’ with outstanding commitment and enthusiasm. The aim of the group is to expose students to experiences of learning that are creative, and not ‘learning for learning’s sake’, and to begin building more youth-focused activities in the library.

For these learners who have taken a positive attitude towards learning and investing in working hard at school, it is essential that they are able to find further inspiration, support and a sense of belonging. There is a real need for spaces where joyful learning and its benefits can be demonstrated and enjoyed, where those who are eager to learn and engage in healthy learning practices can access resources and support. This is what Jabulani’s community library seeks to provide. We are hoping to secure funding to do a physical makeover of the library in order to make it an increasingly accessible and inspiring space, and we hold hope that these groups of ‘early adopters’ have the potential to be part of influencing the general reading and learning culture in Zithulele. Maximising peer-led influence together with a welcoming space, we hope to reach new levels of impact in 2020.

**BECOMING AWARE**

Our Rural Ability Programme (RAP) team were able to support two recent events led by the Allied Health team from Zithulele Hospital. The one event was a Spinal Cord Injury Awareness day that involved engaging patients with spinal cord injuries, and educating them of their rights and available resources. Representatives from the QuadPara Association of the Eastern Cape (QAEC) attended this successful event that we all hope to hold again next year, especially now that the QAEC are soon to open a branch in Mthatha.

The other was arranged due to a Grade 1 learner at a nearby school, who uses an augmentative alternative communication device purchased by Jabulani. Provision of an assistive device alone is not sufficient for solving the challenges he faces at school, so an awareness raising and educational workshop for educators was organised. This event highlighted how different conditions and disabilities affect learners and educated teachers about different intervention strategies (including the use of devices) for providing additional support so that learners can cope in mainstream schools. 23 enthusiastic teachers attended the training, which was fantastic as our experience of engaging teachers on inclusive education has been quite a challenge thus far.
You hopefully read about our Masiphakameni (meaning ‘Let’s Rise’) Youth Development programme in August’s newsletter (if not, click here). This courageous group of young women completed the programme mid-October and we celebrated this with a graduation ceremony, along with Sihamba Sonke’s group of young men who completed a similar programme. Amidst the essential singing that accompanies all events in Zithulele, and with a meal provided by the ladies and gents themselves (utilising new-found skills from the cooking and baking classes they received on the programme), we rejoiced in the experiences each individual had over the previous 7 months. Many a tear was shed as we reflected on and marvelled at the growth each participant showed and we are eager to see where their paths lead them next.

There are two exciting opportunities to join our team. We are currently looking for Programme Managers to lead our Rural Ability and Education Programmes. These are both exciting positions that involve both administrative office work as well as practical, hands-on, in-the-field engagement with employees and service users alike. If you’re interested, please click here or go to http://www.jabulanifoundation.org/join-the-team.html Please pass on this link to anyone you know who’d be keen for a rural adventure during which they will make a significant impact on the lives of our community members and the development of this area.