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[Editor's Note]

This month the staff of the Projects Abroad South Africa office in Cape Town decided it was high time we started walking the talk and participated in a number of volunteer projects around the city.

The result of our labours was a renewed admiration for our volunteers and the hard work that they do on a daily basis. The scores of wriggling children at the Care Project, the piles of sandbags at the Building Project and the yapping dogs and pecking penguins at the Animal Care Project rendered us completely exhausted at the end of each day. Of course each volunteering experience was fun and fulfilling, but what we realised, yet again, is how hard our volunteers really work.

We dedicate this edition to the past, present and future Projects Abroad volunteers in Cape Town. Your energy and efforts do not go unnoticed.

Lara Potgieter | Information Manager, South Africa



[Staff Volunteering Experiences]

This month saw the Projects Abroad South Africa staff engage in a variety of volunteer projects in order to experience a day in the life of a Projects Abroad volunteer in Cape Town.

On 11 June Judy-Rose (Human Rights Assisant), Rebecca (Cape Chameleon Editor), Charlotte (Volunteer Co-ordinator), Ashwin (Volunteer Co-ordinator), Kayla (Volunteer Co-ordinator), Enrico (Photo Editor) and I volunteered at **Masikhule Educare Centre in Vrygrond**.

We spent time in each of the different 'classrooms', feeding, entertaining and supervising the different groups of children between the ages of two and seven.

The children were full of smiles and relished the attention. There were 60 children and the work was exhausting but completely rewarding. We have a renewed sense of admiration for Maria and Miriam, who run the centre, and for the institution that they have created virtually from nothing.

After our time at the centre we headed back to the Vrygrond Community Centre where Farhanaaz, the principal of another care centre in the area (Rainbow Educare) inspired us with a presentation on how she managed to start her centre from the ground, lifting herself and others out of dire poverty and hopelessness.

We congratulate all our Care volunteers on the positive impact that they make on the daily lives of the children of Vrygrond and surrounds.



Also on 11 June, Miriam (PAHRO Volunteer Supervisor), Sam (Project Manager) and Sherwin (PAHRO Legal Services Coordinator) spent the day volunteering at the **Cape of Good Hope SPCA in Grassy Park.**

Upon arriving at the SPCA, they were briefed by a member of staff and given a tour of the premises, including areas where dogs and cats are held before adoption, quarantine areas and the horse unit.

Thereafter, they were given an opportunity to enter the hospital and prepare two cats for a surgery in which they were to be neutered and micro-chipped.

The three were then taken to the dog section, where they spent time exercising the dogs, who were otherwise locked in cages all day. Sherwin noted that the dogs' personalities changed completely once released from their cages – that they were playful and generally just enjoyed the interaction with humans. It was explained that the dogs need to be exercised as failure to do this would result in them becoming aggressive and, therefore, not adoptable.

Overall, the team reported that the day spent at the SPCA was an enjoyable and worthwhile experience.



On 12 June Christine (Logistics Administration Officer) and Jake (Video Editor) volunteered at the **building site in Lavender Hill**.

Project Manager Deen Singh took them through an official volunteer induction, telling them about the community, tracing the development of the site and explaining how the two benefit from each other and fit into the context of the City of Cape Town at large. Deen also offered an in-depth explanation of the eco-friendly materials and methods used on the site.

After the induction Christine and Jake got down to work, mixing cement, laying the foundations for a wall and plastering an existing wall (which they enjoyed the most as they could immediately see the fruits of their labour).

After all the hard work, they ventured into the township for fish and chips before returning to the site to play soccer with the kids (who thought that Jake played for

Liverpool!)).

Both Christine and Jake cited their immersion in the community and Deen's affirmative guidance as highlights of their time at the project.



Also on 12 June, Vash (Volunteer Coordinator), Mark (Head of the Global Information Office), Gisela (Country Director) and Kelly (Voices of the World Manager) spent the day with the **Projects Abroad Human Rights Project** team.

After undergoing full volunteer inductions by Maria (Program Manager), Sherwin (Legal Services Coordinator), Miriam (Volunteer Supervisor) and Shuan (Social Justice Coordinator), they headed off to Manenberg, where they assisted at a free legal clinic for clients in the area. Vash particularly enjoyed interacting with his client and managed to help her with an issue she was experiencing with the City of Cape Town Council.

They then returned to the human rights office in Rondebosch, where they completed the necessary follow-ups to their cases before heading out to Vredelus House for Young Female Offenders in Ottery to conduct a workshop with the girls on the dangers of alcohol abuse.

The overall verdict at the end of the day was that our human rights staff and volunteers work incredibly hard, braving long days and a variety of challenges in their endeavour to make a positive difference to the communities and individuals of Cape Town.

On 13 June Alex (Global Information Officer), Paula (Global Information Officer), Flora (Desk Officer), Deen (Building Project Manager), Nash (Volunteer Coordinator) and I spent the day volunteering at one of our Animal Care partner projects, **SANCCOB Seabird Rescue and Rehabilitation Centre in Table View**.

It was a good day for the centre as there were only 70 birds in the various pens and 20 volunteers there to help. We were thus enlisted to help with a massive clean of the centre and spent the day scrubbing floors with veterinary disinfectant.

It was really hard work but we were rewarded with some special time with the centre's resident rock hopper penguin, Rocky (originally from Antarctica, somehow rescued on our shores and kept at the centre due to avian disease control laws).

It was a good day for SANCCOB but they usually need tons of volunteer assistance as the work involved in both the rehabilitation of the penguins and the maintenance of the centre is intensive.



[Project Overview: Surfing]

DESCRIPTION:

Projects Abroad and the Kulu Manzi Surfing Foundation set up the surf project in order to establish a meaningful and vibrant surfing school which introduces beach culture to underprivileged children.

OBJECTIVE:

The objective of the Surf Project is to give the children from underprivileged areas a sense of pride and encouragement and to identify, develop and sponsor future surfing champions.

BENEFICIARIES:

Ottery Care Centre

- On average, 15 children per session.
- Total : 35 children (average).

Prince George Primary School

- On average, 12 children per session.
- Total: 15 children (average).

Hillwood Primary School

- On average, 15 children per session.

- Total: 18 children (average).

Levana Primary School

- On average, 15 children per session.
- Total: 18 children (an average).

Village Heights

- On average, 15 children per session.
- Village Heights is an informal settlement, and therefore the children do not come from specific schools but from the local area. The number of children attending the surf projects varies on a weekly basis. More children from this area come to the surf project, when the schools do not attend their time slot.
- Total : 30 children

VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACTIVITIES:

- Teaching, encouraging and inspiring children to not only improve their swimming and surfing skills but their self-esteem.
- Working with local children and spending short one-on-one fun beach orientated sessions together.
- Help establish the Kulu Manzi Surf foundation as a leading organisation in surf outreach programmes.
- Maintaining and preparing equipment ready for coaching session.
- Continually improving your own surfing and teaching skills.



[Fundraising Initiative: Erica Leenen's Rainbow Run]

When I came back from Cape Town in December 2008 Faranaaz, the principle of the care centre at which I volunteered, Rainbow Educare, was busy trying to get the centre rebuilt.

After a month or so she told me that the money she had saved to do this was all spent and that she had no more money to finish the building properly.

When I told this story to a very good friend of mine we decided that we could change that. This friend is Sandra den Besten, who is a high school teacher at my former high school 'de GSG Leo Vroman'. She teaches PE, so it was obvious we were going to use our contacts in the school and her colleagues to organise a fundraiser.

In 2009 we did the first and second Rainbow Run for the 1st, 2nd and 3rd year students.

Before the actual run I went into all their classes with a PowerPoint presentation to tell my story and the story of Faranaaz and Rainbow Educare. I never expected it to have the impact that it had. The children were instantly enthusiastic and very willing to raise the money.

The concept was really simple: I tell the children my story, they look for sponsors. Not big companies or anything, just parents, friends, teachers, family. Then for half an hour they run rounds of 400 meters.

They get money per round and collect it at their sponsors.

Dana and I estimated that we raised between 15.000 and 20.000 Euro's by doing this five times over the past 4 years. The results are stunning as you have probably seen yourself. It was a shock to visit Rainbow two years ago. I didn't recognize anything anymore. It's not just the building that has changed. Things are much more organized. This brings a lot of peace at the centre.

Faranaaz is just amazing; because I was convinced she would only use the money to do great things I kept the motivation to keep doing the Rainbow Run. Rainbow now has room for more children and the teachers were able to go to college for formal training. Faranaaz has also started a toy library for the children.

It irritates me when people say that you can't change the world. With all my helpers here in Holland, all the children and sponsors and teachers and friends, we did. Although it's just a small part, I believe that we made a definite change. – **Erica Leenen**

[Host Family Love: Jeanette & Benjamin Jodamus]

With their home located near the SPCA in Grassy Park, Jeanette and Benjamin Jodamus provide a great base for animal care as well as other Projects Abroad volunteers in Cape Town.

After working with Projects Abroad for almost two years, the special host family treats volunteers like their own children, affording them the independence of an “open home” in which they can see to themselves as they please.

Although the Jodamus's house boasts a separate section for volunteers, they spend a lot of their time with the volunteers, enjoying barbecues, lengthy conversations and all means of cultural exchange. “We love listening to all their travel stories,” says Jeanette, adding that she never tires of learning about new ways of life.

Jeanette and Benjamin view their role as holistic – providing not only basic care such as housing and food, but also the necessary psychological care for a young person in a foreign country. “Everyone has a story,” says Jeanette. “For some reason volunteers seem to trust us with theirs,” she continues, adding that she has spent many a night sharing tears and advice with the volunteers she has hosted. “We almost act as counsellors,” adds Benjamin, “but we really love it because we know that we have uplifted the lives of many young people, in our own way,” he continues.

On a lighter note, it is important for Jeanette and Benjamin that the volunteers have fun whilst staying with them. "Sometimes they wake us up when they arrive late from a night on the town, but we just laugh at their antics and go back to sleep," laughs Jeanette. "There's always laughter in our home when there are volunteers around," adds Benjamin. "And our grandchildren really love them!" he adds.

Although the Jodamus's mainly host SPCA volunteers, they have also welcomed human rights, surf and building volunteers into their home. "I once asked some volunteers how they felt about the travelling distance from their project to our place and they replied that it was worth it to be with us," boasts Benjamin.

The Jodamus's relationship with volunteers never ends once they have parted ways, with regular snail mail, e-mails and Facebook messages keeping the memories alive.

Thanks for being such a great host family, Jeanette and Benjamin. Our volunteers certainly seem to be happy with you.



[Animal Care Project Snapshots]

