

CLOWNS WITHOUT BORDERS

SOUTH AFRICA

2007 ANNUAL REPORT



“The children of Ufafa look forward to two events each year:
Christmas and the Clowns!”

Sue Hedden, director of Woza Moya, our partner in Ixopo, KwaZulu-Natal

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I. Overview

The intention of this report is to provide an assessment of Clowns Without Borders (CWB) South Africa's 2007 operations according to our mission and projects in the field. This report will also provide a budget analysis of the year's activities and a proposal for future action.

II. Report Summary

Clowns Without Borders took a dramatic new step in 2007. After 3 years operating in the region under the auspices of CWB-USA's, we established a local chapter called Clowns Without Borders South Africa in Durban. Composed of local artists and facilitators, CWBSA is an autonomous chapter that is part of the International Federation of Clowns Without Borders. Born out of CWB-USA's Project Njabulo in South Africa, Lesotho, and Swaziland, the establishment of CWBSA allows for greater psychosocial intervention with a focus on Southern Africa and the African continent.

Our expeditions in 2007 reflect this new focus. We strengthened existing relationships with partner organisations in Southern Africa as well as expanded into new regions. CWBSA worked primarily with local facilitating artists in partnership with more volunteer teams from the

United States, Canada, Ireland, Sweden, and Australia. This collaboration with other more experienced CWB chapters and international artists was beneficial to provide mentorship and guidance for South African teams and expedition participants.

From March 3rd to October 28th, CWBSA expedition teams visited rural communities in South Africa, Lesotho, and Swaziland. ***They performed over 85 times for more than 37,000 children – the most ever for Clowns Without Borders in Southern Africa!*** We also worked with over 120 vulnerable children and 130 caregivers and guardians in Project Njabulo residencies, our HIV/AIDS intervention program. This program continued to evolve as an innovative response to the pandemic using performance and arts education. Finally, international collaboration with other arts institution brought CWBSA personnel to Israel/Palestine to work for peace through play and laughter.

In partnership with the US, Swedish, Canadian, and Irish CWB chapters, CWBSA raised a total of R287,808 from individual donors, corporate sponsorship, and benefits. Our budget was R255,268 leaving CWBSA with R32,540 for 2008.





III. Beginnings

In March, CWB South Africa was founded with the creation of a constitution that established our mission and a Management Committee to govern our operations and development. The Management Committee consists of participants from previous CWB expeditions in Southern Africa as well as supporters from partner organisations and professional circles. At the founding meeting the committee elected former Project Njabulo director, Jamie McLaren Lachman, as the Director and Chairperson, Lulu Ngcobo as Secretary, and Gavin Stockden as Treasurer. Johannesburg based clown, Garth Van Vliet, and child psychologist, Gill Berkowitz, also rounded out the committee.

The Management Committee met quarterly in September and January. As the year progressed, it became clear that both Garth and Gill were unable to continue as members of the committee due to the difficulty of participating in meetings in Johannesburg. Although they wished to remain, they both left the Management Committee continuing to be active as advisers and supporters of CWBSA's development and work in the field. CWBSA facilitating artist, Sibongile Tsoanyane, joined the remaining members in September.

IV. Mission

As outlined in our constitution, CWBSA has the following primary objectives:

Improve the emotional wellbeing of children and caregivers affected by crisis in Southern Africa and around

the world through humor, laughter, and play.

Raise our society's awareness domestically and internationally about conditions encountered in areas of crisis.

Provide professional development and empowerment opportunities to local artists and improve community based organizations' capacity to provide emotional relief.

Maintain a spirit of creativity, play, humor, joy, peace, compassion, and loving kindness in all our endeavors.

We also have the following secondary objectives:

Target ALL vulnerable children and their caregivers in affected communities, not only orphans.

Support and encourage existing community based organisations that provide services to affected children and caregivers.

Collaborate with cultural and social organisations on the community, regional, national, and international level.

Deepen our understanding of the capacity for laughter and arts education to improve the psychosocial wellbeing of affected children and caregivers.

Provide positive reinforcement of social values that promote peace, diversity, racial and gender equality, and cultural identity.



V. Programme Strategy

In order to achieve our goals and objectives, CWBSA has developed the following programme strategy that incorporates 5 major elements:

Emergency Relief Expeditions, Arts Education and Intervention, Local Capacity Building, and Assessment:

Emergency Relief Expeditions

Send in the clowns! For the past 5 years CWBSA has brought performances to over 110,000 children and adults throughout Southern Africa. When the situation has been stabilized by other humanitarian relief organisations, CWBSA visits communities, refugee centres, and other places affected by trauma to provide momentarily relief to large numbers of children and adults. We help transform places from grief and emotional suffering to joy and happiness by creating an atmosphere of celebration where it is needed most. While humor and play is the primary focus, we also raise awareness of important issues affecting the community.

Arts Education Intervention

(Njabulo Residency Programme)

The Njabulo Residency Program is CWBSA's arts education curriculum for vulnerable children and their caregivers affected by HIV/AIDS. Incorporating drama, storytelling, song, circus arts, and mindfulness based stress reduction, the Njabulo Residency Programme ("*njabulo*" means "*happiness*" in isiZulu) aims at developing a sense of emotional wellbeing and resiliency for those who have been directly impacted by the pandemic. Participants explore the imagination, play, compassion, gratitude, and loving kindness through various exercises designed to help them connect to each other at home and thus strengthen the bond between the child and the caregiver.

Particular attention is given to learning coping mechanisms with stress and grief associated with the loss of a loved one and the burden of poverty.

Local Capacity Building

Local Capacity Building is central to CWBSA's mission to empower communities to provide psychosocial support to children and communities on a sustainable basis. Recognizing the limitations of our small organisation's capacity to work in the many areas of crisis in Southern Africa and throughout the world, CWBSA has begun to work closely with community based organisations in order to train staff and volunteers in our methods. This includes both local artists in South Africa who eventually may work with CWBSA as facilitators as well as non-performers who are trained to implement the Njabulo Residency Program. This training extends beyond the artistic and pedagogical methods when necessary to also provide skills in logistical coordination, personnel management, grant writing, and teaching workshops.

Assessment

In collaboration with our partner organisations, CWBSA is constantly evaluating and assessing our activities in the field. Expeditions close with reflections between partners, within teams, and with the participants. Furthermore, our partners do follow-ups with targeted beneficiaries in order to assess our efficacy. However, CWBSA has yet to implement a comprehensive evaluation strategy to assess the impact of our services on a psychological and social level. We are continuing to look for partners to help achieve this as it is key to our understanding of we can continue to improve the emotional wellbeing of children and their caregivers in Southern



Africa. This is also essential to securing additional funding and wider implementation of our program throughout the region.

Raising Awareness

CWBSA works to raise the social awareness of our society both domestically and internationally through educational tours consisting of publicity campaigns, performances, and presentations. As ambassadors of laughter and witnesses of conditions in the field, our team members are in a unique position to educate about the experience facing communities where we work. We also aim to connect communities together in a network of support and solidarity.

VI. Methodology

CWB South Africa interventions incorporate more than circus-related clown performances. Our methodology involves a multidisciplinary approach that draws upon a wide variety of pedagogies. These include Performance, Applied Drama and Play Therapy, Social Circus, Theatre of the Oppressed and Forum Theatre, Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) applied drama and play therapy, social circus, storytelling in community, and the art of the clown:

Performance

Our performances are a combination of drama, circus, and music. We use nonverbal physical comedy, music, and dance to create an atmosphere of celebration in the community. They are offered in a neutral location such as public schools or community centers to reduce the stigmatization of children who have been impacted by the HIV/AIDS. While humor and play is the primary focus, the performances also raise awareness of

important issues facing communities relating to HIV/AIDS that are normally associated with socio-cultural taboos and discrimination. These include HIV prevention, women's empowerment, coping with death, the loss of a loved one, abandonment, and compassion for those who have been affected by the disease.

Applied Drama and Play Therapy

CWBSA has incorporated applied drama and play therapy into its curriculum for the past 3 years with the Njabulo Residency Programme. In accordance with psychological and sociological research in the area, it has been shown that psychosocial interventions which support child-caregiver interactions are particularly necessary.¹ CWBSA does not directly use therapists in its work – we are primarily artists and facilitators. However, we regularly consult professionals and partner organization for guidance in therapeutic matters. Drama exercises and games reconnect guardians and children to the world of imagination and play, participants develop support mechanisms that help them overcome the trauma of losing a loved one. Storytelling is a central aspect to our pedagogy in terms of its relationship to traditional culture, its power to connect, heal, and transform communities from grief to joy, and, in particular, to encourage creativity, self-esteem, mutual respect, and a sense of play.

Social Circus

Social circus programs for youth and vulnerable children give them the opportunity to connect to society in a positive way and explore their talents. They provide an alternative to crime and delinquency in a safe and nurturing

¹ Richter, L., Foster, G. and Sherr, L. (2006) Where the heart is: Meeting the psychosocial needs of young children in the context of HIV/AIDS. The Hague, The Netherlands: Bernard van Leer Foundation



environment. Through juggling, partner and solo acrobatics, stilt-walking, clown, and performances for their peers and guardians, children develop life-skills of self-confidence, focus, discipline, social responsibility, and group awareness. Furthermore, circus includes intense physical activity that provides a positive outlet for children's energy. This benefits their life at home and school. It has been shown that circus creates a vibrant culture and gives youth and children a voice in expression and identity while discovering a world in which they believe in themselves and in their future. The majority of our artists are survivors of the political violence from the 1990s in KwaZulu-Natal. They have chosen social circus as a way of life instead of crime and poverty. The desire to bring circus to the community motivates them in their work as teachers and performers. It is the chance to believe in oneself and to find hope and faith in one's dreams. Through the circus, communities come together and celebrate.

Forum Theatre and the Theatre of the Oppressed
Forum Theatre and the Theatre of the Oppressed has been very successful in Southern Africa when addressing the HIV/AIDS crisis as well as child abuse, gender issues, violence and other issues as an effective means of education and prevention. Since these methods are closely tied to community empowerment, they also have the potential to facilitate greater involvement and engagement of marginalized populations, such as women and youth, in particular.

Mindfulness Based Stress Relief
An innovated aspect of the Njabulo Residency Programme is the use of Mindfulness Based Stress Relief techniques to help guardians and caregivers cope with the difficulties they

face and open towards greater compassion and gratitude in their lives. MBSR is a method developed in the United States and Wales by Jon Kabat-Zinn, Jon Teasdale, and Mark Williams. It has been very effective with interventions for participants who have been affected by trauma and chronic depression as an Eight-Week programme. The programme focuses on developing tools to appreciate the present moment with intention and awareness in order to access inner resources of healing and emotional wellbeing. CWBSA has adapted this methodology in its 10-week Njabulo Residency Programme by introducing caregivers to exercises that explore awareness of body and breath as well as gratitude, loving kindness, and acceptance practices. The work is also helpful in connecting participants to each other through the realization that they are not alone in their difficulties and can draw upon the support of others through generosity and compassion.

Clown

We *are* clowns! The art of the clown is an essential aspect in all of our work. Whether in performance or in workshops, artists and facilitators embody the spirit of play and humor to connect to audience members and participants. There is a powerful potential of laughter for emotional healing. Clowns have been effective in relieving suffering in clinics, refugee camps, hospitals, and hospices. Likewise, laughter is alive throughout our workshops and performances by connecting to the joy of play. However, the art of the clown goes beyond laughter. In clown, one must be completely vulnerable and resilient in the present moment in order to *play what is happening* and *be funny*. It is a world where anything is possible. When something unexpected arises, it is the task of the clown to find a



way to *play* with whatever it is. Likewise, our facilitators help participants to discover the means to respond to difficulty with ease and acceptance in order to take the necessary steps and decisions to recover and move forward. There is also an element of acceptance and humility in the clown that permeates our work. The clown exists *for* the audience; there is no fourth-wall or division between the performer and the audience – the laughter exists between the performer and the audience. As the clown must read and understand its audience, our facilitators are trained to respond to the immediate needs of the participants and adapt when necessary. As a result, like the clown at every level, CWBSA's work comes from the heart and is offered freely to the community without demanding anything in return.

VII. Beneficiaries

Background to the HIV/AIDS Crisis

In Southern Africa and throughout the continent, HIV/AIDS has had an enormous impact on the lives of the most vulnerable – children. UNICEF (2006) estimates that 12 million children age 18 or younger have lost one or both parents to HIV in Sub-Saharan Africa. In South Africa alone, there are almost 2 million children orphaned in South Africa due to the epidemic. However, the predominant focus of NGOs and the media on “AIDS orphans” fails to recognize the true impact of HIV/AIDS on the lives of children. Labeling a child an “AIDS orphan” carries certain stigmas that can be damaging to his/her emotional and social development. Furthermore, according to a study by the Bernard Van Leer Foundation, *Where the Heart is*, “the preoccupation with orphans has also meant that the plight of children living

with sick parents has been overlooked.”² Additionally, children living in households that foster orphans are adversely affected due to limited economic and social resources. In Lesotho and Swaziland as well as regions of South Africa (rural KZN), infection rates are over 30% and 40%, respectively, of the population. Poverty, malnutrition, accidental death, and insufficient health and social services all compound the impact of HIV/AIDS on the lives of children.

All Children are Vulnerable

Resisting the NGO temptation to label these children as an acronym - OVCs (orphans and vulnerable children) - we recognize the humanity of children as vulnerable beings requiring opportunities for play, laughter, and the permission to be children. Focusing primarily on children ages 6 to 18, we have expanded our emphasis to include children who are affected by HIV/AIDS due to caring for an ill caregiver, in bereavement, living with other orphans, as well as other reasons beyond HIV/AIDS. These children are at an extremely vulnerable developmental period in their life. They need positive and caring interaction as well as opportunities for creative expression as they recover from loss, grief, and depression.

Reaching out to Caregivers.

CWBSA continues to also provide psychosocial support to the greater framework in which the children live, more specifically, **to caregivers who bear the brunt of responsibility in nurturing children.** In the past, we have used performances and workshops solely aimed at children as the primary means of

² Richter, L., Foster, G. and Sherr, L. (2006) *Where the heart is: Meeting the psychosocial needs of young children in the context of HIV/AIDS.* The Hague, The Netherlands: Bernard van Leer Foundation



operation. Over the years, we have come to realize that working with the children alone insufficiently addresses the situation. As a result, CWBSA has broadened our focus to include primary and secondary caregivers.

These are predominantly older women – grandmothers, aunts, and neighbors – who care for children when their primary caregivers are sick or have passed away. Caregivers shoulder the additional stress of finding additional resources to provide for these children, crowded living situations, as well as coping with their own grief from losing someone they love.

VIII. Partner Organizations

CWB South Africa partnered with the following community based organizations (CBOs) and other NGOs in Southern Africa and internationally:

South Africa

Guateng

Camp Sizani
www.worldcamps.org

Eastern Cape

Mpande Toddlers
www.kraalbackpackers.co.za

KwaZulu-Natal

Eshowe Rotary Club
www.eshowe.com

Ingwavuma Orphan Care
www.orphancare.org.za

Rob Smetherham Bereavement Service for Children

Woza Moya Community Project
www.wozamoya.org.za

Limpopo

Children of the Dawn
www.childrenofthedawn.co.za

Ndlovu AIDS Medical Centre
www.ndlovu.com

Ramotshinyadi HIV/AIDS Youth Guide

Mpumalanga

Thembaletu Home Based Care

Swaziland

Schools Health and Population Education (SHAPE)
www.shape.co.sz

Lesotho

Lesotho Girl Guides Association

Malealea Development Trust
www.malealea.co.ls

Maseru SOS Children's Village

Pitseng Disabled Children's School and Home

St. Luke's Mission

Sekamaneng Children's Home

Semonkong Community Project
www.placeofsmoke.co.ls

International

Cirkus Cirkor
www.cirkus.se

Clowner Utan Granser (CWB Sweden)
www.clowner.se

Clowns Without Borders Ireland
www.cwb-ireland.org

Clowns Without Borders USA
www.clownswithoutborders.org

Ermerson College School of Storytelling
www.storytelling.org



Gate to Humanity Centre
www.adam-insan.org.il

Operation Sock Monkey
www.operationsockmonkey.org

Thought on a Thread
www.thoughtonathread.co.uk

IX. Facilitating Artists

CWB South Africa fielded expedition teams composed of 3 to 8 facilitating artists and, at times, a logistics coordinator. A total of 9 artists/facilitators from South Africa participated in expeditions. We also collaborated with artists and logistic personnel from Brazil, Canada, Australia, Sweden, Ireland, and the United States.

South Africa

Mr. Fish
Jamie McLaren Lachman
Bongekile Mabuya
Bongiwe Mabuya
Nkosie Majola
Wonderboy Manana
Thando Phoswa
Gavin Stockden

Australia

James Evans (logistics)

Brazil

Daniella Biancardi

Canada

Alice Nelson

Ireland

Mike Casey (filmographer)

Jonathan Gunning
Bryan Quinn

Sweden

Siri Hamari
Michael Jonnson
Josefin Lindberg

United States

Matt Chapman
Sarah Liane Foster
Liz Turkel

X. Projects

March

Lesotho

Emergency Relief Expedition

Partner Organizations: CWB Ireland, SOS Maseru, Malealea Development Trust, Baylor Pediatric AIDS Clinic, St. Luke's Mission, Sisters of Charity, Semonkong Community
Performances: 35 shows, 11,000 children
Workshops: 30 caregivers (15 hours)

Conference

USA (Stanford, CA)

UNITE for Sight Global Health Conference on *Advancement, Innovation, and Best Practices to Achieve Global Goals*, Stanford University

May

Eastern Cape and KZN (South Africa)

Emergency Relief Expedition

Partner Organizations: Mpande Toddlers, Eshowe Rotary Club, and Ingwavuma Orphan Care
Performances: 26 shows, 8,000 children

Israel/Palestine

Healing Arts Festival for Peace in the Galilee

Partner Organizations: Emerson College School of Storytelling, Gate to Humanity
Performances: 1 show, 500 people
Workshops: 24 participants (15 hours)



July

Swaziland

Project Njabulo

Partner Organizations: Schools, Health, and Population Education (SHAPE), CWB-Sweden
Sveriges Television (Swedish Television)
Performances: 2 shows, 1000 people
Workshops: 30 children (10 hours), 20 caregivers (10 hours)

August

KwaZulu-Natal

Project Njabulo

Woza Moya and Rob Smetherham Bereavement Service for Children
Performances: 24 shows, 12,000 children
Workshops: 60 children (40 hours), 40 caregivers (30 hours)

October

Limpopo and Mpumalanga

Project Njabulo and Exploratory

Expedition

Ndlovu Medical Centre, Children of the Dawn, Ramotshinyadi HIV Youth Guide, Thembaletu Home Based Care
Performances: 15 shows, 5,000 children
Workshops: 30 children (20 hours), 20 caregivers (15 hours)

December

Swaziland

Exploratory Expedition

Partner Organizations: Lutheran Development Service (LDS), Swaziland for Positive Living (SWAPOL), Unicef Swaziland



XIV. Appendix I. Financial Report

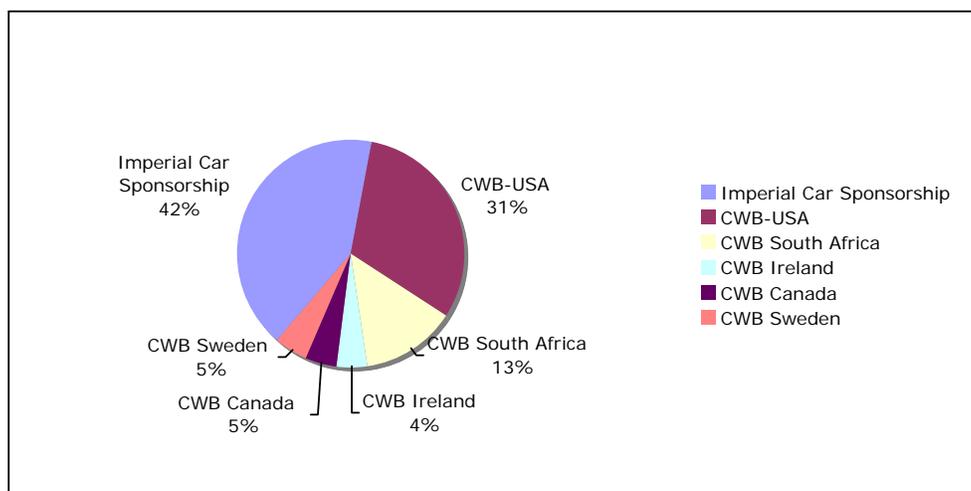
2007 was a transition year for CWBSA. We were in the process of establishing ourselves as a nonprofit organization with the Department of Social Services in South Africa, which only came into effect in October. Before CWBSA managed to create a bank account and means for distributing funds, our expenses were primarily funded through individual donation to Clowns Without Borders chapters in the United States, Sweden, Canada, and Ireland.

CWBSA's organisational budget was R32,539. However, this doesn't reflect our entire expenses as much of the burden was carried through CWB-USA's Project Njabulo. As a result, our total budget for 2007 was R255,268.13. Likewise, while CWBSA's income was only R38,141, our total income from all participating chapters was R287,808.12. Thus, we had R32,540 remaining to allocate towards projects in 2008.

Sources of Income

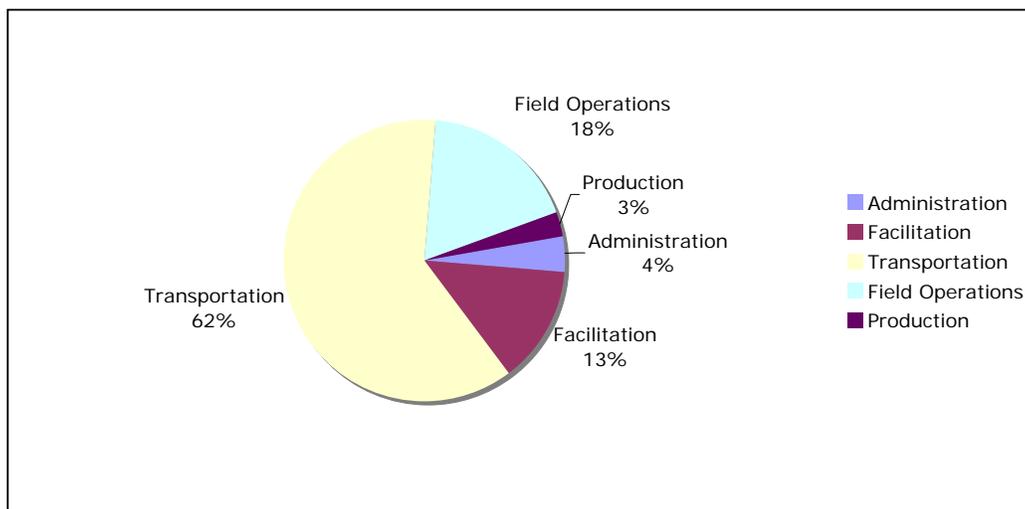
CWBSA is extremely grateful for the fiscal sponsorship of CWB-USA a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization in the United States. Through the joint program of Project Njabulo, CWBSA and CWB-USA received support from many individuals who continue to support our work in Southern Africa (R89,252.87 or \$12,750.41). However, due to our increased presence in South Africa, we were unable to raise the same amount from benefits and tours in the USA as we did in 2006. Fortunately, CWBSA diversified our income with partnerships and outreach locally and internationally.

We also received a grant from CWB Sweden (R14,594.42) through the USA for exploratory work in Swaziland as well as other donations from individuals in CWB Canada (R13,270.87) and CWB Ireland (R12,864.26). When CWBSA finally established a bank account and nonprofit status in October, we also began fundraising locally (R38,141.55). CWBSA is also extremely grateful for the continued support from Imperial Car Rental-Europcar for all of our ground transportation (in-kind donation of R120,000.00).



Expenses

In 2007, CWBSA spent an unprecedented amount of **96% of the budget on operational costs** incurred in the field! This means the vast majority of our donations went directly to providing psychosocial support to communities in crisis with as little overhead as possible. These expenses included: facilitation costs, transportation, and field operations (communication, equipment, food & lodging). Remaining expenses were administration costs (4%) for fundraising and office expenses. Transportation continues to be our greatest expense (R157,531.80) which is gratefully subsidized by Imperial Car Rental-Europcar. Furthermore, CWBSA was fortunate that our director donated his time to the organization for free. Consequently, this figure will change in the future as we grow as an organization and are forced to hire staff for project management and development.



Total Expenses: R255,268.13



XV. Appendix II. Circle of Laughter

CWB South Africa's work would not have been possible without the generosity of our donors in our Circle of Laughter. Siyabonga Kakhulu!

Happiness - \$1,001 and Up

Saul and Daniella Klein
Anne-Marie and Nevin Matthews
First Presbyterian Church of Morrisville

Belly Laughs - \$1,000 to \$501

Margaret McKenzie
Brett O'Brien
Operation Sock Monkey
Josh Selig

Knee Slappers - \$500 to \$251

Janet Farr
Fidelity Charity Trust
Sidney Lachman
Jane McLagan
Mary White

Guffaws - \$250 to \$101

Boorstein Family Trust
Aaron and Fanny Cohen
Michelle Fillon and Joshua Raff
Josh Kamensky
David and Charlotte Koskoff
Sara Laimon and Jonathan Kimmelman
Anthony Lachman
Jack Markin
Thomas and Elsa Menaker
Laura F. Whitten

Laughs - \$100 to \$51

Marcia Dworkind
Erin Cottrell
Susan and Morton Felix
Max Fleischman
Joann Lo
Isa-Kae Meskin
Laura Whitten
Ida and Robert Wrenn
Jan Zimmerman

Giggles - \$50 to \$26

Laura and Kenneth Berk
Barry Blumenfeld and April Cantor
Merodee Buechner
Richard and Mary Jo Button-Tait
Circus Minimus
Tim Cunningham
Dawson County Women's Club
Tim Gadzinski
Deborah Gershman
Philip Ginsberg
Mohammed Fayaz
Jacqueline Heimel
Joe and Chelsea Jarvis
Phyllis Kirson-Baker
Martie Leys
Tibi Light
William Mac Lingo, Jr.
Bridget McCracken
Margaret McLaren
Derek Morgan
Perry and Elizabeth Morgan
Mitch O'Farrell
Richard and Susan Ratzan
Joan Schirle
Mark Sparks
Narcissa Titman
Justine Williams

Smiles – Up to \$25

Karen and Jerry Benjamin
Beth David Synagogue
Mary Chase
Julie Clark
William Cody
Gayla and Jonathan Greenberg
Amanda Haney
Susan Kelley
Richard Lynes
Ambrose Martos
Hansie Mead
Jasmine Moorehead
Pat Sherman
Siobhan McClure-Rose
Patricia Welo



Sponsorship and In-Kind Donations

CWB Project Njabulo received timely sponsorship from the following companies and organizations:

Vehicle sponsorship in Southern Africa:

Imperial Car Rental - Europcar
(South Africa)
www.imperialcarrental.co.za

Accommodation in Southern Africa:

Buddhist Retreat Centre
(Ixopo, KZN, South Africa)
www.brcixcopo.co.za

Malealea Pony & Trekking Centre
(Malealea, Lesotho) www.malealea.co.ls

Semonkong Lodge
(Semonkong, Lesotho)
www.placeofsmoke.co.ls



XVI. Appendix III. Njabulo Residency Programme Curriculum

The following outlines the workshop curriculum for the Njabulo Residency Programme based on a 10-day workshop for children and their caregivers who have been directly affected by HIV/AIDS and *have already participated in a basic counseling and intervention programme*. While the workshops can be for all ages of children, CWBSA has found that the curriculum works best for children ages 10 to 16. Furthermore, although the programme has been implemented during a 10-day intensive period, CWBSA is planning on spreading the workshop over 10 weeks in order to give participants the space to incorporate the activities and their benefits into their lives.

Overview

The residencies are divided into morning and afternoon sessions for caregivers and OVCs, respectively:

OVC Sessions

The children's sessions are designed for a consistent group of 20-35 children ages 10-14 who are already part of a OVC support program that you offer. Activities range from games, circus skills, songs, storytelling, and drama exercises. The major focus is allowing the children to be children again and to have fun in a safe and nurturing environment. The core focus explores a traditional Southern African story while creating a dramatic presentation of the story with the children. This story typically involves themes that are related to the children's lives.

If possible, sessions are held onsite at the children's school in a hall or empty classroom. We usually teach directly after school for 1 ½ hours (2:30-4pm) and provide a snack for the children at the end of the workshop (sandwiches, fruit, and juice).

It is important for this group to be the same children each day as the sessions build on each other culminating in a performance/sharing by the children for their peers and caregivers at the end of the residency.

We also offer a Life Dreams workshop for older children to explore dreams, hopes, and career aspirations through theatre, art, and play.

Caregivers

Our caregiver workshop complements the OVC sessions. They are for caregivers and/or guardians who are ***directly responsible*** for the children we are working with in the afternoon. The workshop is designed to develop a sense of play and joy in their lives by offering exercises that help them relax and acquaint themselves to the life of a child and creativity.

We focus on storytelling and play in these sessions as well as songs, games, and simple movement exercises. The caregivers are also given homework each day to begin incorporating storytelling and games in their interaction with the children. They report their successes and difficulties with the homework exercises at the beginning of the following session.

The final session focuses on providing tools to continue incorporating storytelling, play, and relaxation beyond the residency. The caregivers are



instructed in simple mindfulness based stress reduction techniques that they can use on a daily basis. They invited to the culminating activity of the children's workshop.

Culmination and Reflection

At the end of the residency, both groups come together in a culminating activity that includes a performance by the OVCs for their caregivers. All of our workshops then conclude with a reflection so that the group can process the experience as a group as we provide tools for continuing the work beyond the classroom.

Basic Structure

Both workshops for children and caregivers follow the same basic structure:

Song of Welcome

Each workshop begins with a song led by the children.

Physical and Vocal Warm Up

Focus on isolations, articulation, and range.

Theatre Games

Emphasis is on exercises that are fun and develop a sense of play, group awareness, concentration, listening, and cooperation skills.

Core Activity

(see below)

Snack Time

Many of the children do not have the opportunity to eat anything between school and the workshop. The snack time is an added incentive to their attendance.

Mindfulness Meditation

Children focus on their breath or physical sensation of feet touching the ground in silence to develop a mindfulness of the present.

Closing Song

Concludes each workshop.

Children's Workshops

Day 1: Getting to know the group

Goal: Children will play games and have fun while learning about the group's dynamics and getting comfortable with trainers through problem solving.

Day 2: The Story

Goal: Children will encounter the world of story telling and the imagination. "Children of Wax" will be introduced to the children.

Day 3: Retelling the Story

Goal: Children will gain ownership of the story by retelling it in their own words in small groups.

Day 4: Emotions from the Story

Goal: Children will explore different atmospheres and emotions from the story.

Day 5: Becoming the Story

Goal: Students will begin to physically embody aspects of the story by exploring trust exercises.

Day 6: Creating the Play, Part 1

Goal: Children will begin to adapt the story into scenes in 2 groups.

Day 7: Creating the Play, Part 2

Goal: Children will continue to adapt the story into scenes working together in 2 groups. Storytellers will be introduced.

Day 8: Dress Rehearsal

Goal: Children will rehearse the play with the storytellers in each scene.

Day 9: Culminating Activity

Goal: Children will share their play and skills with their caregivers.

Day 10: Reflection and Party



Goal: Children will have a chance to reflect and share about their experience during the residency.

Caregiver Workshops

Day 1: Awakening the Senses

Goal: To begin awakening our senses to enter the world of the child.

Day 2: Stretching the Imagination

Goal: To rediscover our capacity of imagination through play and traditional stories.

Day 3: Connecting to Our Childhood

Goal: To explore memories from childhood and transform them into fairy tales.

Day 4: Opening to Suffering through Acceptance

Goal: To allow ourselves to hold our pain and explore ways of relieving stress and sorrow.

Day 5: Generosity and Love

Goal: To explore how the generosity of attentive love can benefit ourselves and our children.

Day 6: Overcoming Challenges through Gratitude

Goal: To explore through story the universal struggle of overcoming challenges in our lives and connect to a gratitude practice.

Day 7: Trusting Ourselves and Others

Goal: To develop trust of ourselves and others in order to realize our dreams.

Day 8: Moving On

Goal: To focus on ways to continue connecting to each other, our children, and the loving kindness of people around the world after the sessions are over.

Day 9: Culminating Activity

Goal: To experience the creativity of their children and share what they have been doing during the residency together.

Day 10: Reflection

Goal: To reflect and assess our experience together.

