



**April  
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## EDITOR'S NOTE

I know it's not February, but this month I have really been inspired by that crazy little thing called love.

The love shown by human rights interns to juvenile offenders from desperate backgrounds, the love between an animal care volunteer and an ailing African penguin, the love a foreigner develops for our country in all its splendour and all its squalor, the love that inspires a family to accept a stranger as their own and the love that one man can develop for over a hundred children in a matter of months.

Projects Abroad Cape Town is an investment of love. We build foundations, establish relationships, change realities and even save lives out of love.

I hope that some of the stories over the next few pages will inspire you to continue to spread the Projects Abroad and Mzansi love.



**Dutch care volunteer Eva Saeboe with a little angel at Nourish Care Centre**

## **[Animal Care Volunteer Story]**

### **Bibi Rombouts' Experience at SANCCOB**

In September 2012 I volunteered with Projects Abroad in Cape Town, spending six weeks working at SANCCOB Saves Seabirds Rescue and Rehabilitation Centre in Table View.

Due to an oil spill in Table Bay, around 220 oiled penguins came in when I started working at the centre. The staff had its hands full, and I was immediately taught how to catch and care for a penguin.

In the first weeks after the oil spill, we worked 11 or 12 hours a day. Days would start at 7.45 am with a meeting in which the staff would brief us on our tasks for the day. Cleaning, preparing food and medicines, feeding, helping with blood tests... there was a lot of work to do and I was happy that I came in at just the right time.

Each volunteer, along with a supervisor, cared for a group of penguins. I got the chance to help the veterinarians by washing the penguins and I was involved in two releases (so awesome!).

I was surprised by how many people wanted to take care of the oiled penguins and other seabirds. Local people came in to the centre whenever they had a free day and helped us with daily tasks. The media was also interested and we received compliments about the hard work that we were doing.

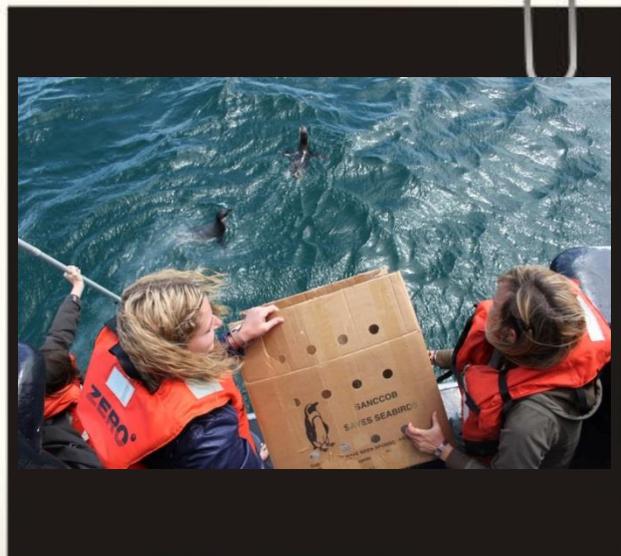
It was good to see that after three or four weeks the first penguins were released, and by the time I left almost all the penguins were back in the wild.

I had an amazing time at SANCCOB. I worked hard and learnt a lot. SANCCOB expects a lot from its volunteers and gives them a lot of responsibility. But how cool is it to get the opportunity to work with penguins?!

My host mom Cheryl cared for me so well. She even popped in to help out at the centre when she had a chance. When we got home in the evenings, there was always a lovely meal ready for us and while we ate, my host mom and her mom would always tell us nice stories about SANCCOB as well as their experiences with the 100 cats in their house. It is a home full of love for animals.

I really felt at home at SANCCOB and in Cheryl's home and I would seriously recommend this project to animal lovers everywhere. – **Bibi Rombouts**

### **Bibi assisting in a boat release**

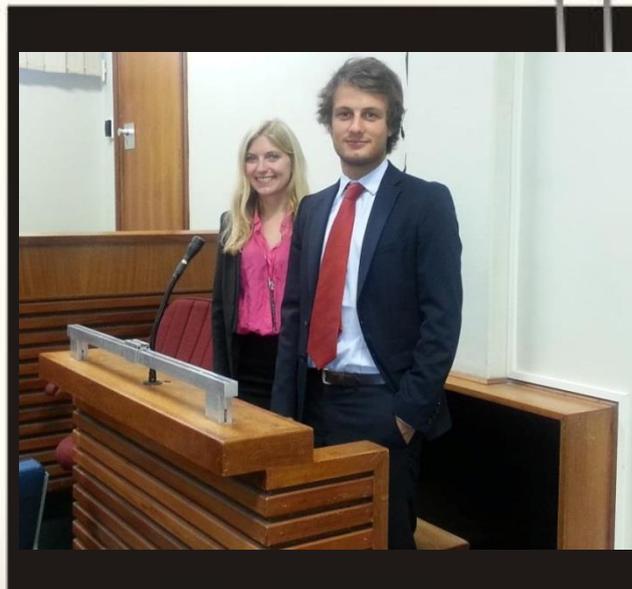


## [A Word from Human Rights]

### Recent Court Appearances

The human rights team's last four court appearances in the Wynberg and Athlone Magistrates' courts were successful. Resident attorney Sherwin Daniels and his team of interns managed to get a juvenile accused of armed robbery out of detention and released into the care of his guardian without paying any sum of money for bail in a formal bail application. Well done to the interns who worked on these cases in the Child Justice Department! They have managed to grasp the seriousness of cases and offences, as well as the minimum sentences that could possibly be passed down upon conviction.

**Human Rights Interns Cecilie Lindstrom and Paul Mallet in the Wynberg Magistrates' Court**



## [Teaching Volunteer Story]

### Werner Berger Introduces Hyde Park Primary Pupils to Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens

I returned to Cape Town at the beginning of this year for another month of a great, rewarding teaching experience with Projects Abroad South Africa at Hyde Park Primary School in Parkwood after a similar mission a year ago.

As opposed to teaching virtually any topic to a 6th grade class in 2012, I was assigned a specific grade 7 class this year. A huge advantage of my return was the fact that most of the children still remembered me.

Although working predominantly with one specific class (supporting the local teacher with English and maths teaching), I was also allowed to teach French and reading to all four of the grade 7 classes.

One of the highlights of my time at the school was a day trip that I organised to Cape Town's beautiful Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens. About 80% of the over 130 children and teachers I took were seeing the famous gardens for the first time. I incorporated the outing into the school's Natural Science teaching curriculum.

On my last day at the project, all four grade 7 classes organised a surprise farewell party for me with songs, drinks, gifts and lots of emotional and personal thank you notes. I have included some of these below:

'We appreciate everything you've done for us and thank you with everything inside of us.'

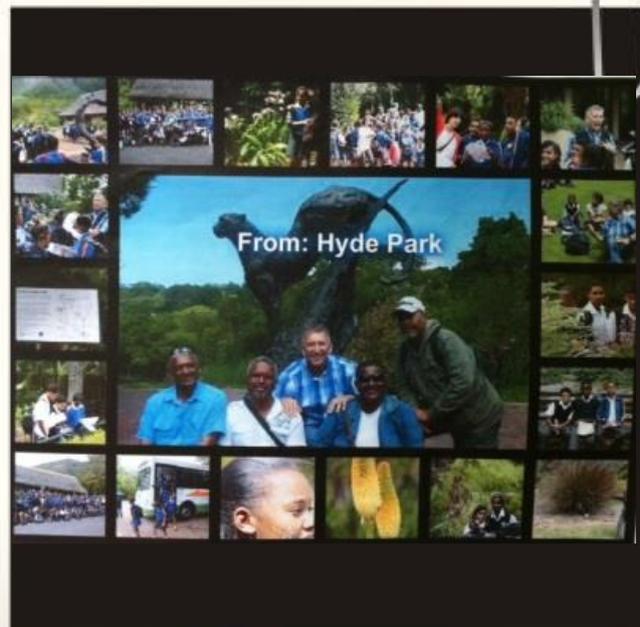
'Lots of love - thank you, Sir!'

'We will never forget you. You are the most best volunteer I have ever met.'

'We felt like the luckiest children.'

'Thank you for teaching us French and for letting us have a wonderful opportunity on going to Kirstenbosch.'

'I wrote your name in the sky but the wind blew it away. I wrote your name in the sand but the waves washed it away. So, I wrote your name in my heart and here it will stay.'



Hyde Park Primary's 'Werner Berger' Collage

### March Volunteer of the Month | Estelle Fischer

University of Geneva student Estelle Fischer (22) spent four months volunteering with Projects Abroad in Cape Town at the beginning of 2013.

Her curiosity piqued by 'lots of documentaries on Africa', Estelle wanted to experience the historically-rich country of South Africa for herself.

'I wanted to get as far away from Europe as possible – to witness the complexities of a third-world country first-hand. Driving from the airport, the first thing I saw was the township of Khayelitsha. No television footage could prepare me for the misery and squalor of the area.'

Estelle is particularly concerned about the vast socio-economic divide that is so obvious in Cape Town. 'It's crazy how there are so many rich white people living in areas like Camps Bay, Hout Bay and Sea Point, seemingly oblivious to the suffering that goes on in the poorer areas. Back home we have rich and poor, but the majority of us are middle-class and the divide is not as obvious.'

Estelle considers it pertinent for foreigners to visit the more impoverished areas of Cape Town and South Africa in general in order to hear and share stories 'across the fence'. 'There is so much large-scale assistance that is needed, but sometimes people just want their stories to be heard. I am lucky enough to be able to travel but most of the kids in the townships will probably never be able to leave South Africa, and we are their only window to the rest of the world. Volunteers and locals give each other so much just by being so different and accepting of those differences.'

Estelle is glad that she came to South Africa for herself instead of just believing everything she had heard about the country and its people. 'We always hear about how dangerous South Africa is. Of course you have to have your wits about you, but it certainly isn't true that people in the townships cannot be trusted. South Africans are very friendly people, and if you show them that you're not just afraid of them because of what you have heard, you will most likely gain their respect and even their protection in certain instances.'

Estelle volunteered at the Projects Abroad Building Project in Lavender Hill, where she really put her back into physical tasks such as sanding, mixing cement, filling sand bags (the eco-friendly alternative to bricks) and building columns and walls. She joined a group of international volunteers to help

extend a care centre for the local children. 'I absolutely loved playing with the children, who were always on site. Knowing that every sandbag I filled was for them was the motivation that kept me going.'

Estelle lived with a host family in the nearby community of Heathfield. 'I was quite worried about living with a host family, as I had previously had bad experiences with host families in Spain and England. My host mother was wonderful, though, and we would chat about everything. One of the best experiences of my life was actually going with her to church in Vrygrond, where everybody was so welcoming and positive and where we enjoyed a true celebration amidst all the poverty and hardship.'

Estelle's advice to future volunteers is to remember that they will only receive as much as they give. She also urges others to spend plenty of time with the locals and not just with other volunteers. 'The children are particularly important. They are the next generation and we have to do something for them now. We have to show them that things could be different for them.'

**Estelle with some of the children from the crèche at the building site**



## [Host Family Love]

Desiree and Tyrin Landsman started working for Projects Abroad Cape Town back in 2008.

The friendly duo began as drivers for the organisation, but as they got to know the volunteers they were urged by them to become a host family too.

The couple has since welcomed over 70 volunteers into their home, introducing them to the often foreign concept of neighbourly relations and a real sense of community.

'We couldn't believe that these young adults could spend twenty years living next to someone back home and not even know his or her name,' Desiree lamented. 'We realised from the start that they needed somewhere comfortable from which to integrate into this new lifestyle and culture,' she added.

Desiree and Tyrin's two daughters (aged 18 and 20) love having the volunteers around. 'Once we didn't have volunteers for almost three months and the girls got into a real slump,' laughed Tyrin.

The Landsmans live in Seawinds and enjoy watching new volunteers slowly open up to the people of the community, relating anecdotes of 'missing' volunteers visiting neighbours down the road and groups of kids leading lost volunteers home.

They really value 'family' time and give each volunteer individual attention. Parents of volunteers who have stayed with the Landsmans have even called afterwards to ask what it is that they did to bring their children out of their shells. 'It's always a hard question for us to answer,' said Desiree. 'We feel that they are the ones who have brought us something new. Our volunteers make our house come alive.'

