



Projects Abroad



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Letter from the Editor

This month I have really been inspired by the amount of love and care that has been shown by the staff members of Projects Abroad with their heartwarming idea to have an Easter Egg Hunt at Where Rainbows Meet project, this love that inspired many to start their own selfless initiatives, no matter how small it might be.

This month has also brought a lot of understanding and learning. Some beautiful words from parents about their son and how he has changed, and grown up since his volunteering experience as well as the Care Management Plan which was the highlight of this month with its abundant ideas for the future of the Vrygrond Township.

I hope that some of the stories will inspire you to learn, love and understand.



Vash Singh
Information Manager/
Editor

Beautiful words from Yvonne Mientje | Niels van der Schans amazing work and the memorable experiences

Niels van der Schans has been doing amazing work at the building project and has inspired many volunteers to do even more amazing work. He spent a lot of the time with the children and had greatly impacted their lives in a positive way. He had also brought his parents to come for a visit.

Here are some touching words from Yvonne Mientje about her experience in Cape Town:

“In March of this year we travelled to Cape Town to visit our nineteen year old son Niels. He works as a volunteer for Projects Abroad in a township. He stayed there for three months. We were there when it was the 7th week of his stay and it was the first time he has done something like this. He had never travelled alone before.

He was waiting at the airport for us and we were surprised to see how he was changed during that period. The child who left Holland became a real man. As he was waiting there for us, we saw the difference!”

He felt really relaxed and at home in Cape Town and he never stopped talking about how wonderful his life was and about the very special people he had met.

We saw all the beautiful highlights of Cape Town with him and we kind of fell in love with the place.

At the end of our holiday he arranged a visit to his project. We left our car at a parking place nearby and Dean, Niels's 'boss' took us with his car to the project.

We could not believe our eyes, it was the first time we were in a township, we could not believe that so many families live there with actually nothing. Dean opened the gate and welcomed us to the place he worked with so many volunteers for so many years to make it a real nice place for the little children who lives there. Most of the children were very happy to see Niels and was like he was a tree and they climbed on him. The children played in the play yard while Dean showed us around. He told us about the project with a lot of compassion.

We took a lot of pictures and were constantly surprised by all the work that was done there. We felt very proud of our son that he could help Dean to create a better life for the children. We hope for the future that there can be built a lot of such places en that there will be more people like our son en the other volunteers we met, to help Dean with his beautiful work there. Dean, we were very impressed and were so glad that we had the chance to see what a difference you can make for the children who lives there. It was an honour to meet you!

With love,

Jan and Yvonne,

Parents of Niels van der Schans,
Holland.





The Care management plan is here!

The care projects are truly one of the most inspired projects that always bring positive feedback and happiness to the children of the community. I always have the great opportunity to go out and visit this project, not only to observe but also to capture the moments in the community of townships and the hard work that is being done to help the children get a suitable education that they deserve. The hard work and dedication from staff members and volunteers has made the care project expand to help many children in need, in the area of Vrygrond.

Care Volunteer Co-ordinator Grant Palanyandi and Project Manager Samantha De Oliveira have been doing an excellent job in running and making sure all the care projects are running smoothly and have been working towards the start of the Care Management Plan. After months of preparation, they are finally able to launch the Care Management Plan. The Plan is designed to best utilise our volunteers, in order to improve the quality of education and support given to the children in each of our Care centres.

The launch for the Care Management Plan will happen on the 25th of April, 2014 and I am particularly excited for this event. For the year 2014 there has been great steps taken to help the community of Vrygrond and we give thanks to all the staff members involved in the continuous great work in all the care projects. The best way to remember Mandela and was one of the highlights of my year.

Care management plan opening | Great plans for the Care projects

The care management plan opening was not only informative but also very exciting and fun. There were local musicians that really took my breath away with their divine melodies that livened up the event. It was also a great opportunity to meet new principals and teachers at the projects and also listen to the great work that the volunteers are doing. Care Volunteer Co-ordinator Grant Palanyandi explained in detail about exactly what the Care Management plan is about and what its main mission is. I could really see that he did not feel that the Care Management plan was just an initiative that was plainly set out, but it was his passion to start something that will change the community and the children's lives for the better.

The event ended with tea, coffee and some delicious sweet treats. All the people involved really went above and beyond to make the opening run smoothly and successful, in which they succeeded. We would like to thank everyone involved.





The Easter egg hunt | Feel the festivities

I have had the great privilege of having Christian family that celebrates Easter. Easter Sunday is one of the most festive events among Christians worldwide. It commemorates Jesus Christ's resurrection from death, as written in the Christian bible, and even though I am not Christian the whole weekend was filled with fun Easter egg hunts and delicious food!

With Easter being around the corner, some of the amazing Projects Abroad staff members have arranged an Easter Egg Hunt for the children at one of our projects - "Where Rainbows Meet".

Chocolate Fun | Easter egg hunt success

I had the great opportunity to be a part of the fun Easter Egg Hunt held on the 24th of April and the Projects Abroad staff members ran the whole event. The atmosphere was ecstatic when the staff started hiding the eggs and it was even livelier when the children started to find them.

This event will continue annually, and we hope to hear this initiative spread out further to more schools and crèche's.





A day in the life of a Volunteer Coordinator – Ashwin Scott

Ashwin Scott is a 22 year old South African Volunteer Coordinator for Projects Abroad. After working with an organization for 7 to 8 years, he joined Projects Abroad South Africa's team based in Wynberg, Cape Town.

Ashwin feels Projects Abroad needs Volunteer Coordinators (VCs) because when volunteers arrive in Cape Town they don't know anything about the city, so the VCs are there to show them: how to travel by public transport, how to get to the Head Office, tell them about safety and how to get to the nearest mall with familiar international stores. "VCs are the first staff members volunteers meet so we always try our best to have a good first impression so they can feel welcome and comfortable."

His daily tasks are (when having an induction):

- Fetch the volunteer at home
- Show them how to travel by public transport
- Take them to the head office for a full safety, project and general induction
- Show them how to get to the nearest shopping mall
- Buy their necessities

(Cheap mobile phones, internet for their phones or laptops, toiletries, adapters, ect)

- Have lunch and go over the most important points of the induction
- Show them how to get to their project if they travelling by public transport
- Take them back home

When in the office:

- Doing administrative duties (scanning, making phone calls to volunteers)
- Feedbacks
- Visiting volunteers to check up on them
- Taking them to the doctor/police station/home affairs for visa extensions.

Ashwin was able to be involved in the holiday program of December 2013 and also assist with writing volunteer stories and blogging. He has learnt to put other people first as the volunteers become part of his responsibility; he also improved on his communication skills. He has experienced different personalities, meeting people from different countries with a lot of cultural differences that really amazed him. His most memorable experience so far at Projects Abroad is meeting people from different countries and making good friends with them. He loves Projects Abroad because they get international volunteers to help disadvantage communities, share their knowledge and make a difference!

This is what he advises to local youngsters out there "If you want to become something in life, DON'T GIVE UP, FOLLOW YOUR DREAMS! It doesn't matter where you come from, you can still achieve the goals you set out for yourself."



Photo Spread I Care



