



Youth

TODAY

**SPECIAL ISSUE:
FOCUS ON EDUCATION**

APRIL 2007

A newsletter for friends of Girls & Boys Town

Leading and learning

The Minister of Education, Naledi Pandor, hit the proverbial nail on the head in her speech at the School Safety Colloquium in Pretoria last November.

'I remain convinced that parents or guardians bear primary responsibility for the conduct and discipline of their children ... where there are parents and caregivers, they must share the burden of inculcating discipline. Schools are not mini prisons and teachers cannot be expected to serve as correctional officers to wild and unruly students.'

Mutual respect

It's impossible not to agree with these sentiments. In theory, they're indisputable. However, in practice, we as parents and caregivers – and teachers – were not taught at school how to manage challenging children. And this is where our programmes come in.

Our 'Common Sense Parenting' programme provides constructive options for encouraging positive behaviour while discouraging negative behaviour, building relationships and teaching positive alternatives.

The 'Well-Managed Classroom' programme offers educators proven, effective skills and tools to



Social worker Washeila Bohardien congratulates two of our Macassar Home boys – Kevin (left) and 'JP' – who were awarded certificates for outstanding achievement in Grade 6.

manage learner behaviours, strengthen and maintain relationships and instil a culture of learning.

Fundamental to all our programmes – and to changing the mindset of 'disruptive children' – is the underlying value of mutual respect. This is possibly the most crucial value that lies dormant in the hearts of South Africa's youth – and it urgently needs to be re-awakened.



Message from Joe Araujo



Seeing the 'big picture'

The spate of violent acts at schools in South Africa is alarming. While these may be symptomatic of the broader problems of our society – crime, unemployment and the like – this in no way justifies them.

The R45-million given by government to implement security measures in certain schools is unlikely to solve the underlying problem in the long-term.

Security guards, fencing, CCTV cameras, metal detectors, etc. have limited effect in the face of the challenges to authority and disregard for life and property.

More importantly, it should instead be used to equip teachers – and parents – with the skills necessary to manage learner behaviours and take back control of the classroom. Fencing them in won't solve the problem. The battlefield lies within the classroom – between teacher and learners!

The war is for the minds of the young. If we can

win over their minds, it will roll out to the periphery and fences won't be needed.

They know who the drug peddler and the paedophile are – and have the capacity to chase them away from their environments. Remember student power and what they accomplished in 1976? And, without the parents as partners, only half the battle will be won.

Schools are places in which children should be safe – from physical and psychological harm; from bullying and any other form of abuse from peers and teachers. Teachers should be able to get on with the task of teaching rather than disciplining.

In this issue we're paying special attention to education and the role that Girls & Boys Town can play in the management of children in the home and in the classroom. We also highlight the programmes and role players that would go a long way to improving the sad – and scary – situation at schools.

Joe Araujo

Joe Araujo -Executive Director

Inside

2



Managing classrooms

How do educators deal with challenging children?

3



Thank heavens for fun!

Good news for donors!
Your gift is now tax-deductible up to 10% of your taxable income. Remember, we gladly provide receipts for tax purposes.

Useful contacts:



- Department of Education: **012 312 5911**
- Department of Education Hotline **0800 202 933**
- Safe Schools' Call Centre **0800 45 46 47**



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Send them home?

The controversial plan to remove troublesome children from school and put them in their parents' care was met with a mixed reaction.

While several school principals and education experts applauded this proposal, the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU) – and Girls & Boys Town – do not agree.

'In some cases the parents may be part of the problem. In effect this would mean throwing such youngsters into the street, with further dire social consequences,' a SADTU spokesperson said in *You* magazine.

Other aspects of the minister's school safety plan include invoking school safety regulations which allow teachers and principals to conduct random searches on pupils for weapons. Random drug testing could also be permissible if the plan is approved.

CALLING CORPORATES

Girls & Boys Town urges corporate South Africa to sponsor the cost of its 'Well-Managed Classroom' programme for teachers in under-resourced schools.

If you'd like to know more about sponsoring training at a school in your community, please contact Girls & Boys Town's Executive Director, Joe Araujo, on 011 482 2655 or e-mail jds@gbtown.org.za

Wherever kids are ... is where we must be

Although residential care is what Girls & Boys Town has always offered – and continues to provide – our aim is always prevention. Preventing children from being placed in alternative care, minimising family break-down and helping to solve problems within schools and classrooms ... these are the ideals that we work towards. But nothing happens in a vacuum – which is why Girls & Boys Town takes a pro-active stance and runs highly effective programmes in both the parenting and education fields.

A child experiencing problems at school is likely to be having difficulties at home. Unless both areas are addressed, there's little chance of positive change.

We say: give educators the resources and strategies to manage their classrooms optimally. Give parents and caregivers the skills with which to deal effectively with children and teenagers. Keep the youth off the streets – out of trouble, out of institutions and out of jail. Everybody wins – and ultimately, South Africa benefits.



Is the 'big stick' needed?

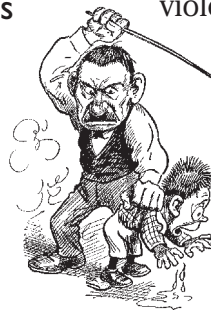
The outlawing of corporal punishment at schools is seen by some as the reason for the decline of discipline at schools. But is this really a realistic notion?

Not according to the South African Human Rights Commission head, Jody Kollapen. With an increase in violence at schools – including murder, rape and stabbing – the re-introduction of caning and the like at schools is unlikely to have any remedial effect.

Girls & Boys Town agrees. Corporal punishment is no wonder cure. We have never advocated its use, either at home or in schools.

When you consider that the Western Cape Education Department last year reported 597 cases of abuse, 451 of burglary and vandalism,

450 criminal offences like robbery, assault and possession of dangerous weapons, and 121 gang violence incidents at schools – it's easy to think that schools have become a cesspool of criminal activity.



Holistic

Stringent measures need to be put in place to counter all crime linked to schools – but the real solutions lie in prevention programmes and efforts that consider learners holistically. Since a 'challenging child' at school is likely to be a problem child at home, too, it's counterproductive to limit change to the classroom only.

This position is in line with Girls & Boys Town's mission of 'Creating opportunities for youth to succeed'. Success in *life* is the aim.



About our 'Well-Managed Classroom' programme

The education system is in crisis. In the absence of discipline, learners – no matter how bright they may be – cannot reach their potential.

Neither the State nor teacher training institutions equip educators to effectively deal with the challenging and threatening behaviours of learners.

But Girls & Boys Town's 'Well-Managed Classroom' programme does. It offers proven skills and tools to manage behaviours and instil a culture of learning in the classroom.

State authorities and educators have consistently identified discipline as one of the biggest problems facing schools. When educators must focus on controlling behaviour – rather than teaching – learning suffers.

Since the abolition of corporal punishment and the increase in class size, educators find themselves helpless in the face of the onslaught presented by learner behaviours – as they themselves have limited skills, tools or structures to maintain order in class. This has often led to subtle forms of abuse of learners by educators and the exclusion or expulsion of youth from schools.

Managing classrooms

The 'Well-Managed Classroom' programme offers educators the opportunity to teach life skills and build relationships throughout the academic curriculum – one that fosters respectful staff and learner interactions, by challenging and addressing the discipline and behaviour issues of learners.

A comprehensive social skills curriculum is offered, along with teaching techniques and

practical classroom management strategies. Some of the goals of the programme are:

- Increase in school attendance and punctuality.
- Knowing and following school and class rules.
- Improved relationships and interactions with educators and administrators.
- Creating opportunities for improved academic performance.
- Increased learner satisfaction with school.
- Decrease in out-of-school suspensions, expulsions and drop-out rate.
- Building employability and life-skills.

Solutions

To accomplish all this, the programme includes:

- A step-by-step process for teaching social skills to learners.
- Shows educators how to make the teaching of social skills part of the school curriculum.
- Gives educators a systematic way to address appropriate and inappropriate behaviour.
- Defines when and how educators should refer learners to the office.

One of the greatest benefits of the programme is that it enables educators to spend less time on correcting behaviours and allows more time for teaching.

The 16-hour training programme can be flexibly scheduled according to different school and educator needs. For information, contact (Gauteng) 011 482 2655 or (Western Cape) 021 939 8085.



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Youth, families, communities; strength and

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Creating opportunities for youth to grow and contribute to a responsible and peaceful community life. Dignity, equality and with o

Our V & Prin

- Belief in the potential of every mature and responsible adult
- Promotion of and development with youth, families and communities
- A firm belief in preservation and the value for the well-being
- Commitment of services based on children's rights
- Adherence to non-discrimination we do
- The maintenance of standards in care practice
- Service delivered responsive to the needs
- The sharing of Town's knowledge
- Sound Corporate to donors and
- Ethical fund raising investing

Vision

families and South Africa's and future.

Mission

opportunities for and develop into citizens, able to family and in the spirit of y, tolerance, and solidarity thers..

Values

Principles

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Petros with Vusi Magadana (left) and our Kagiso-Randfontein Principal, Sydney Mabaso.

Fate smiles on Petros

It was Petros Sithole's lucky day when Vusi Magadana, Corporate Affairs Manager at Harmony Gold Mining, paid a visit to Girls & Boys Town Kagiso-Randfontein. Petros was showing the guest around the centre and the two were discussing Petros's plans after matric.

Vusi made Petros an offer that would steer the young man towards a bright future – on condition that he passed matric.

Petros did pass – and true to his word, Vusi arranged a learnership for Petros at Harmony Gold Mining – as well as accommodation in the company's guest house. Now, Petros is studying marketing, and is hard at work in Harmony's marketing department.



Thank heavens for fun!



Into their heads, through their hearts

What is it that inspires people to work at Girls & Boys Town? Three of our newest Principals offer insight.

Sydney Mabaso, Principal of Girls & Boys Town Kagiso-Randfontein, has an impressive background in various aspects of youth development and care – so he's no stranger to the demands of this work. Except that 'the news of working at Girls & Boys Town really scared my kids!' he muses.

'I found Girls & Boys Town to be a different world, with all the support and passion for the betterment of the lives of the youth. There is never a dull moment and every day is filled with challenges.'

Window of opportunity

'Most of the boys are very receptive to our role in their lives and we need to make positive use of this window of opportunity for building the future of our country.'

Girls & Boys Town Magaliesburg's Principal, Marilyn Pick, relocated from Cape Town to take up what she describes as 'a calling'.

'As parents, we want to protect our kids, but nobody can protect them from life and its challenges. The only thing we can do is to prepare them,' says Marilyn.

'The Peer Group System is a wonderful tool. It's so rewarding to see how the boys work to get promoted in the system.'

'In 10 months this job has helped me grow so much, as a parent and professional. And the boys keep me on my toes!'

Girls

Cynthia du Plessis is Principal of our Cape Houses – which includes our 'girls only' Alpha Family Home. 'Contact with the youth is often overwhelming as they're all vying for one's attention, especially the girls. But many of the children have a great sense of humour, which makes working with them great fun!'

'It's rewarding to see family meetings where the youngsters are empowered by making their own responsible decisions – and to see the youth blossom as they use their leadership skills as managers in the houses.'

'One exciting aspect of this work is the scope for creativity. The children are individuals, each completely different, and one has to try to bring out the best in each one.'



Principals, from left, Cynthia du Plessis, Sydney Mabaso and Marilyn Pick.

'I've found it exciting to see how all of our efforts are impacting on the youth in our care and how they develop, every day, towards becoming responsible adults.'



When 'giving back' gives joy

Thanks to a generous donation from Umhlanga Round Table 155, Girls & Boys Town Tongaat was able to complete much-needed renovations to its dining room.

The gift also allowed for the construction of built-in cupboards in several of the Centre's dormitories.

'One's environment really does make a difference. Our boys are delighted with the revamp – and proud of it, too,' remarked Jakes Raman, Principal of Girls & Boys Town Tongaat.

At a function to thank the donors and show them the completed projects,

Danie Rademeyer, 2006 chairman of Umhlanga Round Table 155, celebrates success with Inkosinathi, Round Table's Kevin Atkinson and Jakes Raman, Principal of Girls & Boys Town Tongaat.



special guest and loyal supporter Penny Rey Coelen praised the work of Girls & Boys Town and thanked the Round Table members for their efforts.

Danie Rademeyer, Umhlanga Round Table Chairman for 2006 – who oversaw the project with Community Service Convenor Kevin Atkinson – said that the organisation aimed to give back to the community. He added: 'I'm astounded by the difference I see here.'



Shine on!



Our congratulations to Anna Duvenhage of our Cape Town Development Office, who celebrates 20 years with Girls & Boys Town. She's an invaluable asset and continues to do a splendid job. Keep shining, Anna.



Also celebrating 20 years' service is Jean Ridley, from our Pretoria Development Office. We're blessed indeed to have such commitment.

Public policies

1. Girls & Boys Town South Africa is a private, registered Nonprofit organisation in terms of the Nonprofit Organisation's Act (Act 71 of 1997) – Registration No 009-244 NPO.
2. Girls & Boys Town is registered as a 'Public Benefit Organisation' (PBO) in terms of Section 18A of the Income Tax Act (Act 58 of 1962). Donations to Girls & Boys Town are tax-deductible in the hands of the donor – up to **10% of taxable income**. No duty is charged on bequests made to it in Wills (SARS ref 18/11/13/379).
3. All donations received are used for the sole benefit and care of the youth of Girls & Boys Town.
4. Only staff in the employ of Girls & Boys Town are permitted to raise funds for the organisation – unless otherwise specifically authorised.
5. The names of Girls & Boys Town donors are never sold or divulged to other organisations.
6. The stories of youth published in our reports are true but their names may have been altered to protect their identity.
7. Youth are admitted to Girls & Boys Town regardless of race, colour or religion.
8. The Girls & Boys Town books of account are audited annually and its financial statements are available on request or can be viewed at the office of the Director of Nonprofit Organisations.
9. Girls & Boys Town does not receive funding from Community Chests in South Africa.

Yes, you can learn to parent effectively

All parents occasionally need help and advice when they're having a tough time with their youngsters.

Girls & Boys Town runs a 'Common Sense Parenting' programme which covers issues such as communication, effective discipline, responding to children when they do well or argue, shout or won't follow an instruction.

It's an easy-to-follow format that consists of six two-hour classes which, depending on participant needs, is presented over two classes per week for three weeks – or over two full days.

The programme emphasises two things: the 'head' and the 'heart'. The 'head' involves using a logical, practical method of teaching children – in

their words, using skills to change behaviour.

The 'heart' means having unconditional love for children. One without the other will not work – but combine them and you have a powerful combination

Each session provides participants with new information and modelling opportunities via video materials and role-play practice.

This programme empowers all parents and caregivers of all ages – whether they're dads who wish to improve their relationship with their children or moms wanting to 'brush up' on their parenting skills. Even exasperated, challenged parents – or baby-sitters, au pairs, child minders and educators – benefit immensely.



23 years of loving and leading

Spending 23 years as Family Teachers at our Glenwood Family Home left its mark on Anne-Marie and Brian Horsefield – an indelible print of love.

And ask them if they can name one child who stands out in their memory – from all the boys they've cared for – and their answer is a telling sign of their sense of humour.

'Raymond came here as a testy teenager who used to drink, fight and get involved in mischief,' recalls Brian. 'After finishing his army training, Raymond visited us with a bottle of brandy, saying that it was to replace the one he stole from me when he was 13!' laughs Brian. 'Today Raymond has a top job, his own family and a lovely home.'

Rewards

Sharing the lives of around 200 boys over the years has also had its share of special moments. 'Like the boy who told us his 17th birthday



Anne-Marie and Brian Horsefield.

celebration was the happiest day of his life, because he'd never had a birthday cake before,' recalls Anne-Marie.

Anne-Marie is frank about her own learning experiences. 'I had some difficulty with teenagers not being appreciative – but then Brian challenged me by asking if I ever appreciated my parents when I was a teenager,' she adds.

'We were never bored!'

laughs Brian. 'The reward has always come from the many old boys who stay in touch with us. We've been to their weddings, met their children and remain a treasured part of one another's lives.'

Without the generosity of our supporters, Anne-Marie and Brian would have no story to tell. And many boys would not have had the chance to turn their lives around.

We say a reluctant farewell to this remarkable couple and a big 'thank you'.



Boys garden for grans and gramps

Seven boys from Girls & Boys Town Kagiso-Randfontein proved how big their hearts are when they volunteered to clean up and improve the grounds of the Mohlakens Old Age Home.

They impressed the residents of the home – and community – who were thrilled with the boys' efforts. Well done, team!



Green fingers and big hearts ... some of the youngsters at Girls & Boys Town Kagiso-Randfontein with Pat Dillon – a Regional Committee Member.

Congrats!

Colin, from our Macassar Home, is congratulated by his school principal Mr Esterhuizen, after being chosen as a Peer Representative for Grade 8.



Do it for ...



Thanks to a group of volunteers led by Jenny O'Hanlon of TDC Design Company, 'Do It Day' was marked by the repainting of the cottages at Girls & Boys Town Macassar. The intrepid volunteers also arranged for new carpets in two cottages.