

Jeug- en Kindersorg: 'n Joernaal vir diegene  
wat met probleemkinders en jeug in risiko werk.

# Child & Youth Care

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A Journal 'or those who work with troubled children and youth at risk





# EDITORIAL

## Kroonstad – A Road to Dignity

In the early 80's the Faculty of Education at the University of Durban-Westville was re-designing its existing building to meet with changing ideas in Educational practice. Someone crept into the venue where the building sub-committee was to meet and wrote this on the blackboard:

**First establish your philosophy before you shape your buildings, otherwise your buildings will shape your philosophy.**

Strange how that scrawled anonymous message has haunted me through the years. Many of us will remember those days in residential care when we were trying to reshape our dormitories and make them into cottage units to meet the changing philosophy in child and youth care – it always was a make-shift change in structure, and child care thinking didn't necessarily change from the dormitory care mind-set. Changing old shaped buildings into new shapes didn't always change the shape of Child and Youth care practices. The opening of the Matete Matches Secure Care Centre for Youth in Kroonstad on the 13th August 1999 has heralded a significant moment in Child and Youth Care service provision in this country. So far, everything appears to have been done right. Congratulations are due to everyone connected with it. The building itself is a mirror-like reflection of the Child and Youth Care philosophy presently in place. All the staff were trained in current philosophy and practices before the first child came into the system. The staff have had time to meld themselves into a team. The community is part of the fabric of the place. It is child and African centred. The spirit of the culture of this new facility for youth in Kroonstad is already a pervasively warm tone into which Youth will enter from day one. There is an honesty and straight-forward obviousness about the belief system that underlies the design of this facility, that should shape the Child and Youth Care practice there. From every aspect of preparation and construction this new facility is a model of how to go about developing a new service in the context of the principles, values and philosophy of the new paradigm. Doubtless this new model project will be carefully watched as a measure of the viability of the principles of the transforming Child and Youth Care system in this country. The responsibility now left with all the parties involved in the setting up of this project is to ensure that the values upon which the facility was founded become so well integrated into everyday practice, that it remains a way of life experienced by every Youth who comes into the programme – making a difference – putting young people on "a road to dignity."

**Barrie Lodge**

**MESSAGE FROM THE  
ACTING MEC FOR  
SOCIAL WELFARE, MS  
OUMA  
MOTSUMI-TSOPA  
ON THE OFFICIAL  
OPENING OF THE  
SECURE CARE  
CENTRE, KROONSTAD  
ON 13 AUGUST 1999**



Honoured Guests,  
Ladies and Gentle-  
men, Children.

Today, as we are about to open this secure care centre officially, we are not only celebrating the first privatised secure care centre in this country and for the Free State Province, but also the importance of the spirit of partnership.

The Department of Social Welfare which led the inter-sectoral secure care steering committee, had a vision that the success of a secure care programme for young people lies in privatisation – for many reasons. This was not an easy process – rather one through which we all have grown and developed.

After more than 18 months of thinking and deliberations, sleepless nights and reality checks, we are here today opening a privatised secure care centre for the Free State.

But, as I said, it also symbolises a new form of partnership between the Department and the non-governmental sector, namely the SKDB. As the provision of a secure care programme for children in trouble with the law who are awaiting trial is primarily a government responsibility, the running cost of this programme is funded by the Department of Social Welfare. This is definitely a new way of doing things – and most important it was worth the risk to try out something new. This is a symbolic step to show our commitment towards the transformation of social welfare services.

Through this partnership we as a province acknowledge and recognise the capacity and strength of our NGO sector to literally "bungy jump" into this new idea and concept of secure care, a programme with a difference.

This secure care centre as it stands here today, also symbolises inter-sectoral partnership. It has been an inter-sectoral team effort led by the Department of Social Welfare with the Departments of Correctional Services, SAPS, Education, Public Works and Roads, Justice (Directorate for Public Prosecutions specifically), NICRO and the National Council for Child and Family Welfare in the Free State who have walked every step of this mile from day one – when secure care was just a concept – to today. This is now reality.

Ladies and Gentleman, as we in the Free State Province say: "*Motho ke motho ka batho ba bang*", which translates to "*a person is a person through other people*". Together we create and actively take steps to ensure the safety and well-being of our children. We know that the journey is long, but together, as partners, we **will get there.**

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Editorial: P O Box 23199, Claremont 7735, South Africa, e-mail: naccwct@iafrica.com Telephone: (021) 697-4123 Fax: (021) 697-4130.

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Editorial Advisory Board: Merle Allsopp BA, HDE, NHCRC; Annette Cockburn LTCL, Dip.Ad.Ed.(UCT), Pumla Mncayi BA (SW), Adv. Ann Skelton, Ruth Bruintjies.

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## NACCW

The National Association of Child Care Workers is an independent, non-profit organisation in South Africa which provides the professional training and infrastructure to promote healthy child and youth development and to improve standards of care and treatment for troubled children and youth at risk in family, community and residential group care settings.

### National Executive Chairman

The Revd Barrie Lodge, BA, UED, Bed  
PO. Box 751013, Garden View 2047  
Tel (011) 614-0121 Fax (011) 484-2928  
Cell: 082-501-0525  
email: naccwchair@iafrica.com

### Treasurer

Roger Pitt, Dip.Th.  
PO. Box 482, King Williams Town 5600.  
Tel: (0433) 21932. Fax (0433) 22252.  
e-mail: naccwkt@iafrica.com

### Members

Kathy Scott (Western Cape), Nomsa Mandoyi (acting Border)  
Elwin Galant (Eastern Cape) Himla Makhani (KwaZulu Natal)  
Marie Waspe (Gauteng), Erna Bowers (Southern Cape)  
Mvuyo Manyungwana (Northern Cape)

### Professional Staff

Director: Merle Allsopp BA, HDE, NHCRC.  
PO. Box 36407, Glosderry 7702  
Tel: (021) 696-4247/697-4123 Fax: (021) 697-4130  
e-mail: naccwct@iafrica.com

### Deputy Director: Zeni Thumbadoo

PO. Box 17279, Congella 4013.  
Tel. 031-205-3775 Fax 031-205-3369  
e-mail: naccwdb@iafrica.com

### Liaison: Sbonile Manyathi B.Soc.Sc. (Hons).

PO. Box 17279, Congella 4013.  
Tel. 031-205-3775 Fax 031-205-3369  
e-mail: naccwdb@iafrica.com

### Consultant: Jacqui Winfield B.Soc.Sc., NHCRC.

PO. Box 17279, Congella 4013.  
Tel. 031-205-3775 Fax 031-205-3369  
e-mail: naccwdb@iafrica.com

### Regional Secretaries

Gauteng/Transvaal: Sheila Deolal, Aryan Benevolent Home  
25 Falcon St, Lenasia Ext 1 1827. Tel. 011-854-6864

Kwazulu-Natal: Irene Cowley, PO Box 95, Pietermaritzburg 3200  
Tel. 0331-45-4425. email: nicropmb@pmb.lia.net

### Border: Contact Nomsa Mandoyi

PO. Box 482, King Williams Town 5600. Tel: 0433-21932

Western Cape: Nola Riley, 5 Dingle Avenue Kenilworth 7700.  
Tel 021-61-0788

### Eastern Cape: Cecil Wood, 76 Circular Drive, Charlo 6070.

Tel. 041-32-2329. email: naccwpe@iafrica.com

### Southern Cape: Yvonne Edwards, P. Bag X6587, George 6530

Tel: 0448-75-8082.

### Namaqualand: Father Anthony Cloete, RC Sending

Kinderhuis, Kamieskroon 8241. Tel 0257-608

### Kimberley: Derek Swartz. Private Bag X5005. Kimberley 8300.

Tel. 0531-73-2321

Fund Raising Organisation 088004480002

Website: [www.pretext.co.za/naccw](http://www.pretext.co.za/naccw)





# Child & Youth Care in South Africa: Embracing a Transforming Reality

Presentation given at the Biennial Conference by Merle Allsopp and Zeni Thumbadoo

**A**s we stand at the threshold of a new millennium and cast our minds back over the years to conferences of the past, it seems that many of the hopes and dreams we have had as a field over the years have begun to be realised. Indeed the developments in our country and in child and youth care appear far greater than we ever thought possible. Much has been achieved and yet the transforming reality has brought with it difficulties and challenges which have surprised us. We catch glimpses of new vistas of possibility as we are exposed to the reality shifting and changing around us. At times many of us are inspired by these new possibilities. At other times however we retreat and we are stuck looking at the child and youth care field in the old same way. Some of us might be embracing the transforming reality that is child and youth care practice in South Africa in 1999. Others feel angry and cheated. We feel that nothing has really changed, but that our work and our circumstances have become more complex. We lose faith in transformation and it appears a myth rather than a reality. Most of us find ourselves vacillating

between these two positions. We are overwhelmed with what has to happen in order to make our new view a reality. Embracing the transforming reality requires so much of a thrust into the unknown that we often retreat and at times devalue what is happening around us rather than join in and add our own transformative energy to the process of developing child and youth care in our country.

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*Much has been achieved and yet the transforming reality has brought with it difficulties and challenges which have surprised us.*

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Today we wish to suggest that transformation is a complex process requiring us as individuals to be in constant relationship with the external changes, and to take personal responsibility for transformation in our own sphere. We will outline the transformation processes that have occurred over the past four years, focussing on what has been achieved on the macro levels. We will then look at the stories of child and youth care

practitioners in our country who are a part of pioneering the transformation process in their area of work. We will draw commonalities from the stories of these pioneer colleagues that might help us in realising the new possibilities awaiting us. But first we need to remind ourselves that most of us are in the process of transition – the spiritual and emotional process of coming to terms with a changing reality. The theory tells us that in order to transition we need to let go of the past – of old ways of doing things, of the familiarity and comfort that goes with a known reality. We find ourselves in a neutral zone where we have a sense of what the new possibilities could be, but we are not quite able to internalize them – it is the “nowhere between two somewheres.” We find ourselves asking for direction without there being clear answers coming from the bodies that should be provid-

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*Transformation is a complex process requiring us as individuals... to take personal responsibility for transformation in our own sphere.*

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ing assistance. Two destructive responses are to blame ourselves or to blame others.

In this neutral zone many people are expecting the transformation to happen for them. It is our view that the transforming reality around us requires of each of us to pay attention to that which we can change. Many good child and youth care workers spend so much of their energies fighting the system, the management and one another that the input that they are able to give to the transformation of their own practice is very little. We suggest therefore that each of us will most usefully be able to embrace the transforming reality if we focus on our circles of focus and influence.

But let us look at the staggering number of transformation processes which have taken place in our country over the past few years ...

### **Policy**

A comprehensive conceptual framework setting the course for action was developed in 1996 and accepted by Cabinet as the official policy guiding the transformation of the Child and Youth Care system. This policy is based on 15 practice principles, embraces a developmental approach and stresses the intersectoral nature of services to children and youth at risk and their families.

### **Pilot Projects**

In order to test "new" models of practice for relevance locally, seven pilot projects were put in place and demonstrated extremely positive results. These pilot projects tried out new ways of practising and delivering service in the following areas:

Reception, Assessment and Referral  
 Family Preservation  
 Alternatives in Residential Care  
 Professional Foster Care  
 One-Stop Youth Justice Centre  
 Family Group Conference  
 Phand'ulwazi Life Centre

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*Each of us will most usefully be able to embrace the transforming reality if we focus on our circles of focus and influence.*

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### **Legislative Reforms**

Various legislative reform processes have been put in place to ensure that legislation reflects the approach to service delivery and the philosophy that is encapsulated in the Interim Policy Recommendations.

### **Minimum Standards**

Minimum standards providing a set of bottom line goals for the C&YC system have been developed based on the outcomes of services for young people and their families. They offer a clear set of guidelines on requirements for ensuring the protection of children's rights.

### **Developmental Assessment**

Over 1,300 practitioners nationwide have been trained in this strengths-based assessment process, in order to ensure that young people coming into the system and those already in the system are serviced appropriately – are placed in the correct programme given their particular needs.

### **Project Go**

Project Go was initiated to stop young people moving "deeper" into the system and challenged practitioners to better practice with children and youth at risk at all levels of the system. By placing a requirement on managing young people where they are and unblocking the system to enable young people to move out of places of safety, Project Go "kickstarted" the transformation in all programmes throughout our country.

### **Make a Difference**

This project was initiated to replicate models tested in the pilot projects through providing seed money and developing pilot projects as learning centres.

Twenty-seven new projects have thus been initiated with a bias towards rural areas and historically disadvantaged communities. There are eight family preservation projects, three professional foster care projects, three life centres and eleven youth justice/early intervention projects around the country.

### **Developmental Quality Assurance**

This process has been put in place to assess the developmental needs of organisations and replaces the old "inspection" system. By using an internal assessment and an external objective assessment by a team of people from the field it identifies organisational developmental goals and results in an organisational development plan.

### **B.Tech Degree**

The first degree course in Child and Youth Care was launched this year at Technikon SA. It is a user-friendly tertiary training



course available to students throughout the country through distance learning. Over 200 students have registered for the course and have sent very positive feedback. (See page 19)

**Professional Registration**

The Social Work Amendment Act has been passed which allows the formation of professional boards in occupational groups working in the social service field. Such a professional board would be a statutory regulatory body designed to maintain standards of practice and education in the field.

**Financing Policy**

The new financing policy has been developed which will enable funding of programmes to children and youth at risk at all levels of the framework for services, including prevention and early intervention. It will be implemented and piloted in the near future and opens up possibilities for transformation of facilities into multi-service programmes.

But while we are excited by the potential offered by these changes at broader levels, and are eager to change and make changes, we are faced with an array of challenges that appear insurmountable. We have to take the responsibility to change and be true to the opportunities that have been created for the profession, for us and for families, youth and children. We have to take our first steps.

It is inspirational and important to see where child and youth care workers are already in the transformation process.

- 6000 in Residential Care
- 23 in Foster Care
- 20 in Family Preservation
- 4 in Youth Justice Work
- 10 in developmental education work in the Life Centers

*“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world: indeed it’s the only thing that ever has.” – Margaret Mead*

Some of our South African child and youth care pioneers are worthy inspirations for us all on the cusp of transformation.

**Harold Malgas**

Secure care programmes for young people at risk are a being piloted in the country. The first secure care facility being managed by an NGO is in Kroonstad in the Free State. Harold Malgas, a child and youth care worker has been appointed Manager of the programme. He says, “When I left Rosendal in 1993 my parting words were ‘I want to be a manager of a child care facility in 10 years time’, I have realized this vision in 6 years. The opportunity is overwhelming and wonderful and also an honor. But the journey was not without disappointments and failures and I have learnt to make peace with myself, and learnt that these disappointments have enriched my journey.”



**Sabitha Samjee**

An example of another child and youth care worker who left her home in KwaZulu-Natal to initiate and support the Pro-



fessional Foster Care project in Kimberly. Previous to this move Sabitha left her position as principal child care worker in a children’s home to assist the NACCW as a contract trainer for Project Go. “I learnt in the process of my own transformation the humility in ‘learning being the process of unlearning’ and was motivated by my favourite quotation, “To achieve the possible, I must attempt the impossible. To be as much as I can I must dream of being more.”

**Mandy Goble**

Mandy Goble is the Principal of a childrens home in Durban. She talks about transformation, “The process of transformation is like taking a rollercoaster ride – there are places along the journey where the cart feels stuck, it rocks back and forth and you feel as though you’re never going to move – then suddenly you’re catapulted into motion and even though you were anticipating this move, its like nothing you were prepared for. When you look behind you you can hardly believe how far you’ve come, and when you look ahead, you see how far you have to go. The journey is full of great heights, blinding terror, taking the plunge, and laughter, tears and great gushes of adrenalin – it’s a breathtaking experience.”



**Sister Clare Sangweni**

Sister Clare Sangweni is a sister of the religious order of the Dominican Sisters in the Roman Catholic Church in King Williams



Town. She is also a child and youth care worker. She is responsible with the team at the children's home for the development of the first Life Center in the country. The project called the Phandulwazi Life Center, part of the KWT Childrens home is very successful. She says "I was comfortable where I was. I had just been promoted into a supervisory position and I was happy. I thought I would not cope with the expectations of me and would disappoint everybody. The language issue worried me. I was scared. I had to grow and reach out to others, I had to learn, I had to change my attitude and even change aspects of my personality. I had to speak up, to ask ! It was not easy. I had to reflect on myself and change to accommodate others to be true to myself and to my commitment." Adaptations of the Life Center concept are now operational in three other provinces and Sister Clare assists as trainer and consultant with others on her team.

### **Kathy Scott**

The James house family preservation programme in the informal settle-



ment of Hout Bay is a vibrant example of the team of workers who said "Lets Just Do It !" Under the able leadership of Kathy Scott, the team decided to transform their programme into a family preservation programme and offer an additional service to at risk families in the community. Kathy says, "Taking risks are necessary but very scary. We believed in what we were doing and could see the benefits in every step we took and were able to continue. We had to realize

that some chaos is okay and how to respond in the moment."

I asked the above pioneers as well as the numerous others who have struggled with transformation how they changed, and came up with the following.

### **Very Important Considerations**

*Believe in the transformation process and believe in yourself*  
You have to believe in the need for transformation. You have to believe in yourself and in your ability to make a difference. You need to first apply the strengths perspective to yourself before you can apply it to others.

#### *Be open to learning and un-learning*

You need to struggle with the challenge of the developmental approach. It forces one to look at many things with new eyes, review past successes, unlearn certain knowledge and skills, create space and humility within one for new learning. You need to access and be open to learning opportunities. It is the deeper development of mastery that we have all learnt in the circle of courage model that needs to be lived out in our own lives.

#### *Create a sense of belonging – network*

Networking and keeping in touch with others who are also struggling for renewal of hope and inspiration is helpful. This sense of belonging will prevent us from feeling discouraged and promote a unity of spirit amongst us.

#### *Take risks*

While taking risks is essential in the way forward, it's also very scary. One needs to believe in

what one is doing although the end result is not clearly defined. It is scary to look at the gaps and the number of things in our programmes that are not in place — the job descriptions are inappropriate now, the mission statement doesn't fit what we are doing, we didn't do enough training, we didn't prepare enough, where will the money come from, are we covered legally. One way to cope with this is to deal with the issues that require attention with new eyes and with the support of others who have travelled the path already. Remember that "those who risk themselves for others sakes: to them will be given increasing opportunities for ever greater risks."

#### *Create opportunities to share with others*

The developmental approach has no place for competitiveness. Recognize and utilize the contribution of every single person in the team and value the significance of little contributions.

#### *Accept complexities*

Recognize that there is complexity in transformation and accept this. Don't try to make it easier. Don't looking for quick fixes. Don't always look to others for answers.

#### *See potential*

See potential in situations and people and time things carefully... when to move forward boldly, when to let it all sink in, when to be quiet for a while, when to capture the moment and the energy in the crisis and move on. Pacing things carefully is important.





*Work holistically*

The transformation process needs to be staggered and planned carefully, giving attention to each step along the way and with the awareness of how each step connects with the next step and the big picture. Recognize that every behavior is potentially powerful and move carefully and mindfully. A wink, a nod or a tone of voice can change the course of an entire life. Resiliency and well being is dependent on variety. The strengths of one individual are likely to compensate for the weaknesses in another.

*Accept trial and error learning*

One needs to be open to disappointments and realize that challenges enrich the quality of the journey and strengthens one in the places one need to grow in. Its important to learn and make peace with setbacks. We are often forced to live out the practice principles captured in the policy document. We can make mistakes and we can learn from them.

*Crisis is opportunity for change*

The transformation process invites us to be free to use the energy in crises and grow from them. Many people and organizations only truly demonstrate the extent of their strengths, resilience and commitment to each other in times of crisis.

*Work from a strengths based perspective*

Believe in the transforming possibilities in the strengths based approach. Recognize strengths everywhere and especially in potential – in the potential of ideas, programmes and people. Celebrate strengths and utilize strengths all the time. There is magic in the strengths approach that can only be truly understood when immersing oneself fully in it.

So, in a complex challenge to us is the invitation to engage in new and deeper knowledge, develop new and more responsive skills and become fuller and more spacious in our self-awareness. We are invited to integrate our behavior with the rhythms of the times.

**Conclusion**

Having thus looked at the macro transformation processes and the lives of some of these working in the field we believe it is true to say that South African child and youth care is undoubtedly embracing a transforming reality. Practitioners in the field are through their own personal willingness to transform making real the ideas and ideals expressed in the documents emanating from the macro transformation processes. Individuals through their own real growth are making transformation a reality. They

have come across something intangible but good and are sharing it with others. “Grandma said when you come on something good, first thing to do is share it with whoever you can find; that way, the good spreads out where no telling it will go.”

We hope that each and every conference delegate feels that this transformation is something good, something that offers new vistas of possibility and creativity and that it gets shared as far as possible and in that way becomes a reality for the children, youth and families of our country. □

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Grandma said  
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go.

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# Human Knot

Another Game from Mark Gamble  
of EDUCO AFRICA



**THIS INITIATIVE ALLOWS ONE AN INTRIGUING LOOK INTO THE DYNAMICS OF THE GROUP**

**H**ere's how you play it ...

Get your group to stand in a huddle, not an orderly circle but a tight huddle. Say you've got twelve children, a good number for this game, you want them to be standing tight together. Once they've accomplished this, check in on the group's energy and feelings of safety. I usually quieten down the group at this point before I continue.

The next stage is to get all the children to raise their right arms and to grasp one other person's right hand. You might have to do a bit of management here as there is a tendency to grab frenetically with the result that you have more than one hand grasping another. Once this stage is complete you give the instruction to put up their left hand and repeat the process but by reaching for someone else's left hand.

You then ask them to untangle themselves, without letting go of the hands. The end result is invariably a circle, or perhaps two. On the rare occasion the group gets stuck.

### Some tips ...

This activity requires physical closeness – be sure that your group will manage that. Watch out for aggressive behaviour when they initially huddle-up.



Use verbal and physical prompts to keep the group's behaviour calm and to offer care during the untangling phase.

### What comes out ...

This activity offers insight into group dynamics.

Who took the leadership role?

How were problems solved?

Who didn't feel heard?

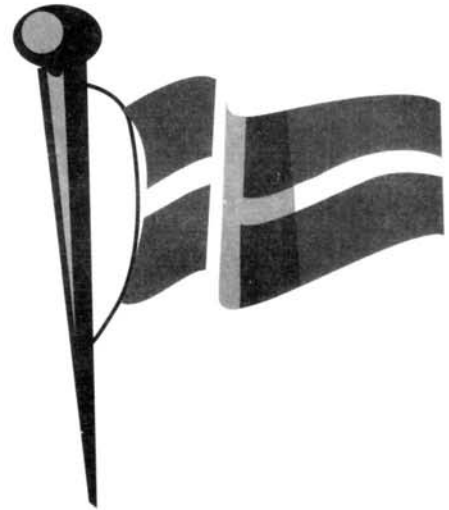
Who felt frustrated?

The human knot can also be used to give a group a sense of achievement.

It also offers an analogy for solving problems and completing team tasks.



# INTERNATIONAL STUDY/OBSERVATION TOUR IN DENMARK



The NACCW has selected ten of its members to participate in a two week study and observation tour to Denmark. This tour has been made possible by the National Federation of Social Educators (Denmark) who will be hosting the participants.

## Claude Vergie

Claude is currently the Director of St. Nicolas Home in Newville, Johannesburg. He thoroughly enjoys his job but feels he needs challenges to broaden his horizons. As Claude is a teacher by profession, he feels that the ability to teach is where his strength lies as well as his compassion and caring for children in care. He has personally been involved in marketing both the Child Care Worker's forum as well as the Administrators Forum. He is also training the BQCC as well as having registered for the B.Tech. degree. He is hoping, from this visit to gain innovative ideas and a sense of creativity which can be implemented in the South African situation. He is specifically interested in creating partnerships between institutions and the community.



ent position for the past five years and has, in that time completed many of the NACCW's specialised courses. He has completed both the BQCC and Supervision courses. As principal he has been responsible for the administration of the children's home, 26 staff members and 132 children as well as the upkeep of all amenities. His main concern is that institutions at all times benefits the child. He feels it is vital that each child is treated as an individual and receives the best possible treatment and that our programs are applicable to our children and in line with world standards. He is very excited about seeing how our facilities compare to those of Denmark and what we can learn from their way of doing things.

as well as the BQCC.

She is hoping to get ideas on how to upgrade their resources in the region. She wishes to observe how forums are run in Denmark.

As chairperson of the Residential Child Care Forum in a rural isolated region she intends sharing her experience gained from the study tour with all residential care facilities in her region.

## Mvuyo

**Manyungwana**  
For the past three years Mvuyo was a senior child and youth care worker at the Galashewe Place of Safety. He has completed the BQSC, the BQCC and the course on Professional Foster Care as well as the certificate in Child and Youth Care from Unisa. His field of specialisation is in Youth Justice work and he advocates for the rights of young people in the Justice system – acting as a guardian for young people appearing in courts. He is also involved in the Professional Foster Care project as well as in peace education programmes and recently as a volunteer in working with gangs.



## Nozuko

**Nonkonyana**  
Nozuko is employed as a Residential Social Worker at Holy Cross Children's Home in Cala in the Eastern Cape. She is also very involved with the Project GO Task team of the Umtata Region. Nozuko has completed a Consultative Supervision course



## Desmond de Wet

Desmond, principal of the R C. Children's Home in Pofadder, has been in his pres-



He hopes to learn about youth development programmes and then share and implement this knowledge back in his organisation and community.

**Alfred Mosimane Rens**



Before starting out in child care three years ago, Alfred was in teaching. He had decided that he would like to broaden his education training by working in the welfare field. He has been at the Galashewe Place of Safety for three years working as a senior child and youth care worker. In March this year he moved to Probation Services. His is looking forward to this tour and hopes to learn from them how they deal with culturally sensitive issues concerning young people. He is also keen to interact with their policy makers. He also looks forward to finding out what emphasis is placed on practical knowledge versus experience and training gained in the field.

**Nomsa Mandoyi**



Nomsa started as a Child Care Worker in 1989 in King William's Town Children's Home. The children's home combined with another in 1992 and then she worked with teenage boys. With the bigger boys she had to learn to let the children participate in drawing up the program. She learned a lot from them – especially in sport. I never played

rugby, but participated in both soccer and cricket. At that time she was also appointed secretary of the child and youth care worker's forum and did a lot of interpretation of procedures into Xhosa. "In 1996 I moved back to the KWT campus and completed two Outward Bound courses. The one involved physical challenges – abseiling, rock-climbing, canoeing! It was very scary, challenging and exciting and I felt great for having done it." She completed BQCC, did the Training for Trainers, Consultative Supervision courses and made use of every training opportunity on offer! When Phandulwazi Life Centre started she moved there as a community worker involving liaison with families and building relationships with the community.

When she started the community work she had no training but she just consulted with a wide range of people – whoever was available and applied the knowledge she gained. She has just been appointed to the position of residential care manager at the King William's Town Child and Youth Care centre. She feels challenged and excited about this job and also proud of these achievements. Her vision is to keep the child care workers excited about the job that they do and keep focussed on the task of developing the young people in their care. "My heart is in the field and I like young people –

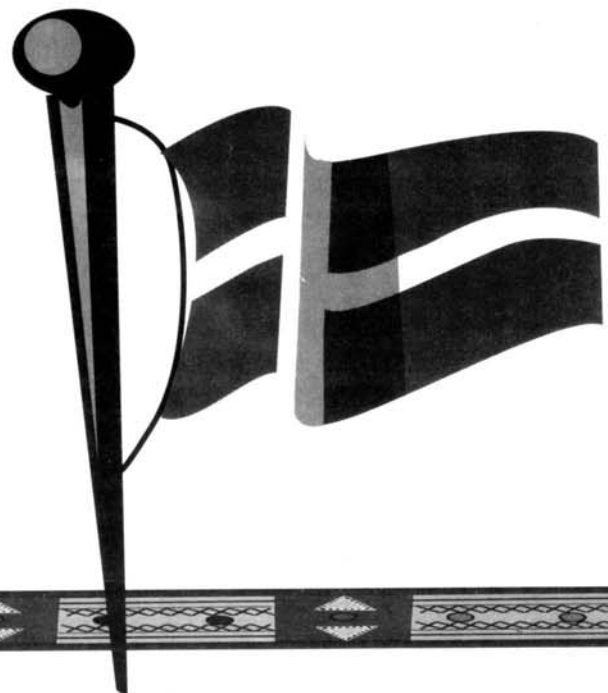
this keeps me feeling happy and positive.

The trip to Denmark will give me a vision of what is happening in another very different place. It will enable me to see what other developments can be put in place in our centre and our region. In child care one can learn every day and in going to see other programs in a different part of the world I will be able to compare and improve what I do and what we does at the Centre."

**Jeanny Karth**



As a staff member of the NACCW Jeanny is very involved with training. She is currently working nationally as a facilitator focussing on Secure Care. She is passionate about her work and is excited at being part of a new approach to dealing with troubled challenging young people. Especially exciting is seeing the development of the new Secure Care Centre at Kroonstad which has just opened. Jeanny does miss working with the children





themselves which is what she was doing when she was a child and youth care worker at St Michael's Children's Home for seven years. Here she was the educational and recreational enrichment co-ordinator and enjoyed setting up and teaching a two-year life skills programme. She also supervised the half-way house for young people on their way back into the community. Jeanny then spent a year in America on an international exchange programme (ILEX) and worked in a children's home where she gained valuable experience and insight. Her placement was in an institution outside New York where she met and worked with a Danish educator, Frank Nielsen. She is very excited to view first hand a system that Frank exemplified in his work as an educator. It is clearly an approach we can learn much from.

**Cecil Wood**

Cecil is based in Port Elizabeth and has been with the NACCW working as a trainer/consultant on a contract basis since August 1995. He has trained various courses as part of Project Upgrade and has been given a number of exciting projects to do since joining NACCW. Some of these include assessing children with behavioural difficulties, conducting the Training for Trainers and Developmental Assessment Course, tutoring for the Technikon, lecturing for Unisa (Child Care Certificate) and consulting and training at various Schools of Industry – specially in behaviour management. Cecil has also written



training material – a module of the BQSC and the Activity Programming short course. At present he is part of the Project Go team in the Eastern Cape as the residential support co-ordinator. He is also part of the national Developmental Quality Assurance (DQA) team which means that he has visited a number of children's homes and been able to assess their strengths and needs. He is very keen to compare South African Child and Youth Care with European approaches and to bring back some exciting ideas which can be adapted to our situation. As he has never been overseas before, this will be a novel experience for him. He is grateful for the opportunity to learn more in the field.

**Sbongile Manyati**

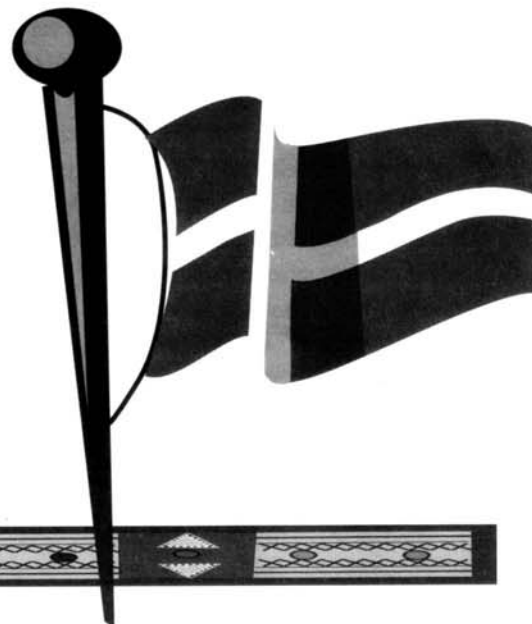
Sbo joined the NACCW staff team in January 1994. Prior to that she worked at a reform school for girls for seven years. This is where she came into contact with the Child and Youth Care field. Although she had a social work background, she realised that she was ill equipped to work with youth in those difficult circumstances. She then enrolled for the BQCC, PPA, and Supervision courses. At this time she connected with the NACCW and attended informative meetings which sparked further interest and involvement in the



child care field. She then joined the staff of NACCW to enable her to work more closely with child and youth care workers. She hopes that this visit to Denmark will enrich her knowledge and positively influence her participation in the child & youth care system in South Africa.

**Jackie Winfield**

Jackie entered the field as a child and youth care worker at Ethelbert Children's Home in 1988. After five years she started working at the NACCW. Since then, she has been involved in various aspects of the NACCW's work. For the past year or two, her primary focus has been on the development of the B.Tech degree with Technikon South Africa. Jackie also lectures at Technikon Natal and is involved in tutoring of Technikon South Africa students. She is looking forward to visiting Danish programmes and learning more about models of working with troubled young people so that important aspects may be adapted for use in training and practice of South African child and youth care workers. □



## IMPORTANT WORK

It's a question of priorities

The last to board the plane from Johannesburg to Cape Town were a woman and three children. "Oh please don't sit next to me," I thought. "I've got so much work to do." But a moment later an eleven-year-old girl and her nine-year-old brother were climbing over me while the woman and a four-year-old boy sat behind. Almost immediately the older children started bickering while the child behind intermittently kicked my seat. Every few minutes the boy would ask his sister, "Where are we now?" "Shut up!" she'd snap and a new round of squirming and whining would ensue. "Children have no concept of important work," I thought, quietly resenting my predicament. Then in my mind a voice as clear as a song simply said, *Love them*. "These children are brats, and I've got important work to do," I countered to myself. My inner voice simply replied, *Love them as if they were your children*. Having heard the "Where-are-we-now?" question repeatedly, I turned to the in-flight magazine map, in spite of my important work. I explained our flight path, dividing it into quarter-hour flight increments and estimated when we would land in Cape Town. Soon they were telling me about their trip to Johannesburg to see their father who was in the hospital. As we talked they asked about flying, navigation, science and grown-ups' views about life. The time passed quickly and my "important" work was left undone. As we were preparing to land, I asked how their father was doing now. They grew quiet and the boy simply said, "He died." "Oh, I'm so sorry." "Yes, me too. But it's my little brother I'm worried about. He's taking it really hard." I suddenly realised what we'd really been talking about was the most important work we ever face: living, loving and growing — in spite of heart-break. When we said good-bye in Cape Town the boy took my hand and thanked me for being his "aeroplane teacher". And I thanked him for being mine.

**Dan S. Bagley**

adapted from *A Cup of Chicken Soup for the Soul* – Health Communications, Florida

## A TRIBUTE TO BRIAN



We pay tribute to Brian Gannon, founder and first Headmaster (1965-1967) of the St. Nicolas Home, a true professional and "Giant" in the field of Child and Youth Care.

Brian Gannon and Derek James acquired the Nokuphila Hospital and converted the hospital into The St. Nicolas Home, the first place for Coloured boys from the streets of Johannesburg. The following are extracts which appeared in the local newspaper at that time:

### **June 1963 – Rand Daily Mail**

*Brian Gannon and Derek James two young Housemasters at St. Georges Home planned to give up their work to run a home on identical lines to St. Georges for the care of Coloured boys in Johannesburg.*

### **March 1965 – Rand Daily Mail**

*Oppenheimer Comes To The Rescue  
A desperate appeal by Brian and Derek secured a R45,000,00 donation from Mr Harry Oppenheimer. This donation saved a dream which Brian and Derek had worked towards for four years.*

### **April 1965 – Rand Daily Mail**

*St. Nicolas Home For Boys, a haven for young coloured boys in need of care was opened in Johannesburg's Coloured Western Township yesterday.*

The St. Nicolas Home was then born and today, thirty-four years later, the Home continues to serve the community and is ready to embrace the Transformation of the Child and Youth Care System. We salute Brian who has worked tirelessly in this field of Child and Youth Care. His contribution to the field is invaluable and he has in some strange way adequately prepared us to take on the challenges which lie ahead. Many of us in the field have met Brian through the Child and Youth Care Journal. The many articles he has written have been both inspiring and enlightening. The boys at The St. Nicolas Home, together with The Executive Committee and Staff, salute him. We congratulate Brian on a fine innings. We know that he will continue on this journey developing other areas of the Child and Youth Care Field. Thank you Brian.  
Hamba Khale.

**Claude Vergie**

Principal St Nicolas Children's Home

# SAFETY STARTS WITH THE SPIRIT OF UBUNTU

Reprinted from *Children First*, April/May 1999

**Buyi Mbambo, a social worker and community development practitioner, draws on the experience of her own childhood and of her work, to give her personal view on the creation of caring and safe communities for children.**

**W**hen I was growing up I felt safe. I could walk everywhere by myself. I could go to the forest to collect wood. I could go to the river, even if I was the only one on the long, winding footpath. The only things I was afraid of were imaginary ghosts, wild rats and maybe the cattle I would cross paths with.

The sight of a human being, an adult, was a welcome one, because whatever came from them was filled with love and concern. Yes, adults would be angry that I was on my own late in the afternoon; they would wait for me and help put the bucket on my head. They would make sure I took the safe route home; sometimes they would shout for people to meet me half way. A lot has changed for today's children.

Families have been broken up by a number of factors, the culture and spirit of concern and high regard for children, and for one another, has been destroyed. Children and families live more and more in isolation and there is a general hesitancy about becoming "involved" in the affairs of your neighbour, even if your involvement could save a life. This is a great tragedy for African children in particular, since their greatest guardians have always included people outside the family.

The spirit of caring for others does still exist shown by the various "Community Achiever" awards. If the efforts of many individuals in the community were brought together to improve the quality of life of children, we would end up with a very different community: a caring community. It is the collaborative vision and efforts of different people who make a conscious decision to put children first in whatever they do, that make a caring community.

People who work with children complain about the difficulty of working in a "developmental" way with impoverished communities. The main point of this article is that caring is a cultural value and has little to do with

the economy.

In my opinion and experience, caring knows no class, no race and defies the state of the economy. There is a perception among professionals that poor communities do not care because they do not have money and resources. This perception is promulgated by some western literature which claims that poor communities are apathetic and lethargic – among other labels. My experience in working with poor communities completely contradicts this professional logic. I have witnessed the utmost caring in communities which have nothing in terms of material resources and infrastructure. They tell me that caring has first to come from the heart; caring is a virtue, a value and it has little to do with material means. That is why you will find poor people who will open their doors to hungry children and needy families and share with them what little they have. That is why there are so many daycare centres for children, which do not receive any financial support from the state, where care-givers go every day and look after children without pay. This is the spirit of *ubuntu*. It cannot be bought and it cannot be faked; it exists in the minds and the hearts of the peo-



ple. It is one of the greatest strengths and resources that we have. Having money is a plus, because it makes a lot of things possible and easy, but not having it does not stop people from caring for children and for one another.

Let me share with you a few examples of such caring communities.

### Everyone's children

A township in the Natal Midlands was severely hit by the political violence of the 1980's and many children were left without parents. One of the most striking things that happened was that neighbours and friends took in children without any question. I was amazed to see orphaned children playing in the streets and going on with life as if nothing had happened. The two-and four-roomed houses were packed with people. In some households there were close to 20 people, including children who would have had nowhere to go, were it not for the spirit of caring – of *ubuntu* – that prevailed in the community. These children and indeed the whole community, were doubtless traumatised by what happened, but the resilience and caring I observed left me filled with hope and high regard for human nature.

The social worker in the community was amazed that no children were reported parentless and nobody applied for a foster care, or other grant.

### Neighbourhood watch

In one informal settlement, the men set up a sort of neighbourhood watch for children. They kept a look out for children who seemed distressed, who played in the streets late, who appeared to be hungry, or seemed neglected. Their efforts uncovered a lot of children in the community who were staying alone for the whole week, while their mothers worked as domestic workers in town. These men made it their business to improve the circumstances of these children and to get people to help; they took some children to clinics and connected parents with resources to help them.

### Seeing good in the youth

Young people have a lot to offer in terms of building caring communities. I had the privilege of working with a community worker who instilled a sense of responsibility in young people in the village. These youngsters were regarded as misfits in the community. Although they had not committed any offence, they were not given a chance, either at home or at school and had nothing to look forward to – until they decided to start a community clean-up campaign. Eventually they started looking for elderly people who had no-one to help clean their yards. They visited the old people, cleaned their yard and gardens, and even their windows. They used their talents for singing and dancing to stage small concerts to raise funds for the local creche. This took place in a context of material deprivation. All that was needed was someone



Block Print by CANTON BEZHUIDENHOUT, Eersterust, Pretoria (Youth Development Outreach.)  
The print was created during the recent workshops in Gauteng with the Ipopeng Project.

who cared to give young people direction and to affirm their caring spirit.

These are examples of unconditional sharing but there is an urgency for re-discovering, in all our communities, our traditional values of caring, living together in harmony, of unity of neighbourhood, as a community and as the human race, for the sake of our children. Those who work with children and young people face the challenge of learning from these traditional, non-academic practices and incorporating them into their daily practice. Although the spirit of *ubuntu* is fast disappearing, owing to a number of factors, there are still people and groups who care. We can learn from them, build on what they do, and show *ubuntu* exists; *ubuntu* is still a virtue and *ubuntu* promotes positive outcomes for children. This is the bedrock for a safe, prosperous and peaceful nation.

Many of the professionals who write off poor communities have no first-hand experience of working with them. We know little or nothing about the people we are supposed to serve. We look at the material deprivation of people, make assumptions about their abilities and “disabilities” and conclude that because they do not have roads, or water, or brick houses, their spirit is dead. It is obvious to me that people do cope with their conditions; they have their ways of rearing children and resolving family disputes. It is just as obvious that their ways are not in the books we have to study at academic institutions.

We have taken their practices and strengths – their traditions and cultural heritage from them and entrenched dominant west-

ern beliefs and practices. The arrogance of western education is astounding; we develop programmes for the communities without bothering to check whether they are acceptable, culturally, to the people, or whether they enhance the capacities the people have.

Part of the jargon of the development language of the 1990’s is that we “build the capacity” of the people. If we believe that people know something before we get to them, how about “deepening” rather than “building” their capacity? We are still trapped in the dominant deficiency model, while using politically correct concepts of “people-driven” efforts, “participation” of children and communities and “partnerships” with families and communities. The question is do we develop our capacity to understand the competencies of communities before we go out to develop *their* capacities?

Unless our capacity is developed, we cannot deepen the capacity of the people we work with. Getting there is not an easy path. It requires us to seriously re-examine our values and to put aside our western theories and learn from the real experts: children, young people, the elders, the physically and mentally challenged, the poor and all the marginalised sectors of our community.

I am not advocating a “romanticised” view of poverty, or the ex-



ploitation of the goodwill of the people. I am saying that we should uncover and identify the acts of goodwill that prevail and use them as strengths for the protection and development of our children. This could radicalise the way the government funds programmes for children; it would acknowledge and make use of what already exists – what people are already committed to – instead of starting new initiatives which have no connections with what already exists. A new attitude calls for the recognition of people’s cultural practices and the use of culture to enhance programmes with children. How often do we listen to the voices of the elders in so far as child-rearing is concerned? How often do we recognise that people’s cultures are their strengths and resources and we need to learn from them? How often do we incorporate people’s

cultural practices (not just the occasional traditional dance) and appropriate cultural problem-solving strategies in programmes?

Unless we consider these factors and start to look differently at how we work in communities, time will run out for our children. In addition to the legacy of poverty, alienation, abuse and violence which our children have inherited, we are facing a monster in the form of HIV/AIDS. This pandemic is too big for any individual or government; no amount of money will be enough to conquer it. It needs everybody, young and old, to hold hands together. I believe that our biggest resource in fighting this monster lies internally, in the reclamation of the spirit of *ubuntu* in every individual. Families will need all kinds of support; children will need adult and peer support. That is why it is imperative to begin now – it is not too late to rekindle the spirit of *ubuntu*, our heritage from our fore-fathers.

We have a responsibility as adults to teach young people to be caring citizens so that they can carry the legacy of *ubuntu* forward. This can be done through a number of efforts aimed at young people. Some initiatives already exist on a small scale.

- Recognising that these young people are our partners in creating safe communities for children and that they have a wealth of knowledge, skills, and talents and that they can teach us different ways of doing things, is the first important step.
- The second step is reassessing community resources and

assets and redefining deprivation. People have skills and assets that they can share, as well as beliefs, practices and strategies that they use to address issues that affect their lives.

- The third step is engaging people in a collaborative and meaningful way, forming a real partnership with them at neighbourhood and local level, creating a unitary vision and acting together to create safe environments for children.

In doing this, we need to recognise that there are no correct ways of doing things; only different ways, of which we may not be aware. We can look at a different way of working with people that builds on what is already there. We have to learn different ways of engaging with children, families and communities, instead of intervening.

I am convinced that we have nothing to lose, and a lot to gain, by adopting this approach. We need to establish forums, together with the communities, to discuss these ideas. We can teach each other, in a partnership, how to reach our goal of raising safe and happy children. All these efforts are a way of fulfilling an African belief that: "It takes the whole village to raise a child". All of us have a role in raising an African Child. □

**CYC-NET**  
 is an e-mail child and youth care discussion forum with nearly 400 members world-wide — students, on-line workers, trainers, administrators — which you can join by sending mail to [cyc-net@icon.co.za](mailto:cyc-net@icon.co.za). It is also an informative web site which you are invited to visit at [www.pretext.co.za/cyc-net](http://www.pretext.co.za/cyc-net)

**CYC-ONLINE**  
 is a monthly on-line magazine for child and youth care workers around the world which you may view at [www.pretext.co.za/cyc-net/cyconline.html](http://www.pretext.co.za/cyc-net/cyconline.html)

**The International Child and Youth Care Network**

MOVIE REVIEW

get real

Ben Silverton, Brad Gorton, Shelott Britain, Stacy Ahart and Kate McEneaney



There is nothing wrong with being in love... That is unless you're a sixteen year old gay, living a secret life.

"get real" is honest and insightful and does not lose touch with the sensitive issues confronting and experienced by gay teenagers today.

The importance of being honest is the emphasis of Patric Wilde's screenplay, which is based on his own life experience. This movie aims at giving teachers, parents and care givers a greater sensitivity towards the world of homosexual adolescence and the issues with which they are faced daily.



At the beginning of the movie, Steve, looks like a typical heterosexual teenager, but, secretly,

he leads a tormented life, trapped in a world that refuses to accept his alternate lifestyle. It is his search for acceptance that drives him, into potentially dangerous, short term, indiscriminate relationships.

Like any normal teenager, Steve falls in love...with the head boy. The conditional yet mutual love is publicly suppressed, until it inevitably erupts in the most public of forums, the school hall.

This movie is thought-provoking and challenges us as care givers to examine our own perceptions of homosexuality and the importance of teaching the value of honest relationships.

There is nothing wrong with falling in love...

Adina Menhard



## TECHNIKON NATAL



### BACHELOR TECHNOLOGY: CHILD & YOUTH CARE DEVELOPMENT

Option 1: Child & Youth Care

Option 2: Youth Work

This is a full time course offered at Technikon Natal

#### YEAR 1 - NO EXIT LEVEL

##### CHILD AND YOUTH CARE

Child and Youth Care 1  
Applied Development 1  
Communication Skills  
Optional Subject Number 1\*  
Optional Subject Number 2\*

##### YOUTH WORK

Youth Work 1  
Applied Development 1  
Communication Skills 1  
Sociology for Child & Youth Dev. 1  
Community Dev. Facilitation 1

#### YEAR 2 - EXIT WITH NATIONAL HIGHER CERTIFICATE

##### CHILD AND YOUTH CARE

Child and Youth Care II  
Applied Development II  
Optional Subject Number 1\*  
Optional Subject Number 2\*

##### YOUTH WORK

Youth Work II  
Applied Development II  
Social Psychology  
Optional Subject Number 1

#### YEAR 3 - EXIT WITH NATIONAL DIPLOMA

##### CHILD AND YOUTH CARE

Child and Youth Care III  
Applied Development III  
Specialisation Subject Number 1\*  
Specialisation Subject Number 2\*

##### YOUTH WORK

Youth Work III  
Applied Development III  
Specialisation Subject Number 1\*  
Specialisation Subject Number 2\*

#### YEAR 4 - EXIT WITH B. TECHNOLOGY

##### CHILD AND YOUTH CARE

Child and Youth Care IV  
Applied Development IV  
Research Methodology\*\*  
Specialisation Subject Number 1\*  
Specialisation Subject Number 2\*

##### YOUTH WORK

Youth Work IV  
Applied Development IV  
Research Methodology\*\*  
Specialisation Subject Number 1\*  
Specialisation Subject Number 2\*

## SANCA

INFORMATION  
& RESOURCE  
CENTRE



**Do you know that there is a specialist library which has information and resources in the field of Substance Abuse?**

It also claims to be the only one of its kind in Southern Africa (south of Kenya)

This facility known as **SANCA Information & Resource Centre (SIRC)** is based in Auckland Park, Johannesburg.

It serves primarily the SANCA Alcohol & Help Centres nationwide as well as Associated Members in South Africa. But the bulk of the users are very varied, such as scholars, teachers, social workers, nurses, community workers, doctors, journalists, psychologists, etc who have access to this facility. It operates as both a reference & lending facility & SIRC is a member of the Inter Library Loan System. It operates as a one person library, however networking is an important component of this position.

#### What can you obtain from SIRC?

- Books (Book List available on Request)
- Journals (Contents page service available)
- Printed material-posters (Price List/Order form available on request)
- Videos for loan (Video List available on request)

In addition to this information there is a lot more besides:

Literature searches on various topics, consultations, a Newsletter as well as a Newsclipping service.

SIRC is based on a fee based system, so charges are rendered on some of the above mentioned services.

There is support to establish this facility as a National Clearinghouse on Substance Abuse for South Africa. Until this is a reality & funding is received, it will have to remain as a cost recovery centre.

For further information please contact:

**Judith Shopley**  
**Manager: SANCA Information & Resource Centre**  
**Tel: 011-482 1070 Fax: 011-482 7187**  
**email: sanca@sn.apc.org**

## KIMBERLEY INAUGURATION

### From Mindshift to Mindshift

Kimberley is proud to announce that they have now been recognized as a full region having developed from a sub-region of the NACCW. This decision was taken at the 12th Biennial Conference in Johannesburg. Child and youth care workers have taken quantum leaps in their professional development in the Northern Cape.



Part of the audience at the ceremony.

Thirty-two child and youth care workers attended the inauguration ceremony of this historical event on the 7 August 1999 at the Mimosa Place of Safety. The highlight was the presentation of Consultative Supervision certificates to ten child and youth care workers and the Training of Trainers certificates to seven professionals.

Ashley Theron graced this pompous ceremony as the keynote speaker. Heads of Departments also paid their respects to child and youth care workers and congratulations were given for reaching this point of "coming of age".

**Sabitha Samjee**



*Students comment on embarking on the B. Tech Child and Youth Development course ...*

I am excited about finally learning what I need to know (in a structured manner) for my job. It is very different from simply learning from streetworkers. I feel much more confident already about my abilities. – **Philomena**

This is a new beginning that has brought about profound inspiration, pride and unfailing optimism in my everyday dealings with troubled children and youth. – **Vincent**

One never has enough knowledge – further study is the way to our future. This course is a great way for child and youth workers to empower themselves and become professionals. – **Lynne**

It's been a long wait – now it is a long way to go, but it is already worthwhile. – **Alfred**

I am new in child and youth care, and I am very pleased to be part of the course. Most important for me is the development of our country and especially the child and the youth. Through this course, and so far I gain more knowledge and develop my personal strength. I've found it very interesting and enjoyable. – **Dora**

## OOSTERLAND CHILDREN'S HOME

A residential child care and development centre invites applications for the position of

### PRINCIPAL

The ideal applicant should preferably:

- Hold a recognized post-graduate qualification in Human Sciences (and preferably the Diploma in Child Care Administration)
- Have experience at management level in inter alia: Administration, personnel, human resource development, child and public relations, negotiation skills, fund raising and financial planning
- Be proficient in English
- Embrace the values of the Child Care Transformation

**Closing date for application: 30 September 1999**

Please apply in writing, with CV to: The Principal, Oosterland Children's Home, P O Box 206 Despatch, 6219 Tel: (041) 9331120, Fax: (041) 9331207

## SITUATION WANTED

Child care worker has completed the UNISA certificate in Child and Youth Care and has done volunteer work at Tutela Place of Safety seeks employment in Gauteng.

**Please contact Gladys Mokgokolo on 082-764-8091**



# The Walker Home and School

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## WORKING IN AMERICA

The Walker home and school is situated in Needham, Massachusetts.

We are a therapeutic day and residential program serving children aged three through thirteen.

Our program is offering a practical training opportunity for periods up to eighteen months. During this time, individuals will be trained in all the preventative and behavioural techniques employed at our agency. The candidates will receive all the benefits associated with the position of child behaviour specialist. This includes a competitive salary, a comprehensive benefit package, and a generous vacation schedule.

Our agency will incur the costs of your application and handle the relevant immigration paperwork.

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## REQUIREMENTS

Recent college grad, or currently enrolled in a university, professional school etc.

Speak, read, and write English.

Medically fit.

Be at least eighteen.

Have no criminal record.

Have a valid drivers permit.

For further information, please submit a one-page resume/CV to either of the following two e-mail addresses:

**[brettyson@aol.com](mailto:brettyson@aol.com) or [dilia25@aol.com](mailto:dilia25@aol.com)**

or

Also feel free to find out more about our organisation through our web page at

**[www.walkerschool.org](http://www.walkerschool.org)**