

Ukuthasa News

Spring 2018

Emyezweni says goodbye to Rachel Allen



Ukuthasa and Emyezweni say goodbye to Rachel Allen as she departs Emyezweni School for new adventures. Rachel has been working at Emyezweni School for more than 14 years and has decided it was time to return to the UK. The school has benefitted immensely from her talent, passion and commitment to the school during this time.

Rachel first came out to South Africa in 2002 with a group from her church for 16 days, which were spent mainly working at the school (then called Nomfaneleko). At that time, Deb Gregory, former principal at Emyezweni, had just started to set up the Grade R class and she was looking at getting another teacher in to set up the Nursery class.

The following year, Rachel worked hard raising funds to be able to visit the school again, and was able to join the school team for a few months at the end of 2003. It was during this time that she realised that she wanted to come back again in the following year, and the rest is history!

During these 14 years working for the school, Rachel has had a various array of responsibilities, from being a teacher to different age groups, to being the Special Needs Co-ordinator, taking on managerial roles as part of the governing body and administrative duties when and where required. There is no doubt that Rachel will be greatly missed. "The Lwandle community, and more specifically the children, have benefitted hugely from having her in their community. She will

always be a friend to many", says Daniela Fredericks, Emyezweni's Principal. A local mum says that "she was a grandmother to Njongo (her son)" while another member of staff tells us that she had become a good friend to her and her family.

"I have really loved working at the school and am very grateful for the support I have had in South Africa from the staff, parents, children, Governing Body and Urban Voice Church. There have been some difficult situations that we have had to face but they are far outweighed by the many positive ones! It has been a privilege to be part of an amazing school for nearly 15 years and to be involved in so many children's lives", says Rachel.

Once she is back in the UK, Rachel hopes to continue working with children, particularly with those with special needs, and supporting families. Everyone at Ukuthasa and Emyezweni wishes her the very best in this new chapter of her life.

Projects in the Spotlight

Sport coaching and character building at the Helderberg Academy



Since it's beginning, the **Helderberg Academy's** main goal has been to reach young people from disadvantaged communities through sport. By giving them the opportunity to engage in sporting activities, the team ensures that the boys and girls stay away from gangsterism, drugs and alcohol, a constant threat in certain communities. However, the Academy not only coaches them in how to play a particular sport, but also teaches them life mentoring skills and leadership development.

In line with this, the last Holiday Club's theme was "Superheros" to demonstrate "**Service**", looking at what true service is and developing how to use it for others. The children enjoyed playing volleyball, athletics team relay and touchball, along other games like monkey ball, head catch and more. Day one was for girls and a total of 31 attended the club, while day two was for boys and 41 attended that day, which makes a total of 72 children taking part!

Each child learnt about service as they discussed what service truly is and everyone agreed that service is to lay yourself down to others regardless of who they are or what they may have done, and that service is putting others first in every situation.

"It was brilliant to see how children developed an understanding about how to serve one another fully and how to serve their community to the best of their ability", says **Beth Veenendaal**, who heads up the Helderberg Academy.

During the last few weeks, the children have been discussing topics such as "**Connectedness**", focussing on the integration and respect between different people groups; "**Success**" and how to handle it together with failure and "**Team Work**", focussing on the importance of patience and how more experienced players can help those with less experience. Recently, the children have learned about how to make good decisions in their everyday life and what the consequences of making good or bad decisions are.

With the increase in gang violence in recent months, it is very important that boys and girls have good values to hold onto, and the **Helderberg Academy** provides a safe environment for the children to develop and grow in. As a parent of one of the kids in Macassar said, "Monday and Thursday the kids are off the streets. They know what time to be at the field and they have a positive thing to do. Otherwise, they would be on the streets, looking for something wrong to do".

The Helderberg Academy are looking for someone with a passion for young people and sport to be part of the team from July 2018 until July 2019. If you are interested or know someone that would like to take a gap year in South Africa, please email Beth at beth@helderbergacademy.co.za.

Get involved...



Get a Glimpse...

Choices School Education Programme



We have been talking to **Mariette Oostenbrink**, team leader of the **Choices School Programme**, to find out more about the project, which visits between 600 and 1000 teenagers every year in the Helderberg area in South Africa.

The **Choices School Programme** was set up in 1997 as a prevention strategy against teenage pregnancies. Since then, the purpose of the programme has been to educate children between 12 and 14 years of age so they can make healthy decisions about their relationships and encourage them to develop self-esteem, self-respect and self-understanding. The programme also aims to present facts to pupils in a sensitive way regarding the risks of casual sexual behaviour and enables them to understand their own sexuality, as well as a basic knowledge of HIV and AIDS and the impact of the virus in South Africa, particularly amongst the youth.

The Programme, which currently has 6 trained volunteer facilitators, takes a holistic approach to enable young people to make wise choices regarding their education, future careers, community involvement and relationships. The facilitators also try to teach that everyone has a choice and has to face the consequences of their actions.

Regarding the response from pupils so far, Mariette says: "Initially, the pupils are uncertain of what to expect during the session, as they feel ashamed to talk about sensitive issues. However, by the end of the 6 (or 7) presentations, they are more open, are more willing to take part and ask very sensitive questions, which shows the trust they've grown for the facilitators. In the end, they all enjoy it!".

Over the last twenty one years, the **Choices School Programme** has been able to educate thousands of teenagers about making wise sexual decisions and to think about their future goals and lives. However, teenage pregnancy in South Africa is still growing rapidly among school age pupils, which leads to teenage girls having to leave their studies in order to look after their babies; according to the 2015 annual school survey, over 15,000 pupils fell pregnant during the academic year.

If you would like to support this project, please contact laia@ukuthasa.org.

Ukuthasa is a small charity that relies on the support of a network of donors. We are fortunate and continually encouraged by the innovative ways in which funds are raised. If you would like to fundraise for us, you can create sponsorship pages through [virginmoneygiving](http://virginmoneygiving.com) and give.net.

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www.give.net:

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Talk to us: For further enquiries, correspondence updates or feedback - please contact Laia Martinez at:



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