

touching hearts & bringing play to life



July 2019 - Uthando Project Newsletter

Greetings to all our wonderful dollmakers and supporters far and wide. What an ever-expanding circle of love we have in Uthando Project, with beautiful dolls coming in from all over the globe. To our Uthando family old and new, thank-you immensely for your selfless contribution to Uthando and the joy you bring to the children who receive our dolls.

NEWS FROM KZN

DOLLS BRINGING JOY

Nothing delights us more than seeing the Uthando dolls in the arms of the beautiful children of KZN. These wonderful photos were sent to us by Susanne at TREE - the training manager was overjoyed to distribute the dolls to the children of the Well of Life Creche. Can you see any of your creations?

We would also like to share this wonderful email message from Jill Frow at Family Literacy Group:

"Recently we have received two consignments of dolls – one from Tasmania and one from Perth. We



feel almost overwhelmed by your generosity. We cannot help feeling that the contents get more and more beautiful as the years go by. Is it our imagination or are you all growing in ability to create almost 'living' little characters who come with more and more exciting adornments. We just love the blankets, the babies on backs, the bags, the balls, the bright colours... We are inclined to fall in love with each doll that comes out of the bag.

Last week Pierre handed over small family member dolls to Jackie for the Therapy centre, and a set of finger puppets to the interns who are running a new project called The Friendship Bench. The interns 'man' the bench at school break, and are available for any child who needs to come and chat or just be near someone.

We have just completed a staff training session in which we used some of the balls to keep everyone awake and promote sharing.

I am very happy to be given the 'go ahead' by Pierre to take 3 bags of dolls to Mozambique where they have experienced the worst cyclone ever known in the Southern hemisphere. Many homes and lives have been lost and children separated



from their parents, not even knowing if they will ever see them again. I dare to believe that the cuddly dolls and teddies, for these children will be a consolation in their distress. Julie we have mostly used the soft toys for this purpose. I personally popped one or two toys or balls (more colourful than ever!) in the hampers that were made up at our church. I carefully kept aside the puppets that were in the same bag because I know they are going to be so useful in our literacy group"



communities. Jill will travel on to Tasmania where Irene Swan and team have planned several meetings with enthusiastic anticipation from the dollmakers.

The theme of their presentations is **"Children in KwaZulu Natal. Thrive or Survive?"** If you would like to find out about or register for events which require registration, please reply to info@uthandoproject.org as soon as possible.



SUNSHINE CHILDREN'S HOME

Submitted by Georgia Efford

When our KwaZulu Natal friend Mabongi Mtshali visited WA last

September she described the enveloping poverty and lack of response from her little neighbour, Okuhle, already a street-wise 8 year old. Mabongi wanted to encourage him to be happy at school and actually learn. She was willing to encourage him as she has done with so many people in her life. Results so far may not be very positive and his granny has to now vacate the house with four other families in it.



On the other hand, Mabongi has regularly visited Sunshine House, a local orphanage, to teach a few girls how to sew their clothes by hand. From her stories of these girls' lives many Uthando dollmakers wanted to provide funds for both Okuhle and the girls sewing skills. Mabongi was able to buy a new sewing machine and overlocker as well as a new school uniform for Okuhle. It hasn't been easy for Mabongi to gain access to Okuhle's teacher despite his mother being in Durban, and there is just the first show of interest from staff at Sunshine House. Giving and receiving support is not always easy.



NEWS FROM OUR DOLLMAKERS

FREMANTLE FUN

These wonderful dolls were made by the group at Multicultural Futures, who meet on Mondays at the centre in High Street, Fremantle. The group is led by Maria and assisted by Simona. Doris (Hamilton Hill) regularly lends a hand providing resources and sharing ideas.

The Thursday night Fremantle Group continues to meet for evenings of Friendship, Support and of course knitting and sewing! Here are just some of their fabulous creations.

Sara Jane has designed this marvelous new jacket pattern - I think we will be seeing lots of dolls in this stylish get up!



DOLLS TRAVELLING FROM ENGLAND

Submitted by Lynne Jones

Penny Cross is one of our many supporters from outside Australia. Penny lives in Norfolk, England and sends her dolls directly to TREE. She has recently sent 12 boy dolls,



complete with extra clothing and accessories, baby dolls and carry bags. Penny also embroidered a special cloth in which to wrap the spare clothing. Each doll had a shoulder bag containing a small book specially made by Penny.

SEWING KITS FROM KZN

Submitted by Ann Vivers

Dlalanathi, one of our long term partners based in KZN, recently reported that they continue to find, utilising sewing kits produced and donated by Uthando Project, to be a useful way to engage with women in the workshops they coordinate in a variety of KZN communities.

Items included in these sewing kits are generously donated by our many friends and supporters of Uthando Project and include scissors and hand sewing needles which many KZN workshop participants have never previously owned or used. Group participants report the women enjoy learning to use these items during the workshops and are pleased to receive the sewing kits which they are able to keep for their own use.

Sorrento (WA) group held a working bee on a rainy June Saturday at the



Henderson Environment Centre in Star Swamp, North Beach and produced 37 completed sewing kits, as well as putting together doll making kits to be used for fundraising purposes. The group was overwhelmed with generous donations of fabric and haberdashery to use in the kits and will be able to complete many more



SCHOOL HOLIDAY LIBRARY WORKSHOPS

Submitted by Ann Vivers

We ran 3 special workshops at City of Wanneroo libraries over the recent school holidays. Children (and an adult or two, who we welcome as new volunteers!) made a doll to keep for themselves or to donate to Uthando to be sent to a child in KZN. The 9 beautiful dolls in the picture were made by children at Clarkson Library to be donated to the children of KZN. The children, their carers and our volunteers all had a terrific time and we look forward to running more workshops in Perth area in October.



Photo: Zoe Vivers

DOLLS FOR UGANDA

Submitted by Robin Hamilton

In April, we had 25 ladies making baby dolls for the children being

cared for by a group in Kwangali refugee camp in Uganda. Irene Gill (Tasmania) has contact with 2 inspirational young men who care for orphans, from babies to older children. They have built one school and another is under construction right now. Primary school is called Globaltein. They requested 200 dolls for babies, and so we are helping Irene and the Tassie ladies to provide these. Thank you to the ladies here, and their great efforts beforehand with preparation and sewing (coordinated by Ann Vivers) and on the afternoon together. 102 dolls ready to go! Awesome!

DOLLS AT BORONIA

Submitted by Lynne Jones

At the end of last year I received an enquiry about a doll making workshop for the women in Boronia Pre Release Centre as a holiday programme. After going through the screening and orientation process, Lynne T and I spent 3 two hour sessions with a group of 4 women who were very keen to make dolls for Uthando Project. The driving force of the group, Sam, has excellent sewing skills and loads of enthusiasm to motivate her housemates. They had

a great team spirit and over the week we were visiting they developed their own roles in the doll making process. The following week we went back to Boronia to collect the finished dolls. They had produced almost 20 beautifully dressed dolls, as well as "renovating" a few of our "hospital" dolls. Sam is keeping the doll making going in Boronia and when she leaves, she hopes to continue working with Uthando.



It was a privilege to work with Sam and her housemates and to gain an insight into the Boronia Pre Release Centre. It is a place where the women are treated with respect and dignity. The grounds are beautiful, cared for by women who choose to work in the gardens. There is a restaurant which is also staffed by women and next time we go, Lynne and I will definitely avail ourselves of the lunches they serve.

EVENTS

CRAFT SHOW THIS WEEKEND

Once again Uthando is privileged to be offered a space at the 2019 Craft Show held in the Claremont Showgrounds August 2nd to 4th . Our stall always attracts much interest and of course is only possible

due to all the fabulous enthusiasm and support from our extensive Uthando family.

This is one of our major fundraising events and this year we are trialling selling some small dolls especially made for the local market. The little "Onesie" doll is always appealing and a group of Uthando doll makers met in April to make a stock of these little dolls to sell at the Craft Fair. Thanks to Barbara from the Hamilton Hill Group, we had 30 bodies ready for stuffing and finishing with simple faces. The dolls are slightly larger than the original ones we made so they were a little easier to work with. Thank you to everyone who helped on the day and later to finish these cuties.

SPRINGTIME IN SEPTEMBER WITH SORRENTO

Sorrento Group is celebrating Springtime on Sunday, 8th September 2019 at Henderson Environmental Centre, Groat Street, North Beach. The wildflowers will be out at Star Swamp and we will enjoy some time being close to nature! There will be a host of busy bee activities to

choose from - assembling kits, making floor mats, dolls, sewing kits, packing beads and more! or just bring your own Uthando project and simply enjoy the wonderful company. The event runs from 10am to 3pm. Please bring a plate to share for lunch. More information is available from Ann Vivers or Robin Hamilton. Contact: revts@iinet.net.au (Robin) or spooner736@gmail.com (Ann).

SHIPPING NEWS

We had yet another bumper shipment in June, thanks to the once again outstanding efforts of our all the dollmaking groups and individuals.

A total of 2412 dolls went into the shipment, as well as 216 sewing kits and of course a mountain of wraps, knitted balls and other exciting goodies! Dolls were sent as follows:

Lifeline – 583

TREE – 854

Dlalanathi – 356



So much happiness in those bags!!!

Family Literacy – 453

Sizabantwana – 166

A FINAL NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Robin Hamilton recently shared this from an Editors note in Plan International's Newsletter and it's too perfect not to reshare

"UBUNTU is a Zulu word that means "I am a person through other people. My humanity is tied to yours"

There is no word in English that encompasses this sentiment of interconnectedness. In the modern world, we often see ourselves as individuals but Ubuntu reminds us we are part of a greater whole. What we do affects others, and when we do well, the ripples are felt by all of humanity.

Our work with girls and with all children is, first and foremost, for them, but it is also for the good of all human beings. Together, we bring about change that benefits all humankind and that is the spirit of Ubuntu, for we cannot be human alone."

So thank you friends around Australia and beyond, for your efforts for the children that we have contact with, through the work of our wonderful KZN partners, and other inspirational people working for the wellbeing of children and families whom they serve. You are all amazing beyond words

- *Karin*, on behalf of us all x



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As always, the whole project sends friendly hugs to everyone who provides comfort for children everywhere.

