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THE UTHANDO PROJECT *Newsletter*

JULY 2008

Dear Uthando Project friends,

Time flows by, 1000 dolls are waiting packed ready for the children of KZN, and nine Australian women are preparing to meet with Rob Smetherham Bereavement Services for Children (RobS) and Training and Resources in Early Education (TREE) for dollmaking workshops in Durban, Pietermaritzburg and Centocow in October. RobS and TREE staff will be the facilitators in a range of workshops which should see 150 Zulu and other women learn the craft of making dolls linked with the importance of listening to and playing with children. These workshops are therefore a true joint venture, a living partnership between Uthando Project, RobS, TREE and CINDI.

Those of us who have been receiving these newsletters over time may recall that out of a Conference 2005 run by CINDI (Children in Distress Network) for all organisations, groups and individuals working with children affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, our first steps of providing dolls for the emotional benefit of children took clearer direction. Uthando Project is an Affiliate Member of the 200 strong organisations aligned in integrity, sharing and caring under the CINDI umbrella.

In preparation for these KZN workshops we need to **urgently ask your help** in providing some of the materials for the workbags and the "HoldAll" sewing kits to go inside them.

The realisation has just become clear that if we can ship these workbags with the next consignment of dolls to reach Durban in time for the workshops we must pack them by Friday 29th August at the latest.

Would you like to help in a practical way?

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS;

These sizes are approximate. Home decorators' fabric samples are ideal for these workbags and HoldAlls as they are individual. It would be good if all bags were easily identifiable by their new owners, not all of whom are literate. You may even have fondly used sewing kits to pass on.

If you are planning on making a goodly batch please let Anne Bell know of your intended number of items. 9454 5116 or abell@aapt.net.au

WORKBAG

Please sew workbags of bright strong material in the same size as a Coles or Woolworth's Green bag, approx 35cms square with a gusset 12 cms wide going down the sides and across the base. These are finished measurements so add

seam and hem allowances. Add a pocket inside for scissors, etc and two strong handles, comfortable in being carried long distances.

We need about 120 in total and already have in hand, 50.

HOLDALL SEWING KIT; We need 6 kits per workbag, as each participant in the workshop will be invited to teach a further 5 women the art of dollmaking and its significance for their children.

Therefore this takes the Grand Total of mini kits to 720. Sounds a few? We CAN DO THIS as a team.

Instructions

Using a piece of long lasting material size A4 (20 x 30cms),
hem both short ends to be the top.

Fold this piece in half.

Sew down the centre of a piece of felt (8 x 12 cms) on to one half
of the right side of the material. This is the “needle and pin book”.

Stitch up both sides so that it becomes an open bag or wallet. Turn right side out.

Stitch a length of ribbon at the bottom edge so that the whole item can be folded or rolled and tied.

SEWING KIT TOOLS AND THREADS ETC.

If you have spare sewing things that you know are useful in dollmaking, please deliver or post them to Uthando Project, 2 Healey Place, Gooseberry Hill, WA 6076. Include them with any finished dolls as the more we can send at the end of August, the better. However if you send after August, don't despair, because we will carry them to KZN in October..... but the lighter we travel the better.

These are the wanted items.

TOOLS: Sharp scissors, (Tailors or smaller)

Needles, especially sharps for general sewing and any needles which have a large eye and sharp point, eg chenille needles.

Needle threaders

Dressmakers' pins

Medium and small safety pins

Knitting needles and crochet hooks, any sizes

THREADS; Sewing machine thread in black, white and brown. Can be partially used reels.

Smaller reels of other colours

Crochet cotton, mainly fine, in black, brown, pinks to reds and white.

Stranded embroidery thread in colours as above.

Black wool for hair. Other textured wools, eg “feathers” or even in other colours for wild hair

HABERDASHERY; (still a great word!) Elastic for pants, hat elastic (for jewellery), buttons, beads, lace, cords, bias binding.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS; Don't buy new things, unless deeply moved to do so, as we will buy wholesale whatever might be missing.

Our organisers in KZN will provide the material for the dolls' bodies and their filling, and the materials for dolls' clothing.

THANK YOU IN ADVANCE FOR SEEING WHAT YOU MAY BE ABLE TO PROVIDE IMMEDIATELY.

The second appeal to support the October KZN Workshops is for **sponsorship funding** to enable rural women and those with limited resources to actually come to these workshops. We want to be able to cover transport and accommodation costs. It is expected that there will be 100 women participating, plus 12 children and approx 16 staff of TREE and RobS.

By selling our beautiful packs of cards at **\$20 for a pack** of 10 different cards (add \$2.50 for postage and packing) we will put this income into this Sponsorship Fund. Every \$20 could cover the cost for one woman for one day. The card design now includes on the back, a photo of Zulu children waving happily aloft their new dolls.

Please email your order to Lis Hansen einar@iinet.net.au or phone Georgia 9293 2363.

Make cheques out to Uthando Project, (2 Healey Place, Gooseberry Hill WA 6076). Our target by end of September is \$2000 and we are already on the way with over \$800 raised. If you would consider it, please order and pay for a batch of card packs and then sell them on to friends.

If you see any other way of selling these cards through retail outlets, school P & C fundraising or similar, we can discuss a wholesale cost.

These cards tell our story, and because it is straightforward to order more packs, it is an ideal way for us to raise funds needed to support the work of our partners in KZN. Please see what you can do.

So what really are these **October Workshops**? I hear you say.

In partnership with the two NGO's, TREE and RobS, seven Australian dollmakers, accompanied by Dr Julie Stone and Natalija Brunovs (documentary film maker), will be teaching dollmaking in four workshops (either two or three days) in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa from October 20 – 31. It will be a golden opportunity to spend time with our partners who every day are close to the cliff edge of living in an environment of HIV/AIDS and training those who care for and teach the children. We will come to understand better, and to witness, the lives of families and communities in KZN.

We hope to discover what happens to the dolls given to the children and in fact that is the theme of the DVD which Natalija will film and produce.

The programme of dollmaking will be integrated with workshop experiences designed through the professional work which RobS foster, of counselling bereaved children using play and of training their carers and family facilitators in listening to and playing with the child.

In a letter from RobS in April this year, a quote from a reflection with a group of women in Emaswazini..."the journey included the awakening of hope within us that things can change when people come together to help children"

In our 2007 workshops facilitated by RobS, over 20 organisations took part and hundreds more women were trained by these participants afterwards.

Nearer to October we will send another newsletter with more details of the workshops so that you can be with us in spirit.

Word spreads about the Uthando Project adventure and the generous way thousands of people have responded with their own skills, materials and loving intentions. This is inspiring the WA film maker Clayton Sievers to make a documentary film about us called "The Spirit of Giving". If you get a call from Clayton welcome him in.

In recent weeks after much investigation and filling in of forms by our new Treasurer, Bill Mackintosh, we can now declare our project to be a registered charity and soon will be an incorporated body according to law. This is necessary as it is our commitment to fund the salary of a special Zulu speaking psychologist on RobS' staff for three years. This appointment provides professional training concerning the emotional needs of children, the value of play and adult communication to many communities and their leaders.

The goal is for \$25,000 each year to be funded through the efforts of the Uthando Project. We are already a tax deductible project through Rotary Australia World Community Service and we are extremely keen to discuss this with potential donors. Please consider contributing to this, or to make a request of others which can be followed up.

Now for **UTHANDO PROJECT NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD.**

Let's start with the remarkable Agnes Johnson in New York. One of her great friends is Iris Tatian, an art teacher at Primary School 199 in New York City. Would you believe that after seeing the film "A Child is a Child", the students made over 1000 dolls!

The 4 schools in Harlem, PS 4, PS 36, PS 57 and PS 173 opened their after-school doors to the Uthando Project and many more dolls came from them.

In February MS Angeli Rasbury (who had visited KZN) opened a session of information on the Uthando Project for Youth programming in the Brooklyn Public Library.

We trust that this resourceful Agnes has been supported in getting the dolls to KZN.

Sarah Armstrong in Yamba NSW has parents in Faversham, Kent, England where the dollmaking will be extended to "older and somewhat isolated women bringing them together for various excuses to drink tea and eat biscuits – and now they are able to use their time to make Uthando dolls".

Nichola Rybak, of Rotherwell, South Yorkshire, England is encouraging her students at Maltby Comprehensive School to make dolls.

Maryanne Oldenburg has been using the DollyHugs pattern for her Doll Study Club in mid Wisconsin, USA.

Ingrid Gmelin, Germany, sent 2 exquisite dolls to WA for sending further.

Anyone can send them directly to

TREE, PO BOX 35173, NORTHWAY 4065 SOUTH AFRICA.

Please advise Taz Sans-Souci Bruiners with details of what you have sent and the date to

taz@tree-ecd.co.za Mark the parcel, "Handmade dolls for free distribution to the children in KwaZulu-Natal. No commercial value".

Adrienne Wilson, of the Unitarian Church, Godalming, Surrey, England, donated \$117 directly to Friends of TREE in England.

In Australia there are constant developments, but two are very exciting. Sue Black in Stirling, South Australia has offered to be the Uthando person for **South Australia**. It was good timing in that one of our champion dollmakers, Brian Harffey was driving over the Nullarbor Plain to Adelaide so he was able to meet up with Sue and give her inside information (whatever that might be). So if you have potential dollmakers in SA please send Sue's details to them, sueblack5@hotmail.com 08 8339 3353. Good luck Sue.

On Friday 11th July, the core group at Gooseberry Hill shared their love and admiration for all the work and the glorious dolls made by Irene Gill. Irene is now living in the wilds of **Tasmania** with the full intention of bringing the Uthando Project there. She even packed their furniture with doll filling so that she would have some initial resources. During her time in WA Irene initiated many community groups and individuals into the joy of dollmaking. As was said at the time "I am going, but not leaving". So for those in Tasmania, please contact our wondrous doll maker communicator, Joy Whitfield, jwhitfi@iinet.net.au who will then pass it on to Irene when all systems are working there.

Dot Smith of Kalamunda, WA called in last Friday with 40 beautifully made sturdy dolls, plus 2 made by her granddaughter, 13 yr Celeste Orr. She had earned first prize and highly commended in the Child

Section Soft Toys of the Kalamunda Show. Congratulations Celeste. I think there might be quite a few lovely grandmother – grand daughter stories out there.

Lynne Jones, Mosman Park, WA has found numbers delightfully increasing for her dollmaking evenings. After the July 30th meeting she will be away until the end of September. Interested? Phone 9384 8492 or email Lynne at brilyjo@bigpond.com

Margaret Gaal, Victoria, tells us that her incredibly productive group of dollmakers is moving on to other things. However as a farewell trumpet blast she is sending 150 dollkits which we will take to KZN for the CINDI Dollmaking Extravaganza where there could be 70 women. Thank you Margaret and friends. You are all heroines and have given pleasure to hundreds of children.

I wish I could list all the individual dollmakers and the schools which constantly send in dolls with their hearts full for the children of KwaZulu-Natal. Please accept this as a thankyou from all of us.

If any school would like to participate, anywhere in the world, contact Lynne Tognolini on lynnnetognolini@bigpond.com

If you need guidance in dollmaking, download the Workbook on our website www.uthandoproject.org

There is a grrrrrr comment from those who check the dolls and pack them safely.

Please do not use any **glue** in your dollmaking. Inevitably, there are tiny gaps or it is inexpertly used for hair, mouth, eyes, Velcro, etc. To mend through such tough hard gunk is very, very hard.

DO NOT USE GLUE even if the dollmaker has new sewing skills (or sort of) it is better to keep trying with sewing.

Students at the South Perth Primary School sent poems with their dolls. Here is one from Renae.

“I Feel Emotions”

I feel sorry

I feel sad

I feel blue

I feel upset

I feel confused

If I got a doll

I would feel talkative

I would feel for a hug

I would feel encouraged

I would feel happy

I would feel loved

I would feel like there's still hope

I feel tickled pink

Jack Tomlin from the same school finished his poem about receiving a doll with the words,

“It would encourage me to play
Encourage me to have a lot more fun,
Encourage me to speak out loud”

Finally from Nirupa Kasserchun, Income Generation Manager, TREE, Durban who writes a huge thankyou to all in Uthando Project.

“Gladys Mbona, our coordinator in the Centocow region always reports to me how excited the children get when they see her. Their response to her is “Have our brothers and sisters in Australia made any more dolls for us? Tell them that we love them. Ngabe osisi nobhuti bethu e Australia basenzele yini onodoli? Siyanithanda.”

(Ed. Sorry to only have Australia in this quote).

Please pass this newsletter on and contribute whatever moves you to give.

Love from Georgia Efford, Joy Whitfield and the Team

No photos this time. Sorry.

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