

Dear Western Australian Dollmakers and Friends,

DIFFICULT TRUTHS WORKSHOP, FREMANTLE

The first of our "Difficult Truths, Being with Children in Times of Stress, Grief and Loss" finished on Friday July 3rd. We experienced a rare time of being powerfully together with lots of fun.

Our partners from the Rob Smetherham Bereavement Service for Children, Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal were celebrated by every participant in the workshop for their openness, their sharing way of teaching and of giving themselves, their life experiences. Rachel Rozentals-Thresher, CEO and staff member, psychologist, Sibongile Khkize worked as a team with our Uthando dollmakers. Like a dance. We played new games, heard, told and created stories with our doll, reflected about our own lives and work. Nearly all the 16 participants came from organisations working with children, eg the Ottey Centre, Anglicare Housing, Salvation Army, Mental Health, Curtin University School of Psychology, Meerilinga, Wanslea, childcare in general. Everyone saw the relevance to their own work in "setting the stage for deeper communication with children". "It's been a catalyst for a change of direction for my life". While learning how to make a doll and then using it for deeper listening to the child, we saw a lovely partnership between the Uthando dollmakers and RobS, with input from everyone. Soroptimist International, Fremantle branch, nurtured us with delicious home cooked meals every day. This contribution brought togetherness and a feeling of being valued. Meals became a time for networking with others committed to this field. Never underestimate the power of pumpkin soup when the room heaters caused a power black out.

Our Open Day on Saturday 4th brought small groups to join in the Knitathon, and to dress the dolls. More fun. We knitted a new pattern for a little doll to be tied to the back of a larger doll. Rachel and Sibongile spoke movingly about their work with communities, children and grandmothers in KZN. There was an enthusiastic response to our two colourful new posters. One poster tells the Uthando story with knitting patterns on one side and sewing patterns and pictures of dolls as guidance on the other side.

The second poster features our remarkable Kay Daw who designs original knitted versions of South African animals for dolls and puppets. All the patterns and hints are there. These two sentences don't do justice to the impact of the posters. There is enormous gratitude to the City of Swan for sponsoring the design and printing of 2000 each of these posters which are sized A1. They are really special in spreading the Uthando message. Ideal for classroom, exhibitions, your workroom, children's rooms. Could be made into a pattern folder. Each one sells for \$5, which contributes to RobS.

PLEASE COME TO THE MIDLAND OPEN DAY.

This leads to a fervent invitation to you to come to the Open Day at Midland next Saturday 11th. Midland Junction Art Centre, formerly Opera Centre, Great Eastern Highway, cnr Cale St. Parking eastern end of Midland Gate. Doors open 10am - 3pm.

- The Knitathon starts at 11am until 12, but in fact, at Fremantle, all the knitters wanted to finish their doll so tables remained full for as long as they wished. We'll have a singalong of favourite oldies led by Sylvia Rutter and her Harmony Singers.
- Rachel and Sibongile will talk of their work at 12.30.
- The "naked" dolls are ready to be dressed by children and adults, all day.
- Tiny baby dolls could be sewn and we have hundreds of dollmaking kits to sell which could be started right there and then. There will be a stunning exhibition of many of our dolls. Yours could be there!
- The Uthando DVD (\$10) will be shown plus a short Zulu film produced by TREE who generously distribute our dolls in KZN.

As if this is not enough, Natalija Brunovs, photographer and director of our DVD, "Goodness and Happiness, Sisters in KwaZulu-Natal", has a special project of photographing young and old together to make a mosaic image for the City of Swan. Perfect as a record of who is in Midland on July 11th, 2009 and perfect for you to bring a young person to be recorded together. This is our NAIDOC contribution. "Honouring our Elders, Nurturing our Youth".

PLEASE COME TO MEET OUR Robs' guests and join in with other Uthando supporters. It is a good opportunity to introduce the project to potential dollmakers.

Our Difficult Truths Workshops will be written up in more detail after the Midland Open Day. They are groundbreaking material for our communities where the emotional balance of children is considered. Many thanks to the WA AIDS Council for the printing of 100 workshop manuals.

As Joy Whitfield is in the Kalamunda Hospital right now, I know she sends her love to everyone as we do to her.

With warm wishes from Georgia and the ever widening team.

This email was sent to [email address suppressed].

You can instantly unsubscribe from these emails by clicking the link below:

<http://mailout.papercutmedia.com/t/r/u/iico/1/>