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THE UTHANDO PROJECT *Newsletter*

AUGUST 2010 NEWSLETTER

Dear Uthando dollmakers and friends,

I wonder why I sometimes wait a while before writing our newsletter. Upon reflection I think it is because it really matters that everyone who gives hours and hours of their time and skill in making dolls for the children of KwaZulu-Natal ought to have all the acknowledgement that each person deserves.

There are so many layers to this project of ours that one can feel inhibited by "missing out" on something valuable to express. Please accept, through the medium of this newsletter, that every stitch you make, or every dollar you raise, generates a loving connection with children whose lives are enriched through the dolls and through the community training through Dlalanathi and TREE in KZN.

This photo shows students at Polytech West who are in the Certificate 3 course in Early Childhood Education. Their Uthando doll making fitted well within their study of "Diversity in Children". Although the dolls were finished in their own time, results were creative and well made. Their lecturer, Margie Crocker (green shirt), realised the many values for the students and has booked dollmaking for Uthando with the next student intake. Georgia is holding the acknowledgement certificate designed by Lynne Tognolini and given to participating schools. Please request a certificate for your dollmaking school or group anywhere in the world. We will be delighted to send it if you provide specific details. Contact lynnetognolini@bigpond.com



LATEST DLALANATHI REPORTS

Please go to www.dlalanathi.org.za to look at some specific pages;

"Reports:2009", and notice how pictures of the dolls are widely used. (Many of these dolls are now made within Dlalanathi's trainings).

Uthando is listed under **"Donor Partnerships"**. You will see that it takes many donors from within South Africa and around the world to enable one organisation to function.

Then, under **Latest News**, check out **"Comfort Dolls"**. This is a photographic journey of a community making dolls. It does your heart good.

This photo, taken by Anne Bell in Pietermaritzburg in one of the fabulous workshops organised by dlalanathi in 2008, reminds us through the AIDS symbol sewn on a doll's bag of the serious need for supporting the emotional growth of affected and infected children. The needle case from the workbag is also a reminder that tools are not always available when life in general is fraught. Also that being in a community workshop gives joy and companionship as well as the

teaching.

It illuminates how the dlalanathi training of grandmothers, other organisations and communities is a beacon of action in KZN.

FUNDRAISING FOR DLALANATHI

We have nearly completed our three year pledge of approx. \$27,000 each year to Dlalanathi, only \$3500 to go for 2010. We now hold to an agreement of approx \$16,000 each year which will go towards the salary for a Zulu psychologist so that the highly strategic "Training the Trainers" programme can be extended.

How do we raise this money?

Ideally we want every fundraising idea to extend awareness of the importance of play for all children and that more dolls for KZN will be part of the outcome. Therefore the making and selling of the following Uthando products brings in our basic income.



- **Dollmaking kits @ \$5** really suit our intentions as more brownskinned dolls are made. This enhances our multi cultural understanding, skills are learned and we get more dolls.
- **Pattern Posters @ \$5** each prove their worth again and again by giving the basic sewing and knitting patterns with many applications pictured. The project and purpose are explained. The posters' designs are very decorative as well. You can trace the sewing pattern on to another piece of paper to keep the poster intact. Other patterns can be photocopied too.
- **Greeting Cards @ \$10** for 5 consistently sell. They spread the play message and provide our website.

The **Uthando Doll kits** make group or class dollmaking easy. Please encourage a nearby school to take on the project. We can always use donations of fabric for the kits (ideally cut into rectangles 25 x 30 cms), lace, ribbons, braid, sewing or embroidery threads, buttons, beads. Bright stretch fabric which doesn't need hemming is useful, also black wool or fabric suitable for hair. A special thank you goes to Toni Kelly, Perth, who had the great idea of celebrating her birthday with her friends giving gifts of pins, lace, needles, scissors, ribbons and wool. This produced a HUGE box of goodies for the Uthando kits....truly, gifts that keep on giving.

FREIGHT EXPENSES

Our other expense is the escalating **cost of freight** for the dolls to Durban.

Is there a way you could contribute to the Freight Fund considering it costs nearly \$2 to send each doll?

Some fundraising ideas include

- the dollmaker selling just one of her dolls for eg \$20,
- or having a doll exhibition morning tea,
- or selling any of the above products, (kits, posters and cards) at a local event.
- giving us a doll to sell through our fundraising or dollmaking events. Please note that we will NEVER sell a doll which has been intended to go to Africa.

In the coming months there will be opportunities to participate in various events.

Over the years there have always been requests from people wanting to buy our dolls.

Would you consider making a doll which is designed to sell here in WA?

Perhaps, for those who are our staple dollmakers, one of your dolls being delivered could be

identified by you as being available for sale.

Fundraising is by no means obligatory, so there is no pressure to do so. However, by sending two consignments each year, we need approximately \$6000 to cover them!

Some wonderful Uthando women have given the proceeds of an art auction, or have paid for the card envelopes, or the whole snail mailout postage costs to 230 people. All these gifts keep us afloat and enable otherintentional funds to go intact to KZN.

BENEFACTORS

We are also blessed to have received major donations from several **benefactors**. We welcome more!

If you would like to talk further about fundraising in any form please call Georgia 08 9293 2363 georgia1@iinet.net.au

For all banking matters, please contact our Hon Treasurer, Lis Hansen, 355 Belmont Ave, Cloverdale, WA 6015 or einar@iinet.net.au

KALAMUNDA ZIGZAG FESTIVAL

One major event is the **Kalamunda ZigZag Festival** where we **provide doll dressing by the children for the Uthando dolls to go to Africa**. It will be in Stirk Park , with the theme of Stirk du Soleil, (ie circus) on Sunday October 31, 11 – 4pm. Please make “naked dolls” and lots of clothes and if you like give us a hand on the day for a while.

HOME FAMILIES' FABRIC SIZES

While on the subject of donations, this time of fabrics for the **Home Families sets of dolls** which are used by TREE's Family Play Facilitators in KZN.

The recommended size for the **Child Wraps** needs to be bigger than mentioned in our last newsletter. **140 x 30 cms** enables the child to wrap a doll on his/her back and tie it more easily. The **Doll Wraps** are ideal at **40 x 25cms**, but often we receive dolls of all sizes and really we can match any sized wrap with an appropriate doll.

If you would like to make use of small pieces of brown fabric or knit them, we can use lots of **baby dolls** to tie on the backs of bigger dolls. They can be very simple indeed and small enough to fit in your hand. Invent!

Cautionary note;For all the dolls it is wiser to make the eyes black or brown.

BLUE EYES may signify TB or river blindness. This needs to be pointed out to us as blue eyes are often on western dolls.

GENEROUS SCHOOLS

Dolls come in all the time and are investigated with delight by the Gooseberry Hill Friday mob. Many schools are encouraged to produce dolls of good quality through the mentorship of Lynne Tognolini. Keep in mind that Lynne made two! 600km round trips to

St Thomas More Catholic Primary School in Margaret River to bring home 100 beautiful dolls.

Schools which have recently sent in their dolls or are working on them now are;

East Butler PS,
Wesley College Junior School ,
All Saints College,
Picton PS,
Winthrop Baptist College

**Rostrata PS
Ardross PS
Melville SHS**

Special thanks go to Victoria to Julie Timewell of Tight Knit World (who is also sending dolls made in Tasmania) and to Kylie Hawkins of Patchwork House. Often Dr Julie Stone lugs the bags on her flights to Perth, or they arrive by post.

Thanks also go to Morna Latham, Darra, Queensland and to some very reliable knitters in NSW.

Edna Mason in Ravenswood, WA, has taken on the project wholeheartedly in her district.

Kris Miller in USA has Uthando included in a Doll News magazine.

The Girl Scout group in Texas College Station, Texas, USA have sent their dolls. What fun! They are the six smilers in the photo.

Enquiries have come from Honolulu and UK.

It is always dangerous to single out a few contributors, so please don't feel missed out as we usually don't mention individuals. Everyone is part of the Uthando team.



HALLS CREEK VISIT

The Hills area near Perth is home to a special choir, Madjiti Moorna, led by indigenous musicians. Some choir members enjoyed two dollmaking sessions enabling many of the choir members to teach dollmaking with a lot of aboriginal children and adults in the remote township of Halls Creek. Halls Creek is in the north of Western Australia, at least two days' full drive from Perth.

The Sing and Sew workshops were held at the Kimberley Language Resource Centre, learning how to design dolls with features and clothing of the Kimberley. Fabulous time had by all.

Community groups were represented at the workshops and the choir members made the suitable kits.

Enthusiastic coordinator, Marie Jacquier, writes,

"The students who came to the workshop loved playing with their dolls. Their bubbly enthusiasm, affection for the dolls and keen interest in the project demonstrated to us the need for the children in Halls Creek to see their own culture and people reflected in this positive and tangible way. Simple as it is, playing with dolls that have skin tones and features of their own families is an affirmation of the value of their culture. The Aboriginal and Islander Education Officers are keen to include the dollmaking in their school programme."

Dolls were also donated to child care centres and hostel. Best of all, two Jaru elders assisted in composing a simple lullaby with Jaru words.

Out of this marvellous visit has come a booklet, "Want to Make a Kimberley doll?" inspired by our dollmaking manual. Contact www.madjitimoorna.org.au



DOLLMAKING FOR REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

Near Perth airport is an Immigrant Residential Centre for families awaiting results of applications to enter Australia. Although daily programmes are designed for them, it must seem that life is on hold, and meanwhile the children in their care are getting older.

Iris Whitelock and Aldy Bagnall who were keen to apply what they learned with Rachel and Sibongile from Dlananathi a year ago in the Difficult Truths workshop, have designed a 12 week

programme for mothers and children, and separately, a school holiday programme for the older students. The concept includes the staff learning dollmaking as well, so that the benefits of actually making culturally appropriate dolls and seeing the value of such dolls to the children will be continued.

Everyone is keen to hear Iris's reports of their experiences. Very rich and thoughtful indeed. She writes,

"We had a wonderful busy hum going today, and although the men weren't doing anything with the dolls, they were chatting happily with each other and the two male translators who were there. My feeling was that the men were happy because their wives were having such a good time! We haven't seen the new baby born last week, but one of the early childcare staff made a mini doll for his "big" brother who is 4 y.o. and was with the dollmaking group this morning."

Perhaps each one of us can think of other families or organisations who would appreciate learning how to make dolls and encourage children through expressive play.

What is the first step?

WIRELESS HILL GROUP OF THE WESTERN AUSTRALIAN EMBROIDERERS' GUILD

A delightful meeting with one of this club's members at the City of Melville's Textile Expo led to an unforgettable collection of dolls being made for Uthando.

Rene Sinclair brought everyone together and fifty individual dolls were all lined up ready for collection.



DOLLMAKING IN INDIA

Denny Crossley, with the inspiration from Joan Halsall, has twice visited a home for children who have been rescued as bonded child labour in Karnataka.

Also she has visited the Madhavaram Aids Centre for Young Children in Andhra Pradesh.

At both centres Denny has brought her love to the children and has taught them dollmaking! She adapts our African doll styles to suit India. The results are deeper than we can imagine.

To enable these centres to survive, (I was going to write "flourish", but often the reality is tougher than that) Denny is holding a

Fundraising event, [Saturday August 28th at 28 Star St, Carlisle, between 2 and 6pm.](#)

Antiques for sale, Indian cuisine. Wear your salwar kamis and buy raffle tickets, play gold coin games..

RSVP to Denny on 9472 4413 or 0450 832 285 (mob) for catering planning.

This is a clear and beautiful example of the Uthando concept being taken elsewhere in the world through the actions of a few, with commitment.

THE LIVING CONTEXT FOR THE DOLLS

Here is an excerpt from **Rachel Rozentals-Thresher**, CEO, Dlalanathi, Pietermaritzburg, in her letter of thanks to Uthando not just for our financial support, but also for our true partnership and caring. Such a relationship is so precious and immeasurable.

*“Children Gauge (2009) reminds us that in South Africa at present, **23% of all children under 18 have lost one or both their parents**. There is a staggering amount of loss affecting families in our country. A focus on strengthening parents, teachers, aunts, uncles, priests and grandparents to cope with loss and build strong relationships is critical to building our nation. Our focus is on the wellness of children and we use play to invite others to build with us a process that acknowledges the pain of loss and works from the strength.”*

Thank you Rachel and all the Dlalanathi staff for bringing us in touch with such compassionate and effective work. May the children hug the dolls.

DEC 3rd FINAL PACKING DATE FOR 2010 FROM PERTH

So that the next container of dolls will arrive in Durban in ideal time for the New Year’s planning, but not get tangled up in Christmas freight, would you please have your dolls at **2 Healey Place, Gooseberry Hill, WA 6076 by Friday Dec 3rd, 2010.**

Earlier is better because we can more thoughtfully arrange the dolls into small families for TREE.

It takes about 6 weeks for the dolls to arrive after their sea journey.

If you live outside Australia, please continue to send your dolls directly to TREE at any time that suits you, keeping in mind that TREE’s holiday break is from mid December until late January. It would be difficult to have the dolls collected during that time.

TREE, PO BOX 35173, Northway 4065 South Africa.

When you have sent your parcel, please advise Mehreen Docrat on fundraising@tree-eed.co.za

Keep loving the dolls you make.

This newsletter is dedicated to the memory of the irrepressible Jeannie Chandler who passed away in June. Words can’t express the light in that woman.

Love from Georgia Efford and the team.

PS The eyes have it. Happy dolls from Southlake Primary School invite you to join them.



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