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THE UTHANDO PROJECT *Newsletter*

BIG SEND OFF

Yesterday (Feb 13th) a big cheer went up from the core team in Western Australia as 2500 dolls packed in 61 bags went off in a van arranged by the Darling Range Rotary Club. They will be packed in with primary school furniture in a container planned to arrive mid March in Durban . Rob Lyons of this club has been a sterling supporter of Uthando from its outset. Thank you Rob.

BIG SEND OFF



It is so exciting to see the quality of the dolls get better and better. All the knitted dolls for babies up to 2 year olds had either a cuddle wrap (30 x 50cms) tied on their back or travelled in a bag useful to the mother. The sewn dolls were of great variety and each had a shoulder bag filled with spare clothes or a small toy and all the girl dolls wore knickers. Each doll had the promise of immediate play not just in itself but with the accessories. Hundreds of dolls came from Victoria, a smattering from around Australia and two thousand from WA.

A huge thank you goes out from everyone to each dollmaker.

Using those large plastic red, white and blue striped bags with a zipper, seemed to be easier for us to handle, and very likely easier for the Zulu women at the other end.

If you would like to deliver your dolls in these bags, (approx \$2.50) they will be used further.

APPRECIATION TO DOLLMAKING GROUPS

Our Wonder Woman, Joy Whitfield, who manages all our data base, records doll arrivals and sends their acknowledgements, says "Welcome to all new subscribers through our website".

There are some dollmaking groups which meet regularly. Their contribution is deeply appreciated. Nola Kirby and Irene Metcalf(WA) and Margaret Gaal (Victoria) are three special women who represent many others by being a "clearing house" for dolls made by lots of other people. I'd imagine that guests in their homes have to clear first the mountains of dolls from the beds.

There is continuing appreciation to Bentley Park Retirement Village residents, to Dorset House, Byford for dolls from a remarkable group of carers for people with severe disabilities and to the Community Daycare Centre, Olive Tree House, Morley. Vasanti Sunderland tells us that dollmaking continues at Bandyup Women's Prison. There are many other church and community groups not listed here who consistently provide character-rich dolls. Thank you.

DOLLMAKING IN SCHOOLS

Uthando Project is more than grateful for the huge number of dolls made by school students. Usually they are sewn dolls, except for the beautiful dolls knitted by the Quintilian School in Mt Claremont. The children delivered them by bus creating a fabulous day of making shoulder bags for the dolls and emotionally wishing them goodbye. For all schools who participated in 2007, please pass on our thanks to the children.

It is difficult to fit in all the names here.

Here are some schools who sent dolls at the end of 2007.

Maddington Primary School

Middle Swan Primary School

St Thomas More Catholic Primary School, Margaret River

Gingin District High School,

The Quintilian School

Our Lady of Fatima

Our Lady of Grace

John Wollaston Anglican Community School

Beaconsfield Primary School

Spearwood Alternative Primary School

Gooseberry Hill Primary School

Kent Street Senior High School

Perth College

Toodyay District High School

Photo; Collection of dolls, arranged with African artefacts, from Lowther Hall Anglican Girls Grammar School, Victoria

DOLLMAKING IN SCHOOLS



2008 holds much in store for us in making tangible our compassion for the children of the world who experience hardship not of their making.

We began 2008 powerfully with a sensitive broadcast of the nature of the Uthando Project on the news, Channel Ten. Copies of this TV broadcast will soon be available. You can show it to family, friends, groups and schools. It will be a great tool for expanding our work and shows the real community spirit that brings

dollmakers together.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

From Agnes Johnson in New York came the news of 1000 dolls ready for KZN.

Photo: Black and white photo from Agnes of a distinctive doll using handwoven textiles.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

More dolls have been sent from London.

INDIGENOUS PROGRAMMES

We want to maintain firmly our relationships with indigenous women and children through Wongutha Birni in Kalgoorlie, and the St John of God outreach programme, "Strong Women, Strong Babies, Strong Culture", in the Kimberley, northern WA.



COUNTRY WORKSHOPS

In WA we are generating interest in a series of country dollmaking workshops which would be accompanied by a travelling doll exhibition and film. **We are keen to receive invitations to visit country towns from dollmakers, craft or community groups.** If you have country contacts, please ask them if they would like to arrange such an event.

MEDIA NETWORKS

Dolls arrive here in Perth from individuals around Australia through introduction on different knitting or dollmaking websites, blogs, YouTube and Facebook.

Being a grass roots movement allows people everywhere to post the Uthando Project website linked to many other web users. Please encourage this and let us know the links.

Photo of a group of small dolls from Bentley Retirement Village. Sometimes very small dolls are tied as babies to the backs of larger dolls. This would lead to rich play and is a reality for many African children looking after their younger siblings.

MEDIA NETWORKS



DOLLMAKERS' WORKBOOK

To spread old and new patterns and up-to-date information for all dollmakers (including teachers) we have revised the information folder to a beautiful 40 page Dollmakers' Workbook for easy photocopying and inclusion of new patterns. I

t particularly mentions the ways of avoiding weaknesses in dollmaking which take up hours of our volunteers' time in fixing.

To cover the cost of printing we request (it is not obligatory) \$10 per copy plus \$5 packing and postage. (in our hard copy newsletter we reckoned on \$3 postage, but we have discovered that it costs us a little more than \$5). Copies will be available at our various public events in WA or picked up on Fridays at our Open House for Dollmakers, 2 Healey Place, Gooseberry Hill, WA or ordered through Joy Whitfield. See Contact details below. Please send a cheque made out to Uthando Project or the amount in 50 cent postage stamps.

Though sharing and photocopying the patterns and information, this new workbook is a tool for potentially thousands of new dolls being made.

DOLLMAKERS' WORKBOOK



HAND PUPPET PATTERN

Hand puppets used in KZN by both the counsellor and the child enable more freedom of communication. Try it yourself. The puppet can "say" more outrageous things or speak of deeper matters. The child becomes less self conscious and may be able to express themselves about things that are worrying them or are buried in their vulnerability. This pattern (pictured) by Anne Bell (WA) is on page 40 of our new DOLLMAKERS' WORKBOOK.

HAND PUPPET PATTERN



SALE OF OUR GREETING CARDS

These cards, as singles or sets, featuring the Uthando type African dolls, are already providing significant funds for the psycho- social resilience training in KZN. Please continue to promote and order our Greeting Cards.

They sell at \$25 for a pack of 10 different cards (plus P & P, \$1.45), but most orders reflect the savings of 2 packs for \$40 (plus P & P, \$2.45).

Feedback is very complimentary and we hear that there is always the ideal recipient for each type of card!

SALE OF OUR GREETING CARDS

DR JULIE STONE



As many of you are aware, our funds support the partnership in KwaZulu-Natal between the experienced counsellors of the Rob Smetherham Bereavement Services for Children (RSBSC) and the huge network of staff and trainers of Training and Resources for Early Education (TREE). Both non government organisations have monumental work ahead of them and are regarded highly. Both are members of the CINDI network of NGO's and Govt. departments working with vulnerable children.

As a background to their work and our focus on play, here are some thoughts from Uthando Project founder and director, Dr Julie Stone.

On 13th February, Kevin Rudd said,

" For the pain, suffering and hurt of these stolen generations, their descendants and for their families left behind, we say sorry.

To the mothers and the fathers, the brothers and the sisters, for the breaking up of families and communities, we say sorry."

Many of those who were taken from their families listened to the PM's words. Their grief and heart wrenching stories of loss remind us of the importance of growing up among those who love you.

In KZN, the devastation of the HIV/AIDS pandemic affects all children, their families and their communities. Loss is a central theme in their lives too and their suffering and grief is also profound. It is a different chapter in history and one that all world citizens must respond to. Uthando's work with our partners TREE and RSBSC makes a small and important contribution to the emotional wellbeing of KZN's children and communities. Thank you for your contribution.

EVENTS IN WA

Following the success of previous year's events, eg Subiaco Craft Fair, folks have enjoyed our input so much that we are invited back to some annual events and to new ones. Through taking our project out into the public arena, many more dolls are made through contacts with schools, groups and individuals. Other organisations are encouraged to follow suit, perhaps in other countries, eg Ethiopia, Kenya.

Photo; Alison Egan and Clare Harris , Leederville Group, setting up our stand at the

EVENTS IN WA



For each event we usually need volunteers to

- Make, in advance, lots of naked brown dolls and/or spare clothing or dolls' shoulder bags for Children's DressUps
- Be on the morning or afternoon roster to help the children and talk with adults about the project and its expansion
- Sell our Greeting Cards and Dollmakers' Workbooks

Please contact Joy (see details below) ASAP if you can help in any way.

- International Women's Day, King's Park, Sat March 8th, 4 – 7.30
www.gatherthewomen.org
- Perth Sun Fair, UWA, Sun April 6th, 9 – 3 www.perthsunfair.com.au
- Children's Fiesta, Samson Park, Sun April 13th, 10 – 3

DOLLMAKERS' VISIT TO KWAZULU-NATAL

Plans are afoot for a group (minimum 10) to visit KZN in October this year. Dates are Fri Oct 17th ex Perth and returning to Perth Thurs Oct 31st.

The aim is to strengthen out partnership with TREE and RSBSC. Our dollmaking workshops would be integral to their training in the emotional needs of vulnerable children. We would visit Durban, Pietermaritzburg and rural areas. There would be time for visiting the Umfolozi Wildlife Park and the Drakensberg Mountains. We want to be able to support the stalwart, seemingly unending, work of the women of KZN. If you are interested in coming with us this year, please contact Joy. It promises to be a most fulfilling experience, with our travel plans there being managed by Compass Odyssey who have taken hundreds of dolls to children in crèches in the St Lucia district. Each participant pays their own way.

If you are interested in coming there is some urgency in contacting Georgia before March 3rd if we are to fulfill South African Airlines group booking demands. 08 9293 2363 or georgia1@iinet.net.au

Let Georgia know of your interest even if you are not able to commit to this adventure immediately.

This gorgeous doll with wrapped hair by Judi Wilson welcomes the Uthando Project initiative of going to KZN in October.

DOLLMAKERS' VISIT TO KWAZULU-NATAL



A photo of this cheerful knitted doll has been sent to the UK for inclusion in an international knitting magazine

UK KNITTING MAGAZINE



OTHER ITEMS

You may have noticed that we have changed our sub title from Dolls for Zulu Children, to Dolls for the Children of KwaZulu-Natal. As there are many other tribal and language groups in KZN, we have used the wider description to be more inclusive.

Appreciation goes to Di Blesing and her husband for the designing and printing of the hard copies of this newsletter. What a contribution!

Georgia Efford will be travelling overseas March 7 – May 20, although the Open House on Fridays continues at the usual address.

Lynne Tognolini, who already coordinates the schools' Uthando programmes, will be the general coordinator. Huge thanks to Lynne.

Her email is lynnetognolini@bigpond.com, ph 9293 3876

All enquiries about patterns, events, cards and workbooks,

OTHER ITEMS



please contact Joy Whitfield, (08) 9291 6403 email jwhitfi@inet.net.au

This is a project which enlivens everyone. Every doll is appreciated as it passes through different hands. Please keep up this valuable work which enables children to play and be loved.

This superbly knitted blue doll by Jennifer Muir-Dick shows a new way of knitting in the ringlets directly into the hair piece before it is sewn on to the head. Simply, at any intervals in knitting the hair piece in any stitch, cast on 10 - 20 stitches and immediately cast them off before resuming where you left off!!! Include as many as you wish. Good luck

Georgia Efford and the Team

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Uthando Project Website