
UTHANDO PROJECT

ANNUAL REPORT 2022 - 2023

Our Mission

To create handmade dolls for our partner organisations in KwaZulu Natal, to use in their work with disadvantaged and vulnerable children, to strengthen relationships through play.

To create opportunities for community, shared creativity and purpose for doll makers in Australia and around the world.

Our Partners in KZN

dlalanathi: Works in impoverished rural and remote communities, building capacity through developing communications between carers and their children and teaching the value of play for development.

TREE: Training and Resources in Early Education. Provides high quality child care and early years education; training of workers in these fields and providing resources in a sustainable way.

Family Literacy Project: Develops literacy skills of adults and children in rural and remote communities.

Lifeline: Provides support and counselling to child victims of physical and sexual abuse.

Sizabantwana: Supports classroom teachers in their work with vulnerable children.

Our Board

Lynne Jones - Chair
Ann Vivers - Secretary
Pat O'Donnell - Treasurer
Lynne Tognolini - Vice-Chair
Robin Hamilton
Karin Maltby
Susan Cromb
Christine Johnson

Members of Uthando Project acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands on which we meet. We honour the ancestors of yesterday, the custodians of today and those of tomorrow. We recognise their continuing connection to land and waters and how culture is held, nurtured and shared. We pay our respects.

We will never know exactly how many comprise the network that is the Uthando Project as we receive so many anonymous deliveries of beautiful dolls and toys. It is wonderful to think of all who sew, knit and crochet having such a gratifying purpose to their work, - knowing they put smiles on the faces of children receiving a new doll or a toy for possibly the first time in their lives. In addition to the doll makers there are also those who make material and financial donations or volunteer their time. Uthando Project wouldn't exist without all these people.

Inequality in South Africa is among the highest in the world with as many as 63% of the population living in poverty. Life has become more difficult over the last several years due to 'load shedding' - rolling power cuts - lasting around 9 hours each day. The economic ramifications of this are huge and of course it is those already disadvantaged for whom the effects are most devastating.

Our partners in South Africa will all be feeling the effects of rising inflation but from the reports they send it is clear they continue to work tirelessly and innovatively to provide the services and care which is needed so badly in the communities of KZN. *dlalanathi* also extends its work to training similar organisations, promoting 'play for communication', in other parts of Africa and also, more recently, countries in Asia. Of course, with modern technology training sessions are delivered online.

Sadly, we can't wave a wand and fix all the world's problems but the love stitched into every doll will spread a little joy and happiness among the children of KZN.

DOLLMAKING

Judging by the numbers of dolls and accessories we receive, knitting, crochet and sewing are still very popular activities. How many of us spend our evenings knitting or crocheting because it keeps us from falling asleep in front of the TV? The challenge to finish yet another outfit for a doll certainly exercises those brain cells.



What better way could there be to spend a morning or afternoon than in the company of like-minded people, using creative, practical skills to produce dolls or toys for needy children you will most likely never meet. It is a truly generous act, but good for the heart and soul, knowing your doll will emerge from its shipping bag to be met with smiles of delight from adults and children alike. I would recommend joining a doll making group to anyone. Laughter has always been said to be the best medicine and the doll groups generate a lot of laughter so they should be very healthy.

We are very sorry to have lost the Albany doll making group. There were many reasons for the group disbanding, circumstances change for everyone. Julie Fletcher, who led the Albany group for many years is now concentrating on her artwork and we wish her all the best and many hours of enjoyment in producing her lovely work. If you're ever in Albany, look out for Julie and her outdoor painting friends around the town. I'm happy to report that some of the Albany members are still making dolls so we haven't lost touch completely.

We continue to receive dolls from around the country and across Western Australia. Some may be a one-off donation but others are from regulars like Jaqui Larson in NSW and Pat Taylor in Victoria. All are valued and the dolls will be treasured.

This year we have been pleased to see most dolls are the standard size we requested. This means we can optimise our packing and send as many dolls as possible of a decent size.. The many 'families' of dolls we send are also very much appreciated by our partners. In addition we have continued sending lots of small soft toy animals and balls as well as sets of hand puppets.

Given the slight reduction in freight costs for the last shipment we'll be sending some accessories again next time. These will include wraps for the dolls. If you are making wraps for dolls we ask that they be kept to a maximum size not much larger than an A4 sheet of paper. We are still not sending larger rugs.



'Play for Communication' is still an important component of the work of *dlalanathi*. This is a programme in which carers are taught to make a doll and then how to use the doll in play with their children. Uthando supplies the sewing kits for these sessions and 200 kits were sent with the last shipment.

dlalanathi has very kindly shared some of their dolls with other organisations working in the field of Early Childhood education. We are now endeavouring to send bags of dolls specially for these organisations so future plans will include increasing the number of community groups and individual doll makers to help generate greater numbers of dolls.

Sikuyo School provides daycare and early education for children 0-6 in a community on the outskirts of Johannesburg. The centre was founded by Thobeka Hlakanyane who saw the need to keep preschool children off the streets whilst their parents were at work. Uthando Board members were fortunate enough to meet this wonderful young woman when she was invited to join us at a *dlalanathi* workshop in 2016. We were impressed by her dedication to the vulnerable children and the resourcefulness with which she set about creating a safe space and not only keeping children safe but providing them with an early childhood education.

Lynn Stefano, a name from the early days of Uthando when she was involved with the Family Literacy Project, is now based in Durban where, in 2021, she established, **Lulamaphiko**. Lulamaphiko is an isiZulu phrase meaning 'spread your wings'. The organisation's focus is on 'early education and care of young children in rural areas of northern KZN'. (www.lulumaphiko.org will tell you more).

Uthando volunteers have always rallied to support a good cause and both these organisations will appreciate any dolls we can send them.

UTHANDO COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS

With COVID restrictions almost behind us, we need to build back a presence in the community through community workshops. To keep Uthando alive it is important for us to promote the value of doll making, recruit more doll makers and, hopefully develop more groups to replace those that close. Nothing in life is static and we mustn't be complacent and think things will remain as they are.

There have been other community groups making dolls for Uthando as one-off projects. These include a craft group in Harvey WA, Beaufort Street Community Centre in Mt Lawley and St Paul's Anglican Church in City Beach.

The Rostrata Craft Group in Willetton continues to support Uthando by making lots of our soft toys, especially the giraffes and zebras.

UTHANDO IN SCHOOLS

Thanks to the following schools that have contributed to our project this year,
Our Lady of the Cape, Dunsborough,
Harrisdale Senior High School
Greenwood College
Swan Christian College,
St Brigid's, Lesmurdie
Fairfield Primary School, Collie
Carey Baptist College, Forrestdale

The sales of kits to these schools helps our fundraising and any dolls we receive from them are sent to Sizabantwana.



PROMOTION AND FUNDRAISING

Once again our volunteers have been busy in the community, working hard to raise awareness of Uthando Project and raise the funds needed to keep the shipments going.

There have been a number of Destash Markets at Rockingham, Mundaring and Cannington. These give us an opportunity to declutter the headquarters at Forrestfield, keep hundreds of kilos of fabric from landfill and let people know about what we do.



Apart from the brown fabric for doll bodies, Uthando relies on donated fabrics for our kits and doll workshops but sadly there is far more fabric out there than we could ever use so the Destash Markets are a great outlet. If we have leftovers we are sometimes able to donate to other craft groups or individuals who have use for it or we can take fabrics to Op shops.

There have been occasions for us to sell dolls and toys at Cannington Craft Market, Mosman Park Men's Shed Craft Fair, Kalamunda Show, Sustainability Fair in Stirling and the Tasmanian ladies have sold their work at the Handmade in Cygnet Fair.



Again, dolls sold at these events have been specially made for sale or are sold with the doll maker's permission. We are grateful to the volunteers who make dolls and toys as well as scented heart sachets and other items for these markets.

SOCIAL EVENTS

Once again a group of Uthando volunteers spent a delightful retreat at the St John of God Retreat Centre in Shoalwater. There is always plenty of time for getting to make new friends and to pick up new doll making ideas and skills from each other. This time we celebrated the year of the Girl Child by making Pillowcase Dresses for disadvantaged girls.



Dolls, toys and pillowcase dresses

The Albany visit this year was not well attended for a variety of reasons, but the small group who stayed at Middleton Beach enjoyed a relaxing break.

The Sorrento Group held a day of friendship and kit making at the Henderson Centre in North Beach. The day produced a number of kits to help build our stock. They also put together fabric packs for the kits sent to South Africa for *dlalanathi's* Play for Communication workshops.

Our Christmas Party was held at Anderson Road Community Centre, on a smaller scale than in the past but still a fun time and opportunity to celebrate the end of another productive year for Uthando Project.



SHIPMENT

Given the increasing cost of shipping over the COVID years, the Board decided to have a longer gap between 2 shipments. Consequently, one shipment left Perth in June 2022. This fell into the previous financial year, though some of the costs associated with the shipment were paid in this financial year. This year we sent a shipment in March and that was fully funded from 2022-2023 budget.

Fortunately the cost of the March shipment was less than that of the June 2022 shipment, even though we sent more bags in March. Given this drop in the costs we are planning another shipment at the end of this year and then probably another in May next year.

In June 2022 a total of 62 bags was delivered to Durban and in March 2023 76 bags were delivered. The costs per bag for each of the shipments worked out to be \$163 and \$105 respectively. A considerable difference between the two shipments and moving in the right direction.

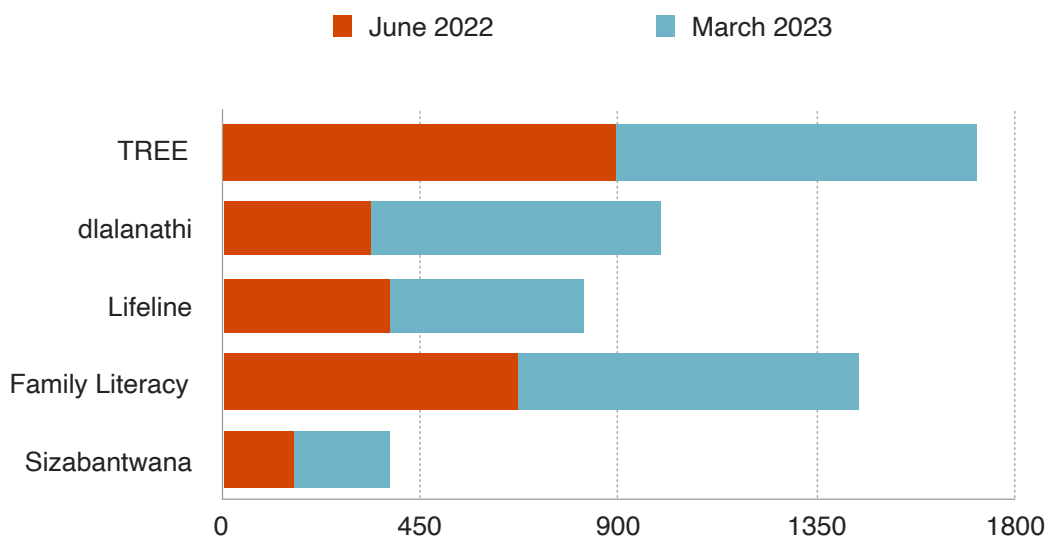
Thanks once again to Judith Allen who packs the dolls that arrive at Forrestfield, labels all the bags, prepares the content details for each bag as well as handling the paperwork for the freight company. Judith is assisted by volunteers and the Monday doll makers.

As well as the 2908 dolls, over 600 balls and 600 toys in the latest shipment, we also sent 200 sewing kits for *dlalanathi's* workshops.

Once again, the good folk from The Foothills Men's Shed came to our assistance to load the bags onto the truck to be taken for loading onto pallets and into a container.

TREE, based in Durban, receives the shipment once it clears customs and they kindly liaise with the other organisations to collect or arrange transport for their bags. Uthando contributes to cover any transport costs incurred by TREE in this regard.

Distribution of dolls and toys to our partners in KZN



FINANCIAL REPORT

Uthando Project is in a strong financial position and is able to budget for two shipments in the financial year 2023-2024

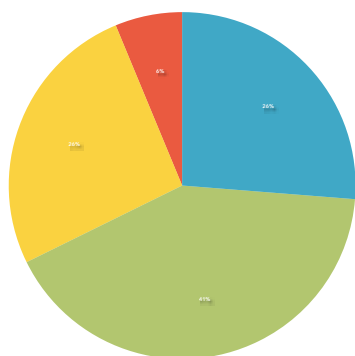
Donations are received regularly from the various doll making groups as well as individuals. We have donors who make monthly direct debit donations and others who give one-off contributions. Being an endorsed Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) organisation, donations may be tax-deductible.

Thank you to all who donate and to the group leaders who find ways to fundraise to help pay for their dolls to be shipped to South Africa.

Funds are also raised through craft fairs, Destash Markets and workshops in the community. Online sales of books, fabric and kits as well as sales of kits to craft groups and schools also continue to generate funds.

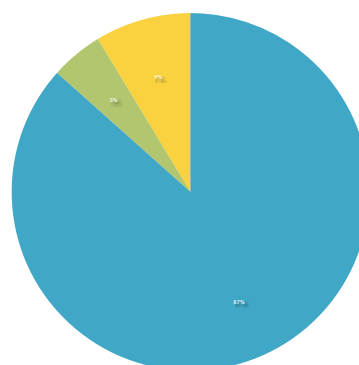
Income

● Donations DGR ● Donations non DGR
● Miscellaneous sales ● Grants



Expenditure

● Freight ● Administration ● Insurance



Income - Miscellaneous Sales include dolls, toys, kits, books and fabric sold through markets, fairs, workshops and online sales.

DGR includes donations which have been receipted for tax purposes

Expenditure - Administration costs include, PO Box rental, Website, Printing and Stationery as well as costs associated with kit making.

Insurance is our Public Liability and Volunteers' Personal Accident Insurance.

UTHANDO SPONSORS

We acknowledge the following individuals, organisations and businesses who have assisted in keeping Uthando Project costs to a minimum.

City of Kalamunda for the use of space at the Anderson Road Community Centre

Foothills Men's Shed for their invaluable assistance on shipping days

Ian MacCallum - Auditor

Gabrielle Doyle - Principal, Our Lady of Grace School, for use of hall by Sorrento group

The following organisations/individuals have assisted by waiving the fees for stalls and space for workshops

Mosman Park Men's Shed

Fleur Adams - **Perth Hills Events**



VOLUNTEERS

The dedication of our volunteer doll makers, wherever they are, continues to amaze and delight. Thousands of children, who might otherwise have no toys, have a special 'friend' to spark some joy in their lives. Each and every person who makes a doll, crochets a blanket, knits dolls clothes..... is a treasured volunteer

To keep the wheels of the Uthando Project turning we also need individuals to take on responsibilities over and above their doll making.

Anderson Road Community Centre serves as our HQ. It provides storage for all our fabrics and other materials, a workroom for doll making and a drop off point for deliveries of completed items for shipping. The centre is open twice a week: on Monday afternoons Judith, assisted by Georgia and anyone else who drops in, are sorting the dolls and preparing them for shipment as well as making dolls; on Fridays a group of volunteers, led by Lynne T, are busy making dolls or fixing up any dolls that need a little TLC. Di C is always busy sorting fabrics for the hundreds of kits she puts together.

Sharen S continues to help keep our fabric supplies to a manageable level and manages the destash and craft markets.

Jo L, another Friday volunteer, is our mail person, collecting the mail and shipping out any online orders we receive for fabric, kits, books etc.

There is always a cup of tea for everyone, thanks to Anne B and visitors are always made very welcome.

Pauline Marlborough has cut out thousands of doll bodies over the years and continues to do so with great enthusiasm.

Sadly we said goodbye to the doll making group in Albany early this year but other groups continue and are often welcoming new members.

The group leaders all do a fantastic job of ensuring their group members are welcomed into the group and enjoy a good few hours of friendship and fun, whilst they make their dolls or just sit and chat!

Thank you to all the group leaders for your efforts:

Irene & Anne	Tasmania
Gerry	Kwinana
Doris	Hamilton Hill

Robin & Anne	Sorrento
Carolyn & Janet	Bunbury
Wendy	Mundaring
Mary	Mindarie
Marlene/Gay	Gosnells/Padbury
Julie(retired)	Albany



Members of the Uthando Project Board give their time in many ways and without them we couldn't operate. Special thanks to Ann Vivers, who makes my job easy by always being on top of administrative /governance issues and to Pat O'Donnell who keeps our books up to date and her eyes on the finances.

As I write this, my thoughts are with the special friends of Uthando who are going through tough times with their health. There are more of you than seems fair. Take good care of yourselves and know that all your friends in Uthando are thinking of you and sending their love.

Thank you to all of you for making this another successful year for Uthando Project.



One little doll can do so much.

Below is a little story sent by Robyn Hemmens of *dlalanathi*

"This past weekend I met an Indian woman and her husband who shared with me their story of having triplets 4 years ago and one of the 3 babies died when they were 10 days old. They have raised their children very aware that they are 3 not 2. Ezra, their baby that died still plays a strong part in their daily lives and when the twins are called twins by others they always say "no we are triplets". This week, when I was going through the doll bags I thought of them and chose 3 dolls to give them, 2 boys and a girl. Their response was amazing. Kerisha the mom messaged me to say that they always assign butterflies and feathers with their baby boy who died and the one little boy doll had a butterfly in his bag. Your dolls found their right home 😊"

Your dolls continue to be profoundly meaningful. Thank you so very much"

Robyn (dlalanathi)

Your contribution to Uthando makes stories like this possible.

Proud doll maker at a dlalanathi Play for Communication workshop - Courtesy of dlalanathi Facebook page





Jill Frow of Family Literacy Project, visited Swaziland (now Eswatini), recently and sent these photos of children receiving dolls.

REPORTS FROM UTHANDO GROUPS

Thank you to all the group leaders who do such a wonderful job. Groups produce hundreds of dolls and the group leaders have to sort them and get them to Forrestfield, as well as hosting each doll day and ensuring the supplies are on hand.

MINDARIE

A little run down on our small but enthusiastic group.

Our Mindarie group meets every Tuesday at my home between 12 noon and 3pm. We have a lady who is almost blind that makes pompoms and finger chains during the week and when she comes to us on a Tuesday, she and another lady that has eye challenges stuff the dolls.

One lady loves to sew the faces and wigs on the dolls, another makes beautiful clothes and has an eye for dressing the dolls. Our Christine sews lovely bags for Life Line and makes many sewing kit bags. I make hand puppets and anything we are short of.

We have a treasure who makes us tea and serves us cake and when not caring for us does whatever is needed. There are a number of fringe members who crochet blankets, wind cotton onto cardboard and sort buttons and beads for the sewing kits.

Three children help put the kits together whenever they visit me.

As we run an Air B and B from our home our guests often sit and join the group, practice their English on us and help in any way they fancy. Our Mindarie group have become very close and support each other through thick and thin but love to have new members. Any one who would like to join us give me a call on 0413707660.

I have recently given one of our Uthando books to the President of Mothers Union as their aims and ideals are much the same as ours and she was bemoaning the fact that they were always looking for speakers at the various meetings around WA. As a member of MU and having done a study on the founder of MU I was amazed to find how closely we are aligned. I don't know if anything will come out of it but I have sewn the seed!

All the best,
Mary Richardson

HAMILTON HILL

The Fremantle Uthando Group is still meeting most Thursdays - the numbers vary now that we are all able to travel again. But there are always enough of us to chat and laugh AND make dolls! Ellen, Jan and Rosemary joined the group, full of new ideas.

We managed to add 230 dolls, 20 balls and extra clothes and blankets to the shipment in March this year. And are already packing for the next shipment end of the year.

Barbara is concentrating on making Simple Dolls for the little Ones at TREE - the latest count is 33! We are still hoping to run a workshop to make some of the lovely "Onesie Baby Dolls, also for TREE.

It is always great to get feedback from the different NGOs in KZN - so nice to know that we can bring some joy in the children's lives! But also so nice for all of us to be part of the Uthando family, to enjoy each other's company!

Doris van Keulen



VALE : Jill and Joyce - former stalwarts of the Hamilton Hill group who died during this year. They are lovingly remembered.

BUNBURY

The Bunbury Uthando Group continues to meet on Monday mornings in the Moorabinda Croquet Club rooms. 9-12 women attend each week; with a few less during the camping season. The photo shows some of the group on packing day before the last shipment. In the 6 bags were 108 TREE dolls, 75 girls and 47 boys for Dlalanathi (as in the photo), 12 balls & 28 animals.

At the end of term in December, we all enjoyed lunch together at a local cafe.



Once again Deborah Campbell hosted the group at her place during the Tree Street Art Safari in March. It was a great fundraiser. The donations exceeded the heart shaped message cards that had been prepared in advance for them.

Two new people have joined us during the year. But we lost one of our original members to cancer. Phena had been making dolls and doll clothes for Uthando since 2012. It was so much part of her life, that her daughter requested one of her dolls be displayed on the memorial table at the funeral in September 2022. A tribute that we all appreciated.

Ford and Doonan (air-conditioning) continue to make insulation offcuts available for stuffing our dolls.

GOSNELLS/PADBURY

The group, originally met in Marlene's home but then moved to Gay's home in Padbury. We are now meeting at Rowthorpe Village in Bentley and hoping more people from the village will join us.

The group of 4 or 5 meets once a month but also has friends who live in Mandurah and Esperance and regularly send knitted items for the dolls.



KWINANA

Hi, everyone. From Kwinana bowling club. We are still going strong .We have been going now for about 6 years. Still love making people happy. We were amazed to see some of our dolls in the photos Lyn sent. It makes it all worthwhile when you see the smiles on the kids faces. We are a group of about 12 ladies. Not everyone can come every week of course, but those who get here every Wednesday have a great time. Coffee, biscuits or cake seem to be on the table most weeks and of course lots of laughs and a bit of gossip goes around as well. We love it. Thanks. Gerry on behalf of the group.



TASMANIA

Uthando Tasmania have had considerable difficulty with illness this year both amongst our ladies and admin staff. As a result we closed down for 4 weeks during June and all those well enough took home extra work to complete during our break while our 3 external groups continued on.

We have been blessed with family contacts through Mary Richardson who from time to time visit Tasmania and courier back dolls to Perth HQ for us. This saves us a considerable amount in postage costs and we thank them all for their help. There are currently 9 bags of dolls ready for postage and we plan to increase that number before they are on their way.

During the last 12 months there have been a number of opportunities to speak at Probus groups where we have sold doll kits and have received a large number of beautiful dolls made by the ladies.

These groups have also contributed to our fundraising and continue to support us with fabric and other items.

Our school program continues with Cygnet Primary School and after 15 years of involvement the headmaster says they now consider it a Right of Passage for their senior students to learn about KZN and make a doll.

We have a Dolls Hospital for those creations that need extra help and our ladies enjoy bringing them up to scratch before they go.

We are registered with CentreLink and have a number of people who work 15 hours per week for their social security payments. This system works well for us and keeps the dolls coming.

Some years ago we met a couple from Mooi River in KZN who wanted to emigrate to Cygnet but this has not eventuated and has been a disappointment for both them and us. Michelle Scullard Lang, keeps in contact with JillFrow at Family Literacy Project and earlier this year brought us some lovely ShweShwe and hopes to visit us again next year.

As coordinator, having reached 80 years of age and with continuing health issues, I have tried to step back a few times to let someone else take over. This has not eventuated and I find myself still managing our increasing number of groups.

We send our greetings to all our Uthando friends.
Irene Swan

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SORRENTO GROUP (WA)

Dolling has continued at a relaxed pace here at the Sorrento Group.

We have 20 ladies who attend our get togethers which now number 2 per month. Monthly sessions at Marine Tce have now been supplemented by monthly sessions at one of the dollmaker's homes, on a roster. This means the ladies have a choice of a mid-week time if more convenient, fitting in with family commitments as needed. AND we get to meet more often 😊 We occasionally use the hall of a local primary school and thank the Principal very much for this free service.

We value the efforts of 3 ladies who do not attend meetings but deliver bags of dolls and assorted items when the shipment date comes around. We enjoy keeping supplies up to the Mindarie friendship group when requested – it's a joy to see the sewn skins we provide come back as beautiful complete dolls ready to join new friends in KZN.

Several ladies attended the Shoalwater Retreat where we played with dolls to our hearts' content. The Albany group gave us their spare supplies, posters and pattern files – very useful thank you Albany friends

A trusty band of dollmakers teamed up to prepare and deliver several events:

1. City of Melville doll making at Blue Gum Community Centre. Children came to make dolls (sewn bodies, wigs etc provided by Sorrento team) Two ladies returned for the presentation of the dolls to Wheelchairs for Kids program
2. Transitional Town Stirling had an event before Xmas and Uthando was there, showing our recycling and reusing skills in doll making. Activities for children had a steady flow of interested children and parents.
3. We had a great turn out of dollmakers from across Uthando for our doll kit making day at Star Swamp, North Beach. We appreciated the support of a local Councillor who attended to find out more and give a generous donation. The kits we made are then shared:
 - a. With all groups, to help with event supplies and on-line shop orders
 - b. Become part of sewing pouches that go to dlalanathi so that group participants from communities there can make their own

dolls as part of the workshop process, such as emphasising the importance of play and communication for the health and happiness of children and their carers.

On a personal note, thank you to Susan and family and doll friends who gave me a lovely afternoon tea to celebrate my official title as “Senior Citizen”, turning 65. Was so special, and we all loved being with 2 little grandchildren to brighten us up.

So another year of dollmaking where friends and dolls help each other through some hard times, and give us a lot of joy and happiness to share with each other, and our dear partners in KZN

THANKYOU for all the time, skill and love that goes into each doll.

THANKYOU for you creativity and ideas as we swap and recycle materials, patterns, ideas

THANKYOU for the financial donations involved in buying your own supplies and donating to our costs, such as insurance and shipping

THANKYOU for helping with events

THANKYOU for hosting us in your homes

THANKYOU for the FUN and FRIENDSHIP

With Admiration and Love

Robin