

the bridge!

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our first newsletter!

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It's sunny and lovely in Bellville South, Cape Town. There is so much happening with Building Bridges...finalizing our NPC status, raising funds, rehabilitating our new building, and working with University of Minnesota (USA) students who have been developing policies and interviewing our community around their needs. So it's time...time for our first newsletter. We hope you enjoy!

Building Bridges itself is in the development process...and all started at a Kentucky Fried Chicken in Delft. Anthea, Mickayla, and Nate had been working together for years at numerous youth agencies in Cape Town. It had been Anthea's dream to open an after-school program in her home community of Bellville South, which never had an organization of this kind. Over a warm value-meal, she asked Mickayla and Nate to help with this amazing idea; after four years, Building Bridges is finally a reality!

It has not been an easy journey. Starting a Non-Profit Company (NPC) in South Africa takes a lot of time, resources, and skill. We have been busy educating ourselves, raising funds, and partnering with multiple organizations, namely: Education Without Borders and Aspire Youth (both in South Africa). Identifying community needs has been our first priority. Bellville South is a small residential area in an

industrial zone at the edge of the Cape wine lands. Most of our roughly 30,000 inhabitants are Coloured (with Afrikaans as the predominant language), along with a relatively small number of migrant populations from other African nations. The community has a mixture of working-class houses, lower-income freestanding homes and council flats – with up to 4 informal shacks per yard.

Our youth have a tremendous amount to teach the world and they have done a great deal to improve their communities in our young democracy. They have familiarity with public health challenges, social reconciliation, entrepreneurship, music, art, sports, and so much more. They are the future of our nation, which gives us a great deal of pride. We also know our young people are hurting.

The extreme nature of poverty in our community, along with the trauma of Apartheid



our history

L to R: Nate Whittaker (Director of International Programs), Mickayla Smith (Assistant Director), and Anthea Jansen (Director)

has had a bruising effect on our youth. Many of our young people are head-of-home with parents lost to illness or substance abuse. Substitute "family" can often be found in gangs. Unemployment is high and racial prejudice is still present. Building Bridges is unwaveringly committed to replacing hopelessness with hope, happiness, and triumph.



our progress

We needed a fiscal agent for BB that was already established - someone who could watch any funds we raised in a legal way. A long time dear friend of ours, Mark Gamble agreed to be our fiscal agent. He runs a program called **Aspire Youth** (aspireyouth.co.za), working with young township kids on economic empowerment. He, and Aspire, was our first true partner. It was important for us to have a legal and established fiscal agent.

Next, we partnered with **Education**

Without Borders (www.educationwithoutborders.ca). EwB provides "add on" services to already established NGOs in South Africa (mainly food resources and tutoring). Right now, EwB is supporting three programs in Cape Town. In the coming months, Building Bridges will be the forth, which is exciting.

We are in the process of applying for our own (non-profit company) NPC status in South Africa. This is different from your typical NGO. The

non-profit sector in SA is funded almost exclusively by the government; NPC status is far more stable in SA and allows us to obtain funds outside the normal realms...there is also more oversight. We put in our paperwork for NPC status a few months ago. This is on-going.

Next, we would like to purchase a "container" (additional building) for office space. We are attempting to raise more funds and have the building by May, 2019.

Minnesota Students Visit Bellville South



In January of 2018 and 2019, University of Minnesota (USA) students have worked towards the development of Building Bridges through community-led initiatives, which has culminated into programming ideas, policy development, the inclusion of community voice. All students are a part of a learning abroad course developed by Nate Whittaker (Building Bridges Director of International Programs & Initiatives) called, "Solidarity & Community-led Social Change in South Africa."

Students experiment with methods that mitigate the problems of "volunteer work" or "service learning" as a "vacation" that does not work to transform communities, particularly previously colonized nations where an "oppressive savior complex" has done little towards justice-orientated structural change. The expectation is that participants prioritize learning **from**, and working **with** the community of Bellville South. They further learn that we are not in the business of "empowering" others but supporting others in empowering themselves while working with them towards a common goal. It has been wonderful having the students from Minnesota!

Jean Quam is the Dean of the College of Education & Human Development (CEHD) at the University of Minnesota (USA). She loves iPads and has gained the wonderful nickname, "Dean Jean, the iPad Queen." In actuality, Dean Quam believes 21st century technology and resources can equip learners to impact the world and their lives outside of the classroom. For a number of years, all students in CEHD have been lent iPads for their academic pursuits.

In 2015, our director, Anthea Jansen, was able to meet Dean Quam during her visit to the United States. A few years later, students from the U of MN

iPads from Dean Jean, "The iPad Queen!"



asked Dean Quam if she would consider donating iPads to Building Bridges. SHE AGREED and donated twelve devices to our program. Another gift from a separate donor allowed us to purchase Bluetooth keyboards, iPad stands, and a charging station. Once our centre is up and running, we will have a fully supported computer lab for Bellville South youth. These resources will play an essential role in developing and providing access to knowledge that will enhance learning, creativity and well-being for our youth.

THANK YOU DEAN JEAN QUAM!



communal clean-up!

We have been working with the local primary school in Bellville South for a location/building. We worked out an arrangement to purchase a building that already sits on the school's grounds but it was recently vandalized.

On 3 Feb, the community came out big time in supporting an initial clean-up of the building. We want to send love to all those who supported the effort!

the intern | carla schleicher

I had the amazing opportunity to travel to Bellville South for the month of August to work with Anthea and Mickayla in the initial stages of starting Building Bridges. I helped them with setting up fundraisers for Building Bridges, and attended meetings with Anthea around location planning and support from other institutions in Bellville South such as schools or other community spaces. Since Building Bridges hadn't launched yet, I also spent time shadowing them at their 9-5 job at Education without Borders, an after-school care program in Guguletu. This gave me the chance to see Anthea and Mickayla doing their inspiring work in an operation similar to the one they were starting. I had worked with them both before when I came to Cape Town as part of Nate Whittaker's Social Justice Seminar back in 2012, but this trip I spent every day with them and the children they worked with, both in Guguletu and at home in Bellville South and Delft. They shared their homes and their families with me, everything still connected to their mission of supporting community empowerment. This month that they shared with me allowed me to see a fuller perspective of what truly happens to get work like Building Bridges done. It's not an easy or glamorous job, it's not one that you can clock in an out of, but seeing Anthea's and Mickayla's passion and drive to continue despite the emotional weight or institutional barriers, was incredibly encouraging, and I can't wait to go back and see how much further Building Bridges has grown.



support us

1. Donate to our start-up campaign. You can even create your own personal support page!
2. Make a one-time donation!

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facebook.com/buildingbridgessouthafrica



3. Become a Sustaining Member! Our sustaining member program is an international and socially equitable way for you to support our work. By becoming a sustaining member, you help us do our work through a quarterly monetary gift and in return, gain exclusive access to our membership website.

SUPPORT IN ANY OF THESE WAYS HERE: WWW.BUILDINGBRIDGESSA.ORG/SUPPORT-US