

MY AFRIKA MAGAZINE

ISSUE #03 // 2017



Afrika Tikkun
Developing Young People
from Cradle to Career



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Heritage Day Pics!

What is ADHD?

A camp of miracles!

Disability and traditional healers.





I'm going to do a

SHATTERPROOF

HOUSE OF GLASS

SO WHEN THEY ARE SHOOTING
EACH OTHER OUTSIDE, THE BULLETS
ARE NOT GETTING INSIDE





Afrika Tikkun
Developing Young People
from Cradle to Career

Sandy Somdyala and many kids like her want to change the world. Make sure they can by helping us support them in every aspect of their lives, from cradle to career. **Donate at www.afrikatikkun.org.**



Message from the General Manager of Wings of Life

It is my privilege and honour to invite you to the **MY AFRIKA MAGAZINE**. It will shift your paradigm about the work that Afrika Tikkun does every day. The stories of the young people are told by the young people themselves.

throughout their lives from cradle to career. This means that through good times and bad, we are there for them. In this quarter's magazine, we read two stories of how children struggled and eventually overcame one of life's greatest pains – the death of a loved one. The stories of Kgopi, age 6, and twins, Sandile and Bandile, age 12, teach us what a difference support can make for grieving children.

Corey S. Powell says: "There's an old joke. If you tell someone the universe is expanding, he'll believe you. If you tell him there's wet paint on the park bench, he'll want to touch it to make sure." In the same vein, when you open this quarterly magazine you read about remarkable experiences of real people with real lives and how they became heroes in their own stories. Our stories are elegant and sound lofty, oh, yes go ahead and put us to the test. We can show improvement across all our functions thanks to our new Monitoring and Evaluation Unit. We also welcome the Aspiring Leadership Program, which takes commitment and accountability to new heights.

For the first time, you will read letters from our readers whose responses to the last magazine's articles show what a warm, loving and diverse family we are. I would like to extend a thank you to all the children, families and staff, the leadership and partners/sponsors of Afrika Tikkun, for jointly, we realise the vision of inclusive economic participation. May you continue supporting Afrika Tikkun in its endeavours to realise its vision. I wish you all the best in the last quarter of 2017 as we all work towards an even better 2018.

We walk alongside young people and their families



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NEWS FROM THE 5 AFRIKA TIKKUN CENTRES

WHAT WE SAID...

*"These are letters sent in response to articles in the 2nd quarter magazine. **They do not necessarily reflect the views of Afrika Tikkun.** They are the views of different people who are all part of the vibrant community that makes up Afrika Tikkun. We hope these responses will spark respectful, caring and honest conversations for you and your friends."*



WHAT NOT TO DO IF YOUR FRIEND IS GAY



Anonymous

"There are people who are gays outside there, and they are scared that people can judge them. And when your friend is a gay, you just have to support him or her, because that is the thing that particular person needs at that time."

Thabang

"Homophobia is a serious problem amongst African people particularly black South Africans. It is great to see the

conversation being started around this topic because I believe that the more we talk about it, the faster the information will spread. We need to support our youth and encourage them to own their identity as best as they can. If I suspected my friend was gay, I would accept him/her just the way they are because I expect the same from my friends. It is only time, trust and openness that will create a space for both of us to discuss this topic. In the mean time I will be the best friend I can be toward my friend."

Ayanda

"I like this article the most because it shows me how ignorant we are about the violence that the LGBTI community face day by day. For me this is really a big burning issue not only in South Africa but in other countries as well. The SRC member of Alex is one of the bravest people I know. For him to stay strong against every word he's been called; he still smiles and moves on and that for me is a good strategy."

Kgomotso

"As the LGBT community become visible and accepted in society, more and more people are feeling comfortable to "come out of the closet". Even so some of the people still don't know how to react when someone close comes out to them. If we truly love the person we should accept the person the way he is, because he is still the same person as before – you just know a little more about them now. I think as a friend you should empathise with them and find ways to keep your friendship strong."

STEPHEN MOHAPI



Anonymous – "It so amazing to see someone's dreams come true especially a township boy"

David – "Stephen Mohapi encourages us to not give up in life. I thank Afrika Tikkun for helping Stephen's dream come true."

Renky – "This shows that there is life in Afrika Tikkun. I like the fact that they helping people to achieve their

careers."

Victor – "Stephen Mohapi is a hard-working man and he doesn't give up. I like him."

Anonymous – "Stephen is an inspiration to me. Stephen is an inspiration to all the youth and whoever is interested in sports."

Frank – "He is so passionate about what he does and sometimes I get great inspiration from him, because he is a great leader. I like the fact that he's pursuing his dreams."

GENERAL

Elizabeth

"Afrika Tikkun does a very good job, I can say it is really exciting and heart-warming to see that we have organisations such as this one, that make sure that children are being taken care of and are made priority in the community. I think Afrika Tikkun should introduce activities like aerobics. They can keep that spark of excitement and happiness in their hearts as part of development."

Anonymous

"I love the fact that Afrika Tikkun created a magazine. By creating this magazine they empower children and young adults to know better and to do better in life. The idea of the magazine is brilliant as it tells people who are not from Alexandra about how we live and it tells them also about our heritage."

DIEP TYRES

Daniel Selowa

"In a community like Alexandra there are few organisation like Afrika Tikkun and this magazine exposes what the organisation does. I like the fact that the organisation offers the opportunity to local people who have potential to make something positive of their lives."

Khutso makes us realise that we don't have to wait for someone to do something. He made us realise that you can do something on your own without consulting someone and that you can use your own skills. He show us that you can just see something and think it is useless, give it a thought and then do something good with it. It will change your life completely and can teach a good lesson to us and our next generations. Khutso makes us see that when you make something unique, there will be many opportunities that will come to your life."



TEEN SUICIDE

This is the article that we had the biggest response to from all 5 centres. It's a growing problem, that we don't talk about enough, but that is affecting us more and more. See what Tikkuners had to say.



Bridgette

"Teenage suicide is real and people my age are killing themselves because of their life situations. Depression is the biggest cause of it. All we need to do is to be strong and fight with our daily life challenges no matter how hard the

situation is. Always have faith and hope in yourself."

Mlungisi

"It is a fact that each and every day in South Africa someone will commit suicide. For the past years the rate of people commit suicide is extremely high. There are many reasons teenagers commit suicide. You must first ask yourself, why do they even have suicidal thoughts. One possible reason which I think people tend to be ignorant of is REJECTION. There are a number of young people who feel rejected on daily basis.

They feel rejected by the communities they live in.

They feel rejected by their families.

They feel rejected by their friends.

They also feel rejected because of their disadvantaged family backgrounds. They even feel rejected at schools where they are supposed to be assisted."

"We all have different values, priorities, beliefs, priorities, religion, culture, and race. For one to cope with rejection, I think he/she should start by understanding all these differences. We are all special, just because some do not share the same feelings, values, beliefs, religion and culture, should not mean one should feel rejected. Teenagers should not be afraid or ashamed if they have suicidal thoughts. Try seeking help from trained professionals or people whom you can trust. Always value yourself and know that you were brought to earth for a specific and special reason."

Paul

"My name is Paul and I think teen suicide is true and increasing every day for different reasons, such as divorce, child abuse, death of loved ones, being raped etc. It is unfortunate that many black people from rural areas are not able to recognise the symptoms of suicidal thoughts. People should know that teen suicide is real and can happen to any of our family including our self. It is very painful to start talking about this issue when it is too late or when someone you love committed suicide. Prevention is better than cure. The South African government should do something about it as soon as possible, but let us not wait for them. Let us ensure that we take care of our family. If you see something suspicious with your child, such as changes in their behaviour, it is your responsibility as an elder to intervene. Ask them what is bothering them and what they think they can do about it. Listen to them, make them feel like they are not going through that challenge alone. Our children are our responsibility whether we are their biological parents or not. Save someone's life by intervening and showing them support."

Mukhethwa

"Everything that I've read in this article I've seen before. It is happening out there. When I was at secondary school, so many students I was attending class with were being abused at home, by their school mates and by teachers. The problem is they don't know how to share their problem with their friends. So they end up trying to solve the problem on their own and making the wrong decision. Some of them they end up not going to school and some of them end up committing suicide. Mostly this suicide affects girls between 15-19 years old. They think if they tell their friend about what they are going through, they will laugh at them."

A MOTHER WHO CARRIES THE HEARTBEAT OF HER COMMUNITY



Sebesho

Many women don't accept and appreciate how their children look but this mother appreciates the little boy for how he is and loves him. Afrika Tikkun opened their hearts and managed to employ

Utilia and she is now able to take proper care of her children. I just wish most mothers can do what she did and accept their children for how they look.

Nokwanda

Well I find it so touching and brave what a real woman is. She chose her son over people and her husband, and the truth is she loved him too but she did what was right for her, without even thinking about what people would say and think of her. Some women would leave her baby and go with her husband.

But because God his good all the time, he opened doors for her. She did not stop praying. It's like she knew that something good would come after the pain and the abandonment by her loved ones. It takes braveness and love to do that. Thanks to Afrika Tikkun for the help and the beautiful work they did for the brave mother. Now Utilia showed us as women that whatever God gives you, it's yours. Take it as a beautiful gift and give love. Whatever challenge you are in, you are not alone. I'm so in love with this story.

Masilu

I mean for a lady like Utilia, I have learned that everything is possible as long as you got a goal in your life and you don't undermine yourself.

Cynthia

She is an example to the community that she was afraid of.

RISING FEMALE LEADER



Sibongile

"Rising female leader is my favourite article because women are not usually noticed for their qualities, skills and what they can really do. I love the fact that a young girl, brave and intelligent, has been noticed and has a chance to

be in the spotlight. She encourages young girls who are also in the CYD programmes to stand tall and represent themselves. It also encourages girls to come out of their comfort zone and become YOUNG FEMALE LEADERS in the centre, community, school and personal lives."

Mantsha

"I really love Lebogang Nkhatau, since the first day I saw her at my first camp in October 2016 at Magalies Retreat. When I saw her, I just saw a confident and respectful person, with pride and dignity. Then the first time I heard her participating in the debate, I was so touched. She is a real role model that many girls must have. She really inspires me! #my role model #my leader."

SPELLING BEE Busisiwe



"I love the story about Nthabiseng Mabe because I get motivated and inspired because I really love the Spelling Bee. One day I want to win the spelling bee competition. Seeing someone as young as I am winning the Spelling Bee, I got touched and I think I can also do the Spelling Bee and win like her."

A Day to CELEBRATE HERITAGE



2017





It was all colour, music, dance and good food in celebration of Heritage Day this year. The day was a riot of colour and a wonderful opportunity for cultural pride to be put on display.

The light at the end of the tunnel.



Kgopi (5) started attending the ECD programme in 2015. She did not take long to adjust to her new environment. Soon after she started with the programme she was interacting with her class mates and participating in the classroom activities.

But in 2016, Kgopi lost her mother, and her teacher started noticing that she was different. Kgopi started to isolate herself from her peers, lost enthusiasm and refused to take part in classroom activities. Her teacher noticed this and asked for

support from the social worker.

Kgopi has since received the psychosocial support she needs together with her family and has since returned to her old self. She has shown tremendous development emotionally and socially and her participation in classroom activities has also improved. Her confidence has grown, especially through taking part in dance and music activities, and she is one of the best dancers in the ECD.

What to do when a child loses someone they love ...

Losing someone you love is never easy for an adult or a child. So it is important that children, like adults, be allowed to grieve as an important part of accepting that a loved one has died. Having a caring adult who will support them will help the child through the process. Here are a few tips on how to help children cope with grief.

Be Honest

Honesty builds trust. When children don't know the truth they can come up with all kinds of crazy ideas, so it's important to be honest. Open the discussion, find out what they know and think, and give as much detail as they can cope with.

Use Simple Language

You could say, "I have something very sad to tell you. _____ has died. She's not alive anymore and we won't be able to see her and play with her."

Offer a Listening Ear

Children's concerns are often different than you might expect. They might ask questions like, 'Where is _____?' and you can then teach what you believe. Don't worry about having all the answers. What's more important is being available and responding in ways that show you care. Emphasize that they are not alone in their feelings of helplessness and shock.

Keep a watchful eye

Children don't always communicate just with words. Common reactions to grief include fighting, denial, mood swings, self-

blame, fear of being alone, regression to early childhood behaviours, physical complaints like stomach aches or headaches, trouble sleeping, failing or over-achieving at school, or a lack of feelings altogether. Keep a watchful eye in case they may need more professional help.

Accept their feelings

It's natural for children to experience a range of emotions after the death of a loved one. Feelings of anger, regret, and even relief are all natural and appropriate. Sometimes children have irrational thoughts and think perhaps they caused it to happen. They may be scared to go to school for fear that something will happen to somebody else while they're gone. Encourage your children to express their emotions. Consider appropriate ways to talk about your own feelings. You might say, "Sometimes I have a really down day because I'm thinking about _____, and I miss her and I feel like nothing's the same. Do you ever feel like that?"

Maintain a Routine

Kids will be concerned with how their lives will change, so it's important to reassure them that most things will go on as usual and to continue following a structured schedule.

UNDERSTANDING

ADHD IN OUR COMMUNITIES

run up and down in class, did not want to sit down and listen, especially during resting time. During creative art she preferred to scribble anything, tear up pages and make noise. She liked playing by herself and speaking to herself throughout the day and did not like it when other children engaged with her.

“We have had to be very patient and understanding of her condition and gentle with her because she would get aggressive when we try to engage with her. The training we receive from the OT has helped a lot in that we now know how to deal with Londi’s personality and help her engage with us as her teachers and her classmates”, said Londi’s teacher.

Recently Londi has shown some improvements because she’s now able to listen and participate in most activities. She’s still very active but she is now showing progress in routine and participation. Her favourite activity is ball skills – she enjoys throwing and catching the ball with both her hands.

“It’s always important to use the child’s name or get closer to the child and touch them to get their attention. We also advise that lessons and tasks be kept short so that it grabs and maintains the child’s focus. It is also important that teachers include physical activities as well as different mediums or items to carry out the tasks in a more engaging manner”, explained Ilhaam.

Certain things play a role in causing ADHD. Feeding children too much sugary foods and smoking and drinking alcohol during pregnancy may cause this condition.



Occupational Therapist (OT) Ilhaam Hendricks has been working with Mfuleni’s ECD to help teachers understand children with **Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)**.

ADHD is a common condition in children, but it is mostly perceived as naughtiness or moodiness, and a lack of discipline. This is because most people do not know about ADHD.

Children with ADHD have difficulty staying focused and paying attention, difficulty controlling behaviour, and can be hyperactive.

Londi (not her real name), age 4, is a lovely young girl with ADHD. She joined our ECD centre early this year, but has difficulty paying attention in class and participating. In the first few weeks of school she would

MISS SOUTH AFRICA AND THE ALEX ECD



Developing children takes more than just having a session in a classroom – **it’s also about making them feel special.** Varsity College, Sandton, pampered our ECD children. For Women’s Month, Varsity College hosted a Miss Princess event for 20 Grade R girls in partnership with Afrika Tikkun.

They were treated like princesses for a day, and had an opportunity to meet and share a day with Miss South Afrika 2017, Demi-Leigh Nel-Peters. The event was fun-filled, with educational activities including creative arts, and they were pampered with make-up, manicures and treated with lunch by Miss SA. They

were crowned Miss Princesses in a crowning ceremony.

The kids had a ball! They told everybody the following day that spending the day with Miss SA was like a dream come true and that they had so much fun.



A CAMP OF MIRACLES



During the holidays, Afrika Tikkun holds camps for young people from all the centres. They come together at a beautiful campsite outside of the city and spend time in nature. It is a time to be equipped and motivated to be leaders and role models. It is also a time to be empowered to respond to some of the most serious challenges facing young people in townships.

Meet 12-year-old twins, Bandile and Sandile. They are being raised by single mother, Elizabeth Kwenaike. They lost their father last year, 2016. The twins have been part of Afrika Tikkun for more than 3 years.

They were known for fighting with other children and amongst themselves. The loss of their father affected them so much that their behaviour got worse. They became troublesome, naughty, aggressive and bossy. When there was a fight at the centre, they were always part of it. They didn't want to listen, and they refused correction. They would listen but as soon as you turn your back, they would continue with what they were doing.

Until they attended the camp of 2017.

In a joint statement, the twins said, "At the camp of miracle, we learned about leadership skills, self-acceptance and self-knowledge. Now we can take care of ourselves".

Their facilitators are quite amazed at the transformation: "Since they came back from the camp, they are very respectful and responsible. Even at the centre they look after their peers. They see themselves as leaders. They are aware of their behaviour, and even

advise other kids to stop fighting", said their facilitator.

"The first time I met the twins, they had anger issues, they would get angry and pick-up a fight with the peers. Now they are volunteering to help; they are leaders and they are confident", said Malvin Khumalo, Sport Facilitator.

At the parents meeting, their mother said, "I don't know how to thank Afrika Tikkun, you have changed my little boys. They have transformed from being the naughty, irresponsible boys they used to be. Today I can proudly say that my kids are very responsible. When they wake up in the morning now, they know that they need to bath, brush their teeth and sit down and eat. They do not backchat when I talk to them; they listen and respond with respect. They have showed me so much respect recently that I don't know how to thank Afrika Tikkun for doing this for my children".

Since they came back from the camp, there is peace in the house, they are in a good space within themselves, and they have improved academically. The mother is now able to sit and talk with the twins, and she enjoys their company.



PRIME STAR

When a young boy reaches the critical ages of between 11-13 years, they look at male figures in their lives as role models. Prime Nchabeleng (17) did things a little differently. He took it upon himself to become a man in his own right.

This is a story of a young man's journey to self-discovery. Coming from a place where drugs and violence are a norm for young men his age, Prime chose a different path.

From an early age, Prime's experience of a man was close male relatives that constantly abused women. Not understanding this behaviour Prime lost trust in men, became reserved, withdrawn and lost a lot of confidence. "I did not know what to do and felt helpless. I remember every time I wanted to protect these women I was called names and told I was letting women control me", said Prime. This confused Prime and he did not know who or what to become.

When Prime was 14, he made a decision to change his life. He enrolled at Afrika Tikkun in Diepsloot only to find many young people with similar ambitions and dreams. Soon after being part of the programme, the previously shy boy started making friends and interacting more with his peers. "When I first came to Afrika Tikkun I thought I was going to be judged, but I have since learnt to be myself which will allow other people to believe in me and in return I have learnt who I am as a person", said Prime.

The turning point in the young Nchabeleng's life was when he attended a camp organised by Afrika Tikkun for young men and women.

At this camp, Prime learnt that being a man means to protect those around you, that no matter what another person does to you it is no reason to be violent towards them.

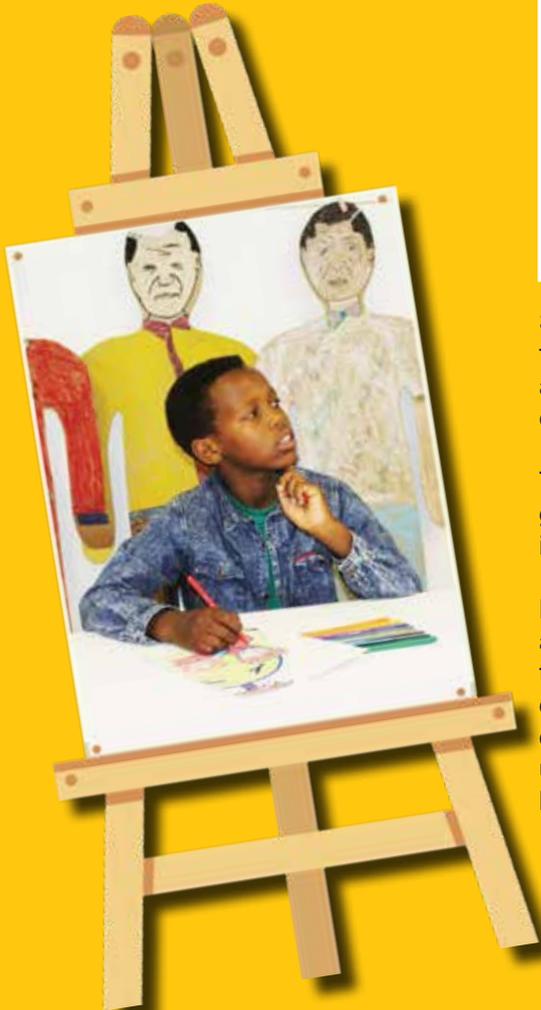
Prime attends the CYD programme and also Physics and Maths Saturday Classes at the Wings of Life centre and as a result, his Mathematics has improved. He also turns negative energy into positive by putting it towards things he loves such as: cycling, spelling bee, and dancing. Prime is dedicating his life to seeing the beauty in the world, and that is why it is his dream to become an astronomer.



TALENT MEETS LEADERSHIP FOR FUTURE ENGINEER AND GRAPHIC ARTIST, LUKHANYO NONO

Talent meets Leadership for future Engineer and graphic artist, **Lukhanyo Nono**. Lukhanyo Nono (12) is a very talented Grade 6 learner who enjoys drawing, maths, science and English and wants to be the best artist and electrical engineer in the world. Coming from a tough background, this big dreamer is a true example of persistence and courage.

Nono and his siblings joined the CYD programme in Mfuleni, Cape Town in mid-2015 and life has not been the same again for this family. Like many families, they faced the challenge of no employment and no income within the household. This negatively affected his studies and focus. Thanks to the Family Support Services programme, the Nonos will receive monthly food parcels until their situation changes for the better. They also receive quality development from the ECD and CYD programmes to support them.



Since joining the CYD, his love for drawing has been developed further through our art programme and he is back to being a top achiever at school, through the help of the CYD facilitators who ensure that he focuses on his studies more.

This year he was chosen to become a Peer Educator. He has good leadership skills, is eager to help other young people and is assisting the facilitators with some of the programmes.

Lukhanyo has recently joined the Running Sports Hub, which allows him to focus on fitness and being a great leader. He wants to pursue his goals to make lots of money and move his family out from their small shack and into a mansion. But what stands out the most with this young leader is his love for his family: "My ultimate wish is to see my parents back together and coming back to a warm home", said future engineer, Lukhanyo Nono.



DETERMINED TO BE A BETTER ME

Sifiso Monchu, a young man doing his Grade 11, has faced adversities in his lifetime, but continues to believe that there is still much to gain from life and that it is worthwhile to try to be a better man.

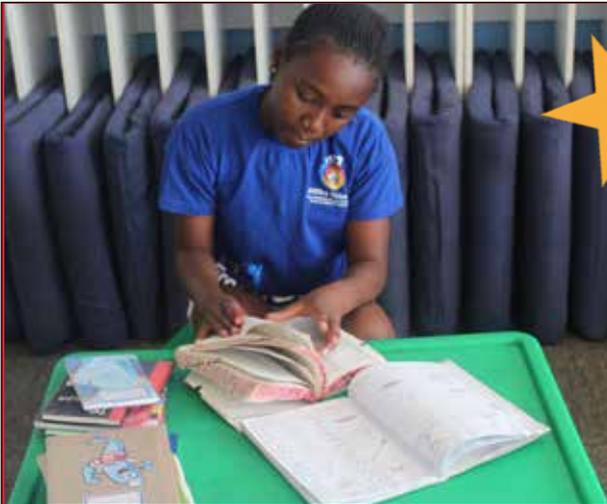
Sifiso lost his mother, his only parent, when he was 3 years old. His sister took him in, but **he had to learn to become independent from an early age**. "Even though my sister is working, I understand that she has to support her children, so I make my own means to survive as well. I sometimes wash cars, or help my neighbours with any household chores, so that I can make my own money", he added.

He depends mostly on his neighbour, who not only gives him lunch money but encouraged him to go back to school last year when he dropped out. Sifiso is now repeating Grade 11. He tells us proudly that he is coping with his studies, and attending Afrika Tikkun's Saturday classes.

He joined Afrika Tikkun in 2014. He takes part in debating activities, "I appreciated how we could speak freely there and how confident I would be" Sifiso says with a smile; but it is cycling that is his passion. "I came to the Centre to take part in arts and culture activities but I fell in love with cycling".

The cycling programme has allowed him to participate in well-known races like the 94.7 race last year and more recently, in CycAlive. CycAlive brings young people from Johannesburg, Israel and Afrika Tikkun together in a cross-country cycle expedition from Johannesburg to Durban to raise funds for local schools. "For some reason I was sad in Durban, I wished my mom was there to witness this proud moment", said Sifiso.

"I thank Afrika Tikkun for giving me an opportunity to be a cyclist and to go further with it. I am proud of this Centre", he added. Sifiso plans to pass his matric and study accounting or business thereafter.



From Zero to Hero

Congratulations to Kutlwano! Her academic results improved so much since coming to Afrika Tikkun that she has now been awarded a scholarship to study at Leaps Maths and Science School. She was referred to Afrika Tikkun after doing badly at school, and says her marks have improved because English is spoken at the centres.

BREAK THE SILENCE ON WOMEN AND CHILDREN ABUSE

BURNING ISSUES

“Each domestic beating is a potential murder, each domestic sexual abuse of a child is a potential rape and infanticide”, Police Minister FA Mbalula.

The crime rate in townships has been on the rise in the past few months with heartbreaking cases of children and women abuse, rape, domestic violence and murder. Most of these crimes go unnoticed or even reported; and the Mfuleni community is no exception to these devastating crimes.

Most women in disadvantaged communities tolerate abuse in their homes and communities because they think it is the way of life. Children get abused and used to such home conditions from a very young age and therefore grow up thinking that is normal. They grow up witnessing their mothers being raped and abused in various ways by their fathers, spouse or relatives. These kinds of circumstances can damage any child’s mind, emotions and outlook on life. Children grow up damaged emotionally, and can become either bitter or follow in the footsteps of the negative role models they have seen, becoming criminals and abusers themselves.

According to Communications Officer and Captain of the Mfuleni Police station, Nomathemba Muavha, domestic violence, rape and gender-based violence cases is on the rise in Mfuleni, but they see it as a good thing. This is because various NGOs in the community have been working hand-in-hand with the police to drive as many awareness programmes as possible to empower women and help them come out and report these cases.

In one of the awareness events held at Afrika Tikkun hall in Mfuleni, MOSAIC Training, Service & Healing Centre of Women shared on physical abuse, verbal, sexual, emotional and economic abuse.

Captain Muavha, shared on the important steps to take if you have been raped or involved in a domestic abuse; “First and foremost **we urge women and children to break the silence on these cases!** There is support for victims of rape and abuse; women should not tolerate abuse of any kind. Secondly, we advise that do not walk alone at night from shebeens or pubs, rather get your alcohol and drink in your homes as most of the rape cases we have happen at night and involve partying and alcohol.

“If you have been a victim of rape, immediately go to your nearest police station **WITHOUT** having taken a bath so that they can get the DNA of the perpetrator. This is crucial as that may not be the first offense of that crime, so coming forward to report may help many other victims linked to that perpetrator. Lastly she urged that if it is a case of domestic violence or abuse, the victims must report the case and also go to the magistrate court to obtain a protection order against the abuser. Please note that you do not need to open a case first before obtaining the protection order. This order gives police the power to arrest the abuser easily when violated.”



HIGH SCHOOL DROP OUTS ON THE RISE

A lot of our young people are not only unemployed but also unemployable – unemployable because they do not meet the minimum requirement of having matric. A high number of young people in communities like Orange Farm have taken the route of dropping out of school. Although some return, most do not.

There are a lot of reasons for dropping out of school amongst young people. Mostly, it is because of the home background, being unable to afford a decent school uniform and having lunch. Another reason that has pushed young people to drop out of school is because they believe they are not coping academically and are afraid of failure. “We have had similar cases of a Grade 12 learner who just dropped out and did not write his final matric exams last year, and as we investigated we found out that he did not have the required documents as he is not from South Africa” said Xolani Sampies, CYD Manager.

According to Sampies, the Centre’s intervention has assisted in encouraging the learner to get back to school and he is now doing his Grade 12 again. Whatever the reasons may be for dropping out of high school, young people fail to consider the disadvantages of their choices. The most significant disadvantage high school dropouts face is lowered economic gains when compared with high school graduate, because they find it difficult to even enrol in tertiary institutions.

The CYD Manager, Sampies, believes that with education, young people have unlimited opportunities to lead all aspects of their lives tenaciously to success. When young people complete their education, this results in a decrease of poverty.



Youth Skills Development Programme

YOUTH GOT SKILLS



Obed Mokgoko lives in Alexandra. Before he came to Afrika Tikkun, he was studying towards a Business Management Diploma. However, due to lack of finance, he was forced to drop out and look for something else to do. He struggled to find employment, leaving him frustrated and worried about where he would end up. He was then referred to Afrika Tikkun by a friend and registered for the Youth Skills Development Programme. After graduating, Obed was placed at a Woolworth’s division as a sales assistant.

“The little knowledge that I had combined with the Afrika Tikkun experience, boosted me to go forward”, said Obed. “I was a bit shy when I stated the training. Afrika Tikkun helped me to be stable, and boosted my morals and confidence. I was exposed to things that I wasn’t aware of and I have acquired all of these skills free of charge”.



Nomathemba Gamede was living on her granny’s pension when she heard about Afrika Tikkun. “I heard about Afrika Tikkun from a friend of mine, so I came and enquired then I started with my classes” she said. “The course has exposed me to so many things, including being able to manage money, job ethics and how to conduct myself in an interview.”

After completing the course, Nomathemba completed a Child and Youth Care learnership in Orange Farm. She is now a Data Capturer. “I am proud to say Afrika Tikkun changed my life for the better and I am looking forward to grow in every aspect of my life”, she said.



Xolisile Mdakane came to Gauteng to look for work opportunities so she could support her child and mother. Her plans were crushed when for the longest time she couldn’t catch a break. That is when she enrolled for the Youth Skills Developed Programme at Afrika Tikkun.

Soon after the programme, a job opportunity presented itself and Mdakane grabbed it with both hands. “If I knew better I would have taken part in the programme a long time ago, the skills I learnt such as the interview and people skills played a major role in me mastering the interview and getting the job,” said the excited Xoli.



TURN YOUR HOBBY INTO AN INCOME

Even with Afrika Tikkun's plan to develop and skill the youth to find employment and be productive citizens, unemployment is still a challenge for most young people. A lot of young people are sitting at home with talents they have turned into hobbies. Some are good at doing people's hair, while some are good with the mechanics of cars or creating things with their hands. The next step is to turn your hobby into something that you can make a living out of. Here are some tips on how to:

Create a plan

You need to make a plan that includes, what your product is, your target market and how you plan on letting people know and eventually buying your product or using your services. It will help to research about the kind of business you want to start. What is already in the market, how is it priced, and where is it sold.

Test your product in the market

If you are a hairdresser start with doing the hair of the people around you, even if it is for free so that they can show off your work. This will get people asking and creating an interest.

Market your brand

Be your brand, it does not have to cost you money for now, but use your social network

accounts, your family, and friends (word of mouth) and go out there and tell people about what you do.

Keep your first clients happy

Make sure your first clients are happy, they are the ones who will continue marketing you should you grow to produce more diverse products.

Treat it like your job

Do not stop going, keep pushing and make it your everyday thing. Remember starting a new thing is never easy for anyone, but that does not have to stop you from reaching your goals and being the best that you can be. Lastly, bear in mind that all the huge innovations around you started small. All the best.

Though Women's Month has come and gone, we continue to celebrate young women doing their best to uplift themselves through business.

Meet the four young ladies from Orange Farm, Lerato Modiakgotla, Banele Mazibuko, Nondumiso Mkhize and Nomvuzo Hlaola. Their journey began when they enrolled for the Youth Skills Development Programme (YSDP) at Afrika Tikkun's Centre in Orange Farm.

While they were still on that course, a training opportunity came from the Curriculum Development Project (CDP) "Women in Arts" project, in creating mosaics. Nthabiseng Gama, Afrika Tikkun's Skills Development coordinator pushed them to apply: "I saw their drive and loved how positive they were and I knew they would not give up", Gama said.

"I went for training not knowing that art can be my passion, **I fell in love with creating beauty with my hands** and loved how empowering our facilitator was", Nondumiso said. The young ladies recently celebrated their first paid project. They were offered a job to create art work for Angels Day Care, a pre-school in Orange Farm. It's the first of many opportunities they hope.

"We believe that this will get our name out there and has pushed us to go out and market our work and also to build a professional brand that will sell us. Doing skills development changed our attitude of looking for jobs to a mind-set of believing that we can create jobs", said Nomvuzo.

Today, these ladies are transferring their skills to other young women in Orange Farm who have just completed the YSDP. "The response we are receiving from the students is very humbling, although the project is on hold because of the shortage of material", said Banele.

Going forward, they would all like to see their brand being as big as their dreams, with their work recognised while all the more young women are being empowered.



YOUNG WOMEN TURN THEIR ARTISTIC FLAIR INTO A TRADE



Lucky breaks through



In a country with 3.3 million unemployed young people, this story of a young man's perseverance to career success is a lesson in what it takes and what it needs.

Lucky started out his life in Limpopo. His mother was unemployed and his father had died. Hunger was a daily reality for him and his four siblings; and if it was not for the ingenuity of his mother and the kindness of neighbours, he would not have a story to tell. Seeking any opportunity for work, he came to live with his two siblings in Alexandra, Johannesburg. None of the siblings were working, and so they struggled to make ends meet.

Then one day, at a time **when he was "close to giving up"**; he heard an invitation on the radio to invite athletes to compete to travel overseas to take part in a triathlon. He came to Afrika Tikkun's Phuthaditjaba Centre where he met his future mentor Thomas Taole. Through taking part in the sports programme, he was mentored to develop the soft skills that would prove so valuable in his career path – discipline, perseverance, good sportsmanship and teamwork. Travel opened his eyes to a whole new realm of possibility. Upon returning he applied to take part in a child and youth care learnership the organisation was offering. The learnership would offer him a stipend, and with it, he was able to sustain himself and his sister.

Lucky proved himself to his community and the Centre, and soon a job opportunity arose. He began to climb

through the ranks of the organisation that employed him. Through his learnership and now his work experience, he was discovering his passion – training, motivating and inspiring young people. He continued

to progress within the organisation, and was appointed to work with a company, Afrika Tikkun Services (the career and placement arm of Afrika Tikkun). This gave him the opportunity to interact with many other companies, and no-one was more impressed than international courier company, RAM. RAM headhunted Lucky for a new position they were creating at their offices in Isando.

Today Lucky is rising through the ranks at RAM Couriers – and is himself studying further. He is the first person in RAM's history to be promoted within his first year of employment. He trains up to 2,500 people a month, travelling the length and breadth of the country to the 42 hubs of the company.

"I am building my mother a house just to thank her for all the support she provided to me even though she was not receiving any income at the time."

Many young people face the kinds of circumstances that Lucky faced – for Lucky what made the difference are the mentors he has met along the way, including the managers and directors

at his place of work: "My life changed drastically and I still can't believe how Afrika Tikkun and now RAM have contributed so much to the person I am today."



Knowing what's best for your child



Elizabeth Tshabalala's last born child, Lesego was born with Cerebral Palsy. After a very difficult birth, Lesego was in a coma for 3 months and every time Elizabeth thought Lesego would not make it, he pulled through.

The grandmother believed Lesego was bewitched. As a result, Elizabeth was forced to visit one traditional healer after another with the hopes of finding a cure for her child. The visits to the traditional healers made life difficult for both Lesego and Elizabeth as **it went against her beliefs**. But afraid of being kicked out of her home, she continued going to the traditional healers until one day she had enough and refused to go. Elizabeth was forced to leave her family home in Soshanguve, and came to join Lesego's father in Diepsloot.

One Sunday, on her way to church, a lady saw Lesego and came and told her about Afrika Tikkun's Dishumeleni Self-help group for mothers of disabled children. After much doubt, Elizabeth decided to come to the centre. At first she was ashamed, and covered Lesego so people would not see him. But the meetings started to change Elizabeth's outlook on disability "I saw that I was not the only one with a child with Lesego's condition, and I had nothing to be ashamed of. Lesego is the way he is because God intended for him to be that way and no one, including traditional healers can change that. Since being part of the support group at Afrika Tikkun I have learnt a lot and not once do I think of traditional healers", said Tshabalala.



Since accepting his condition, Elizabeth has noticed that Lesego is much happier, healthier and doesn't cry as much as he used to. Lesego has been accepted at Bona Lesedi Stimulation Centre for Children with Disabilities. Elizabeth wishes to help mothers who are in the same boat as her so they do not fall into the trap of thinking traditional healers can heal their children.

WHEN TO GO TO A DOCTOR AND WHEN TO GO TO A TRADITIONAL HEALER

The choice about going to see a traditional healer is dependent on your belief system. No-one should ever feel forced to consult a traditional healer. Disability of any kind cannot be medicated, diagnosed or treated by a traditional healer. **Disability is not and has never been a curse.**

Julia, the passionate community builder



“Mam J” grew up in Dikgale, a village in Limpopo. She and her siblings were raised in Limpopo while her parents worked in Johannesburg because at the time segregation laws only allowed black people with legal permits to work or live in big cities. Julia’s grandparents shaped the value systems and morals that she has kept throughout her life and one important lesson that she learned from her grandmother is the spirit of giving and caring for those who are in need.

“My grandmother was very gifted in making clay pots and she made a living out of it. She used to give back to the community and served families who couldn’t afford to buy food. I remember experiencing a deep satisfaction when my grandmother sent me to deliver food to those families and I could see and experience the love and care that my granny gave to us and the community at large. She used to work hard and was very passionate about her work. For me, the saying that a ‘man is the sole provider for his family’ at that time, was not applicable to my situation. I witnessed a woman who accomplished a man’s role of making sure that she provided for her family including the

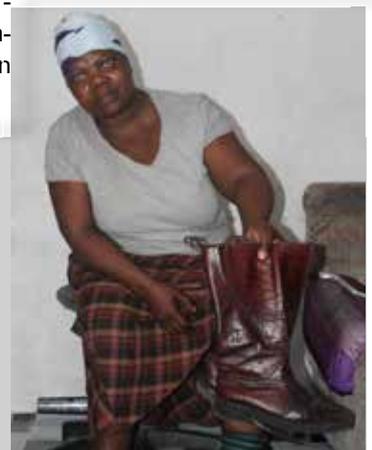
community”, said Thobakgale. Julia’s upbringing was the reason she developed a passion for teaching. Upon completing her teaching Diploma at the Soweto College of Education she started teaching in 1988 at a farm school where she worked for 2 years. “The early days of my career were a learning period, I realised then that being an educator went beyond the classroom. I found myself having to buy school shoes for some of the learners from my own pocket and prepared meals because a majority of the children had to travel a long distance to come to school and back without food” said Julia.

In 1994, the South African Education System was about to change and Julia enrolled for a BA Degree with the University of the Witwatersrand. The decision to go back to school was not an easy one, Julia had to leave her job and her 5-year-old daughter with her mother in order to finish her studies. “I took study leave for 3 years without pay because I had to better myself and be a better teacher for the sake of the children I will teach”, expressed Julia

On her return to teaching she was promoted to Head of Department, and studied further for a BEd Degree in Educational Management and Curriculum studies. After 28 years as a professional teacher, Julia came to the belief that teaching is not confined to a classroom.” **I believed I could offer more support outside of the classroom. That is when I found Afrika Tikkun.** I am passionate about what the organisation does to uplift the standard of children in disadvantaged communities and I aligned myself with their vision: ‘A future where today’s young people are tomorrow’s productive citizens’. Because I understand where Afrika Tikkun’s beneficiaries are coming from and I can relate to their situation, I can offer a much-needed support”, said Thobakgale.

Shoes for Albertina!

Albertina has a disability and thanks to Afrika Tikkun **recently received the special orthopaedic shoes** she needs to be able to walk. “I have been waiting for these shoes since 2006”. “I am very happy and grateful to the Afrika Tikkun team and Uhambo for helping me get these shoes. Now I can function well and even do chores in my home,” happy words of gratitude from Albertina.



The leaders we want



THE FIRST BATCH OF ASPIRING LEADERS PROGRAMME LEARNERS HAVE GRADUATED!

Afrika Tikkun is committed to creating and developing the leaders it wants through its Aspiring Leadership Program (ALP). Afrika Tikkun's COO, Leonie van Tonder pioneered this program to benefit individuals for their personal and professional growth. It requires a lot of sacrifice as well as commitment. The six months course covered topics such as the habits of effective people, fundraising, marketing, strategic planning, legitimate leadership and many other topics created to broaden the awareness and capacity of its participants to be effective leaders and people.

"I don't see the course as a skills development course, but as a course where people can share information with one another and ask questions they would otherwise feel stupid to ask. Through the sessions I had with the participants, I was able to share philosophies that are dear to me of practicing legitimate leadership and to care for and grow people", said Leonie.

Afrika Tikkun is especially proud of graduate, 38-year-old Phumzile Mathonsi, a gardener from Uthando Centre. This mother of six joined Afrika Tikkun in 2012 as a beneficiary of the social services department. As a way of thanking Afrika Tikkun for the support she received, she began to volunteer in the garden. The passionate gardener took a computer course while volunteering. Her ambition and determination eventually led to full-time employment for Phumzile as a gardener. When this leadership course was made available, she grasped the opportunity like a ripe fruit.

"I did the course to be empowered and inspire other women like me to not give up and always work hard to better their lives. To be honest I was worried because I don't have a great background in education but through the help of Leonie and the other participants, I made it. This course did a lot for me and my development as a person, I have more confidence and feel empowered", said Phumzile

Phumzile, like other the participants who did the course, came out as champions of their own personal development and careers. Now, Phumzile is planning to go back to school to finish matric and become an entrepreneur so she can be an example to her children and others to pursue education.



Well done Phumzile and ALP graduates!

A HOME FOR CHRISTMAS

Anna Chauke takes care of three of her own children and three children she adopted. She lost her job after health complications. While visiting the local clinic, Anna told someone her story and she was advised to visit Afrika Tikkun.

After receiving counselling, Anna decided to leave an abusive situation at home, and approached Afrika Tikkun for assistance with a place to stay. Afrika Tikkun not

only built a shack for Anna and her children, but she also receives food parcels to help feed those children.

The social worker also worked with Anna and helped her to get an RDP house. Anna is now on a waiting list because of her disability, and she and her family will be moving into their new home in December. "I am very grateful, I always envied people that had homes especially during Christmas and I will finally have a home for my children", said Anna.

