



Welcome to our special newsletter 2014

The pictures on the right tell the story of a garden that many said that we would not be able to grow anything in.

Our vision was to make Woodlands Primary a green and friendly space. We were undeterred and did not stop working the ground. The picture below shows that hard work pays off.

This newsletter aims to demonstrate to you that the seeds you have invested in GCU and your nurturing has resulted in some beautiful flowers. As is the case with flowers you don't see the seed grow overnight but for so much of its development it grows under the ground. Seeds and plants may take many seasons to establish and develop themselves but once the roots have been established the rewards of the seeding and nurturing become clear.

GCU has certainly gone through many seasons but are slowly starting to see little flowers blossoming. Please enjoy the read.

Mario Van Niekerk
Co- Founder of GCU



Beginnings involve new information, new understandings, new values, new attitudes, and new identities. We must grow into these new places.

Sports

We have learnt over the years that not every child wants play football. This has been one of the challenges we have faced in our attempt to provide children with an alternative to gangs. In the same way as there are many different gang identities each offering something slightly different we have recognized the need to offer opportunities to the young people of Heideveld which appeal to a broader range of skills and interests.

First we added rope skipping, then basketball and art. Recently GCU has included drama and boxing in its offering to young people from the community. The support GCU receives from you has meant that we are able to employ over 14 coaches across all the activities offered. Please see more on our Continuum project <http://gcu.org.za/the-continuum-project/ng>



Picture on the left; drama girls in action.

Picture on the right; Mario in Brazil attending a course with Fight for Peace.



It's amazing how our coaches are taking more responsibility as the programs grow. They now not only coach but also assist with homework.



It has been very rewarding to see boys from our soccer program moving on through the ranks to become coaches. We are delighted to see the same progression of our rope skipping girls some of whom are now becoming coaches.



Education

GCU currently has 12 tutors working on 4 primary schools every school day morning. This has proved to be one of our most successful programs. We offer the Wordworks program to the Grade R and grade 1 children and paired reading has been very beneficial to the Grade 2 – 7 children.



The tutors have started a homework class at Woodlands Primary in the afternoon which has proved to be a very successful intervention. GCU high school members attend the homework session assisting the primary school learners with their homework in the afternoons.



Our Xhosa speaking coaches have been assisting our tutors with the Xhosa speaking children when they don't understand some English words. This has proved very popular with the Xhosa speaking children who benefit greatly when concepts are explained to them in their mother tongue. The teachers have also made use of these services. This seems to be particularly beneficial in maths classes with our coaches explaining concepts in Xhosa.



GCU is also involved in a global partnership between two schools from Scotland and Heideveld. The partnership started with Larbert High and Woodlands Primary after one of the Larbert High teachers and a tour group was introduced to GCU by the Backpack (a long time core supporter of GCU). Following the establishment of that relationship the master moved on to Balwarie High School in Scotland and has introduced that school to GCU and to Welcome Primary. These have been very exciting and beneficial partnerships for GCU and the schools. Please see more on the link <http://www.woodlands-connect.blogspot.co.uk/>

Because of the partnership between Larbert High and Woodlands four of GCU/Woodlands learners have receive a scholarship for high school.



As an organization we continue to grow and learn but this could not have been possible with out your support. THANK YOU!!!

We would like to extend an invite for you to visit GCU and witness you impact first hand. Please like our face book page <https://www.facebook.com/GCUAcademy>.

If you would like to make a donation towards our work please email us on mario@gcu.org.za or you can make a direct bank deposit.

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