

Newsletter

August 2011

wordworks

transforming lives through literacy

"Wordworks is the highlight of my week! Every session is different but the kids never fail to inspire me. They work hard but there is always lots of laughter. Even when progress feels slow I know I am making a difference."

Anna Hugh-Jones,
volunteer at Oranjekloof
Primary in Hout Bay

Dates for your diary:

15th & 22nd October 2011

9.30am - 4pm

Home-School Partnership
training for facilitators

*(to apply to attend please
contact Edeline in the office)*

2nd November 2011

2pm – 4pm

Early Literacy Programme
– Assessment workshop
for volunteer co-
ordinators

(venue to be confirmed)

Parents lead the way

A key goal of Wordworks is that our programmes become self-sustaining. So it is hugely encouraging for us when parents who attend the Home-School Partnership programme go on to run the course at new sites. This is what three parents who attended the programme in 2008 did. Rugaya Jacobs is a parent at Lantana Primary in Mitchell's Plain where she organised and facilitated the seven-week programme this year with the support of the principal, Mr Gesant. One of the parents who attended fed back, "I liked the fact that learning is made easy and fun. Rugaya did a great job to inspire me to do more reading, writing and playing with my kids."

Carmalita Marney and Nomiso Mati facilitated a course in Phillipi for parents of children at Meadowridge Primary. Some of the children who attend Meadowridge learn in English, although their first language is isiXhosa, and struggle to keep up. There were moving scenes at the final session of the programme when a number of parents made thank-you speeches in both English and isiXhosa. The sense of trust and community among the group was very strong and there was a feeling that this could be the start of something bigger.

New resources

An important aspect of our work is the development of fun and appropriate resources that can be made available to parents, volunteers and teachers.

We are delighted therefore that this year, with the generous support of Yvette Roberts from PRO-PRINT, we have been able to produce new high-quality colour resources for all our programmes to use.



Expansion in Grahamstown

In July 2010, three students from Rhodes University in Grahamstown attended our Early Literacy Programme training. They went on to set up a student organisation called Ikwenkwezi and over the past year have recruited 65 students to help children with their literacy development in Grades Two and Three in four local schools – all on their own initiative! The team is led by Julie-Anne Lothian. Shelley recently travelled to Grahamstown to train another group of volunteers who will be working with Grade One children under the leadership of Cathy Gush. We are thrilled that these programmes are flourishing and that the Wordworks methodology and materials are being used for the first time at sites outside the Western Cape.

Can you help?

Each site that runs our Early Literacy Programme requires a set of basic readers, which Wordworks usually provides as many of the schools cannot afford to buy books. We would like to be able to increase the range of readers available to volunteers and children, and have put together a list of books that each site should have. There are 30 books in each set at a cost of R1200. If you feel able to sponsor new books for one of our sites please do get in touch.

Contact Us:

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Sheilla Mqalu inspires and delights the Grade R learners at Masiphumelele Library with her passionate storytelling, actively involving the children through isiXhosa and English.

Communications Toolkit

In June, we were pleased to launch our new communications toolkit for schools and other centres delivering Wordworks programmes. The toolkit contains a wide range of communications resources, including templates for posters and flyers, model fundraising letters, local media contacts, and tips on how to increase participation.

Name change

We have renamed our Community-School Partnership programme the Early Literacy Programme to ensure that the name clearly communicates the content and purpose of the programme to parents, teachers and partners. The aim of the Early Literacy Programme remains the same – to support and improve the literacy and language development of children from disadvantaged communities through targeted early intervention.

In the words of a parent...

"I would like to thank Wordworks for the opportunity of the parent programme. I know that there is so much a parent can do to help his child to achieve more, by attending the programme. Now helping other parents is the most fulfilling thing I ever did so that they can do the same with their children. To other parents I plead to them, let us give our children clear light so they can see easily through learning and reading." Nomiso Mati (below)



Our mission: Wordworks aims to strengthen early literacy and language development in disadvantaged communities through targeted early intervention and the delivery of proven programmes and resources. Wordworks seeks to enable all children to fulfill their learning potential by empowering parents, teachers, community members and volunteers to play a meaningful role in facilitating the early acquisition of reading and writing skills.