

ProjectsAbroad



HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICE

MONTHLY REPORT - CAPE TOWN JUNE 2012



SOCIAL JUSTICE PROJECT UPDATES

Bonnytown – This month volunteers found out just how bad the mindset of the boys in Bonnytown is. They believe that because they are ‘criminals’ they will not amount to anything more once they’re out. They voiced how they believe they will not find jobs and believed they would never be able to complete their schooling or return to education because of their criminal pasts. This encouraged our volunteers to look into ways that they can be rehabilitated once they are out and how they can be supported to get educated and find jobs. This is the type of information these boys need most and can help them change their mind set and become positive about changing once they are released.



Vrygrond Mock Trial – This month saw the finale of the mock trial performed at Wynberg Magistrates Court in one of the court rooms with a prosecutor acting as judge. The final trial was a theft case which the children conducted and volunteers took part by playing the parts of different witnesses in the case. The kids did a great job and enjoyed the experience, thanking the volunteers for their support and guidance as they had learnt a lot about the law and the criminal justice system. We are now hoping to get this project up and running with a new set of children.



St Anne's – The numbers at St. Annes has been decreasing and so there are only a few women there now attending the sessions. This month volunteers helped to set up the women with their own email accounts and discussed some of their issues regarding medical assistance, parenting and childcare. These are issues which are always brought up by the women and so volunteers have decided to try and find someone with medical experience who will be able to visit the women at the shelter and answer any questions they may have and to advise them on caring for their children. This is something which will be highly beneficial to the women and they have said that they would appreciate it a lot if we are able to organise it. This is an ongoing project for July.

Young in Prison - Huis Vredulus – The volunteers have continued to work with the girls at Vredulus and are building up some good relationships with them. We are currently still working alongside Young in Prison and attending the sessions with them. We have been organising the ice breakers and activities for the girls and then assisting Young in Prison with their workshops. We are hoping that after we have built up a better relationship here we will be able to start doing our own workshops with the girls. This will allow our volunteers more freedom and allow them to be involved more directly in the planning and executing of workshops.

Ottery Education and Youth Centre – After getting the opportunity to assist Young in Prison with their workshops throughout June we were able to get to know the boys whilst showing the Centre the sort of work that volunteers at the Human Rights Office are capable of. They have now allowed us to work independently of Young in Prison with our own session in which we will be in charge of the workshops. This is a great opportunity for our volunteers to take the lead and facilitate their own workshops. This is a very similar age group to the boys we work with in Bonnytoun and so we will use what we have learnt working with those boys to assist us here. The workshops will also be similar as the issues we have been discussing at Bonnytoun will be just as important to the boys here.

LEGAL SERVICES UPDATES

The legal side of the office has been busy as usual with some heart wrenching cases coming in throughout June. Volunteers have been assisting a number of clients this month who are victims of rape. Such issues are very delicate and at times can be hard for volunteers to deal with but these issues are very real for our clients and the dedication of those volunteers dealing with these clients is commendable.



We have also had our usual influx of refugees needing assistance with applications for permanent residency or with appeals against their rejection for refugee status. Housing matters are becoming quite common along with family matters, such as child maintenance or divorce procedures.

Our legal clinics are still running and will be keeping many of our volunteers busy with cases throughout the busy period of July.