

Sisanda FUNDaytion

what a difference a day makes

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Connecting through Play

'The foundations of human well-being are laid down in childhood. If we do not create enabling environments and provide nurturing care for our children today and across the life course, the future well-being of the world will be in doubt'

COVID-19 and the lockdown in South Africa has had an enormous impact on children and young people. Stress, anxiety and resulting mental health issues have broken down relationships leaving so many already vulnerable children isolated, scared and at risk during a crucial developmental stage in their lives.

In these times an accomplished strategy is connecting through **PLAY**. This is equally effective for both children and adults. *'Play can trigger the release of endorphins, the body's natural feel-good chemicals. Endorphins promote an overall sense of well-being and can even temporarily relieve pain.'*

Additionally children learn to understand the world through **PLAY**, and as the LEGO foundation explains *'Playing together helps to improve social skills and the ability to empathize with others. These experiences will bring you even closer.'*

The Sisanda FunDaytion believes in **'Connecting through Play'**. Co-creating spaces to connect, we bring joy, grow confidence and communication skills. We build curiosity, creativity and empathy.

We are proud to report that this past quarter we created another **30** opportunities to connect through stories. A Fun Day Outing for **45** people to explore and connect and we initiated a journey for **35** families to connect though Play@home.

<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/mental-health/benefits-of-play-for-adults.htm>
<https://www.news24.com/parent/partner-content/building-essential-skill-through-lego-duplo-play-sets-20210224>



FunDay - 06 March 2021

Taking a Walk on the Wild Side with Unexpected Opportunities Community Organisation

Twenty nine very special 5 to 12 year old children from Bonteheuwel, their facilitators and eight excited volunteers began a wild adventure during "World Wildlife Week" when they boarded the Golden Arrow bus and their trusty driver, Wellington crinkled his eyes and gave a broad smile of welcome.

Under the warm morning sun the day started with breakfast and some WILD games led by our Play Ambassadors at the Claremont Community Church. It was then time for "Taking a Walk" on the "Wild Side" in the beautifully exotic Ardene Gardens.

During this journey of wonder and delight, all senses engaged and one child dreamily mused, "I wish for a big truck so that I can bring my bed to the gardens and I can sleep there."

This location was new to most children and piqued their curiosity, encouraging them to connect further while learning about nature...and each other.

When it came time for StoryTime with Uncle Ross, the children were entranced and so deeply engaged, one child clearly learning something new about himself announced: "I didn't know I could be so quiet."

A yummy, piping hot pizza lunch from Debonair's was served as everyone settled down to share the excitement and memorable moments of the day with their volunteers.

Pretty soon it was the time of the day to hop back onto the bus and head home. Happily weary, with tummies full of Debonair's Pizza and excited brains churning and thinking of all they had to share with their families of their wonderful day, children and volunteers alike had the happiest smiles on their faces.

Reflecting on the day's wonder and delight, our oldest and favourite Sisanda volunteer said:

"Sometimes you do things and, well you just do them. But on Saturday we told stories, then we marched around the car park and became very hungry caterpillars. I lost 70 of my 76 years and was back as a six year old again. That's the thing about being involved in Sisanda, you don't have to be your age, that is unless you are six."

Yet another incredibly successful Sisanda FunDay of connecting through play.

A very special thank you to our generous sponsors:

**Claremont Congregational Church | Truworthe's |
Golden Arrow | Debonair's | Jolly's Fruit and Nut |
Osman's Wholesalers | 3@1 Digital Printing**

FunDay



Click here for NEW registrations OR to check your volunteer status.

[VOLUNTEER](#)



Our next FunDay is 24 April 2021. Click the button to volunteer.

Story Time

"He is so out of his shell now, and very confident of expressing himself."

These are the words of Gracious Mnemba's mother. Gracious is a 9 year old boy who has attended twenty Storytime sessions. His typical shyness caused his teacher to enquire from his mother in February "What has Gracious been up to?" They were intrigued by his dramatic increase in confidence. His mom said "He's at a book reading club."

We are incredibly proud of the impact of Sisanda StoryTime. It has magically grown in leaps and bounds since it's inception almost one year ago. Our Zoom connection has allowed us to bridge the isolation gap, flex imaginations and boost self-confidence. Not only in the children but all who dial in each week.

The gregarious Melanie is our Mamma Bear who keeps the group engaged and connected. We always welcome listeners, storytellers and volunteers of all ages and levels to share their favourite stories.

If you have never experienced the Sisanda Squeezy hug, well now is the chance to give and receive virtual hugs, relaxing those tensed up muscles and releasing all those wonderful happy endorphins.

We do this for the love of stories, connecting communities, play and recreation experiences



Sisanda "Zoom" Storytime

**Mon & Wed @ 3pm
Fri @ 2pm**

ANYONE IS WELCOME

**Please Contact:
melanie.lippert@sisanda.org.za**

Meet our Team Member: **Nonkululeko Gwele**

Vibrant, Fun and Energetic! With a smile to light up the world!

These are a fraction of the ways to describe our Programme Coordinator Nonkululeko Gwele, better known as Nkulee.

At the age of 14, Nkulee attended a Sisanda FunDay and she was so inspired that she returned as a volunteer and later became an Activity Leader. This is when she discovered her love for children and her passion for encouraging play and growth in communities that desperately need inspiration.

Nkulee is an instrumental leader of our community ambassadors for our play@home programme and with her passion and commitment is an inspiration to all.

"I give myself to serving others and I believe in making a positive difference with my heart and with vision. This is what keeps me loving and growing."



Play@Home

Our Play@Home Community Empowerment Programme is immersed in its 3rd season, which means that we have learned a great deal from the past, making it better than ever before.

The Sisanda Fundaytion Team team ably supported by Rosalie Herik from the Netherlands, have been hard at work training all the new PLAY AMBASSADORS and turning them into positive community role models who use play to connect adults with their children and encourage family bonding.

Six youths from Gugulethu are involved in this 3 month empowerment programme. Two of these young people were so inspired by the previous programme, in which their families benefitted, they decided to become involved to become PLAY AMBASSADORS themselves.

During the training sessions they learn communication skills, how to use play to grow relationships with themselves and others, along with some basic project management tools. Mentoring over the next few months will nurture their confidence and resilience while building their reputation as a positive influence in their communities.

Thirty five families have started their eight week journey with their PLAY AMBASSADORS, coordinated very competently by our Coordinator Bonga Mykeni and fuelled by the fun family packs thanks to the CrazyStore. Excitingly many other families have expressed interest in future programmes.

As emphasised by the News24 article **"Children and adolescents can be powerful health promoters"**

Our Play Ambassadors have demonstrated this by transferring messages about COVID '19 and uplifting mental health in their communities. This fuels our mission to fill neighbourhoods with Play Ambassadors to teach, through their actions and knowledge, the joy and value of **CONNECTING THROUGH PLAY**.

<https://www.news24.com/news24/analysis/analysis-covid-19-has-had-a-profound-impact-on-young-people-20210217>.



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