



Michaelhouse Community Partnerships

QUARTERLY REPORT

July – September 2021

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS: PROGRESS REPORT

(July – September 2021)



OVERVIEW

As we enter the fourth term, the Grade 12 learners are preparing to write their final exams, while other learners prepare for benchmark tests and exams. Here we reflect on the progress and projects from the previous quarter:

TRAINING

TRAINING

As the COVID restrictions ease, we will host Digital Citizen Plus training for 20 Eduhelpers at Midlands Community College; 9 October, 16 October, 23 October, 30 October and 6 November. This will not only help Eduhelpers but will allow them to support the learners they work with.

HOME BASED CARE

The St Raphael's Team attended Home Based Care training facilitated by Love Howick. They attended this as a refresher course to help them improve their knowledge and learn new skills. The topics covered included hygiene and infection control, diet and feeding, wound care, dealing with medicine and many more - all of which can be applied to their day-to-day jobs as Caregivers of the St Raphael's project.



EDUCATION

EDUHELPERS

One of the core projects of the Michaelhouse Community Partnership is “Eduhelpers”.

An Eduhelper addresses two major needs in our community: access to quality education and the provision of teacher training. Our goal is to partner with our community for effective

education and augment teaching capacity to provide meaningful learning and improve literacy and numeric skills. The Eduhelpers are the key role players in this endeavor. We have grown to 23 Eduhelpers working at 11 schools and their jobs differ depending on the school’s needs.

EDUHELPER WORKSHOP

On the 20 August 2021, at the Nottingham Road Farmers Hall,

Dr Sandy Stewart and Karen Mackenzie cohosted a session with the Eduhelpers where Sandy presented on lesson planning while Karen spoke on personal leadership.

The feedback from the Eduhelpers was encouraging as many mentioned the joy of connecting in a group again; doing activities together, having to come up with their own lesson plans as a group, as well as sharing ideas and feelings. The group discussions on lesson planning and the information given by the speakers were much appreciated. Not forgetting the words of encouragement from the Michaelhouse Chaplain, Chris Meyer.

It has also come to light that the Eduhelpers need more support in their work load, structure of the project and permanent work.

The next Eduhelper workshop is set for 27 October and Craig Carolan <https://intrinsiceducation.co.za/> will be addressing the Eduhelpers.



ART AND CHOIR COMPETITION

Plans are underway for us to host the choir competition towards the end of November. We invited our partnership schools for a choir workshop facilitated by Mr Jaco Dippenaar (Director of Music, Michaelhouse) at Nottingham Road Primary School. The workshop was particularly aimed at conductors, focusing on skills and techniques that are essential to conducting. Fish Ndlovu (Theatre Technician, Michaelhouse) will visit each school that is participating in the choir competition this year to give them more personalized singing techniques.

All art materials have been delivered to the participating schools and we expect to receive artwork from them on Friday, 22 October 2021.



LITERACY

There has been lots of development over the last three months in the literacy space, as it becomes more and more evident that reading for meaning is a major limiting factor to learning.

READING FOR MEANING

Reading for Meaning is a strategic programme within the Zero Dropout Campaign which uses Pratham's principle of Teaching at the Right Level to focus on a child's learning needs rather than their age or what grade they're in, helping them to keep up with their peers.

The Reading for Meaning team trained 16 volunteers at the beginning of August to prepare them for the implementation phase. Reading for Meaning sessions commenced on Monday, 16 August with 229 Grade 5 learners in 9 of our partnership schools. This project will continue until March 2022. Each week, a group of learners has two sessions with their reader leader. The feedback so far has been very encouraging, however some schools are still on rotation, thus sessions do not take place consecutively.



BOOK DASH

The Grade R learners in our schools received a set of their own books from Book Dash, totaling 1 758 books. Book Dash gathers creative professionals who volunteer to create new, African storybooks that anyone can freely translate and distribute. They employ their unique, 12-hour book-making methodology to create beautiful new books in just one day! They then share with the world on their website and in physical format for children to own. We have submitted an application for the next print of new stories to share with our Grade R learners.

READING TO LEARN

Funded by the University of Hull, Reading to Learn is a set of strategies that enable teachers to support all students in their classes to read and write at the levels they need to succeed. It has been in development globally since the early 2000s at all stages of education. Shea O'Connor Combined school teachers have been selected to receive the training. Over the next quarter, 17 teachers will be trained in the Reading for Meaning methodology.

HEALTH

ST RAPHAEL'S

3rd quarter report:

Each new quarter seems to start with a new challenge and this quarter brought with it civil unrest resulting in food insecurity and unemployment. The care givers at St Raphael's were perfectly positioned to identify the most vulnerable in the communities

we serve. They used this ability to recognize those families in need of immediate help during the period of food scarcity. 50 families, representing 142 hungry tummies were singled out for food relief. Donors were generous, particularly the Michaelhouse Old Boys and the wider Michaelhouse community, and we were able to provide each family with basic groceries for one month. Food was sourced, packaged and delivered to these families

and received with gratitude. We are exploring more sustainable and long reaching options to help these families into the future such as teaching the communities to establish and look after a vegetable garden and sponsoring members of the community to attend courses to increase their employability.

We have run two pensioner’s clinics this quarter with 16 and 8 attendees respectively. 35 home visits were conducted, 30 patients were transported to the clinic, 51 patients had their medication collected and delivered to them and 10 patients were booked on the planned patient transport to the hospitals in Pietermaritzburg.

This quarter we also participated in our first market, selling knitwear knitted by the gogos in Zenzani Village. Although we did not sell many items, lessons were learnt, and we intend to do this again in the future. All proceeds will go toward buying more wool and tea for the knitting group. The group previously met in the St Raphael’s building in Zenzani Village but during the latest Covid 19 wave have been knitting independently at home. We hope they will be able to meet again this coming quarter.

The care givers also had the opportunity to refresh their knowledge and learn new skills by attending the Home-Based Care course run by the Dream Centre and Love Howick organization during August. They thoroughly enjoyed this time and have been implementing the lessons they have learned.

This coming quarter will see more clinics in the community and collaboration with other organizations.

UNREST IN KWAZULU-NATAL

Following the unrest experienced in KwaZulu-Natal Dr Kendon and the St Raphael’s caregivers identified 50 families in Balgowan that were in need of assistance during the unrest in July and each family received a parcel consisting of mielie meal, cooking oil, potatoes, onions, carrots and a tray of 30 eggs.

We would like to thank Michaelhouse Old Boys’ Club and the wider Michaelhouse community for their contributions towards this initiative.



Supplies packaged and ready for delivery.



Gogos enjoying some tea after the pensioners clinic at Zenzani.



Nokuthula taking a blood pressure reading from the back of the St Raphael’s vehicle in Estandeni.



With our supplies bought at a farmers’ market soon after the unrest.

BOYS INVOLVEMENT

BACKABUDDY CAMPAIGN

The sizes of the schools in our footprint vary – some are understaffed and overcrowded while others have 8 to 10 learners per grade. In order to support our schools, we are wanting to support parents. The subsidized taxi has been running very efficiently between Bruntville and Shea O'Connor Combined School. Learner transport is yet another layer of complexity in the school system.

Following the double blows of COVID and unrest in KZN, many parents lost their jobs and could no longer afford to transport their children to school. Consequently, in townships like Bruntville where learners can walk to school, pupil numbers grew to over 60 per class - meaning that all the learners and teachers are hugely disadvantaged and challenged. To decrease the high number of learners in Bruntville, Jon Bates has organised a BackaBuddy campaign to raise funds to transport grade R to grade 3 learners from Bruntville to Shea O'Connor Combined School in 2022. It has been found that if learners start at the first step (grade R) and complete every year of education with solid proper teaching, the rate of dropouts and failures will be transform from 70 percent to virtually nil.

<https://bit.ly/backabuddyMHS>



CHILD SAFE GUARDING

We try to improve the educational experience of learners at partnership schools. We have included training on child safeguarding. Principals and senior staff members were invited to attend three training sessions.

Masivuselele Let Us Inspire NPC <https://bit.ly/30ud2ih> has been facilitating the workshops.

Workshops took place over three Saturdays 7 August, 4 September and 16 October.

Some of the main topics included:

- How adults and children are expected to interact,
- Detailed procedures for reporting suspicions and incidents
- How and by whom investigations will be led
- What the implications for individuals involved will be
- Procedures for communicating the keeping children safe message
- Methods for including all stakeholders in processes
- Timelines for recurrent reviews of the policy



MATHS AND SCIENCE WORKSHOP

Midlands Community College facilitated a Maths and Science workshop for three of our partnership schools on Saturday, 31 July 2021.

The learners attended a three-hour mathematics workshop, run by Mrs Paula Meyer (MCC Maths Educator) and a three-hour physical science workshop, run by Mrs Jeanne Phillips (MCC Physical Science Educator). The educators were supported by a teaching assistant in each class. Each learner received a workbook containing notes and worksheets.



PARTNERS FOR POSSIBILITY (PFP)

We are building momentum for a 3rd PFP circle of at least 8 partnerships for launch during the first half of 2022, while the previous PFP groups still continue with great commitment.

On Friday 28 September, we had a successful morning of introducing Microsoft TEAMS to our principals. This is a platform for increased efficiency in travel times with reductions to meetings and weekly document submissions to Pietermaritzburg. Then we grasped the opportunity for an impromptu “reunion COP” of previous PFP participants. A COP is a “Community of Practise”, a meeting of like-minded souls, committing time to impactful causes and conversations in their community. In this case the community of rural government schools situated between Lions River and the Mooi River area.

Having not had a face-to-face connection during the height of the Covid19 pandemic, the community of ten, represented by principals and community leaders, used the time to connect on recent Heritage Day reflections. This was a time to share meaningful advice given to you in life, exchanging shaping stories, engaging compassionately with the topic of cultural appropriation and appreciation, whilst truly hearing the hearts in our community. No doubt that these conversations between individuals whose lives would hardly intersect will shape the narrative of stories in our Midlands valleys.

What a privilege it was for Partners for Possibility to be the beneficiaries of the “Mothers of Michaelhouse” (MOM) launch of their fundraiser “Pledge & Commemorate” goodie bag, celebrating the 125 th anniversary of Michaelhouse, held in collaboration with ARDMORE Design Studios. A magnificent showcase of collaboration in community, celebrating iconic brands committing themselves to education in rural KZN. The intention of the Mothers of Michaelhouse is to sponsor “one of their own” onto the Midlands3 PFP programme as a partner to one of our school principals. The limited offer “goodie bags” (125 bags in total) are still on offer until the end of 2021 and Mrs Rose Upfold can be contacted for further information on raupfold@gmail.com. The bags include unique 125 year MHS memorabilia, a beautifully designed ARDMORE facemask, delicious Wedgewood nougat, the recently launched Beauty-Love-Soul & Spirit CD by local singer, song and play writer, Audrey M (Mbuyazi) and a generous contribution to Partners for Possibility.

Finally, we would still love to launch a 3rd circle of 8 PFP partnerships in our area, as we continue to mobilise community,

inviting active citizenship and ask of our Michaelhouse community to share in their wealth of knowledge, experience and resources, to the benefit of the children in our community. Our principals need support more than ever, as the pandemic has disrupted education severely in our country, most tragically hardest hit being schools like we are surrounded by, with no means of connecting remotely. Literacy, numeracy, mental wellbeing, basic sanitation, personal leadership, practical skills and the possibility of a dream of an alternative future, are but some of the challenges faced in our community.

The vehicle of our expertise is our humanity...often potential volunteers are uncertain as to whether they can add value, not necessarily feeling skilled in education within our rural school setting. The answer every time is a resounding yes - You will be a contributor as you hold network, you hold life skills and provided that you arrive with a willingness of an open mind and heart, you will have a truly life changing South African experience, an immersion into the real KZN Midlands.

What are the possibilities that you can offer in this community ? We would love to welcome your gifts as a community partner to a principal from March 2022-March 2023. Give Mrs Karen McKenzie a call on 083-709-8525 or karen@symphonia.net, for a face to face or online conversation and invitation to upcoming information sessions.

WINNING WOMAN WEDNESDAY

Every year over Women’s month we want to showcase the amazing work that women are doing in our community. Each week on a Wednesday a woman is profiled on our social media pages.

MY SCHOOL AND SCHOOL DAYS

Let’s double the number of Michaelhouse Community Partnerships Supporters, by sharing the news with family & friends!

Here is the link :

Michaelhouse Community Partnerships Registration Link
<https://bit.ly/2YPPvwe>

Did you know, that you when renew your car license with our partner Car Licence, you raise funds for Michaelhouse Community Partnerships? <https://schooldays.co.za/partners/carlicence>

Lieza

MICHELLE PICKLES



Gr 7 teacher at Nottingham Road Primary School

WHAT DOES WOMEN'S MONTH MEAN TO YOU?

Women's month is an acknowledgment of the many roles women fulfill in society.

This, I believe, is where our true strength comes from: our adaptability.

Paying tribute to women is important because so much of the work that we do goes unnoticed

WHICH WOMAN INSPIRES YOU AND WHY?

My mom continues to inspire me! I have always admired her and her incredible work ethic and dedication to her family. When I became a mother I was able to fully comprehend the sacrifices she has made, and continues to make, in her life for her children, and now her grandchildren.

WORDS OF WISDOM TO YOUNG WOMEN

Don't restrict yourself to one role. As women we have this amazing ability to multi-task, take advantage of this! Don't pass up an opportunity to further yourself- personally and professionally – and remember to surround yourself with positive people who support you and build you up as opposed to breaking you down.

WAYS TO GET INVOLVED:

1. Join MySchool AND SchoolDays
2. Donate via EFT or Zapper
3. Partner with us on a project



BANKING DETAILS:

Standard Bank
Branch: Pietermaritzburg
Branch no: 05 75 25
Account no: 05 22 86 525

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