



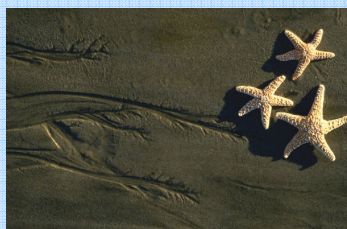
## Newsletter – A year in review - 2007

### The Starfish Story..... where it all begins

One day at the beach there was a young girl picking up a starfish, which was one of thousands that at low tide had been washed ashore. One at a time she was throwing them back into the sea. Some people walking along noticed what she was doing and thought she was wasting her time and said 'Why are you throwing those starfish back?' She said 'If I don't do this they'll die from lack of oxygen.' They replied 'But there are thousands of starfish on this beach and thousands on other beaches. You can't possibly make a difference to them all.'

Throwing another starfish back into the sea, she smiled and said -

**'Made a difference to that one!'**  
*The Star Thrower'*  
by L. Eiseley



### What's been happening.....

As they say "All good things come to those who wait", and so it has been for StarBright this past year. Although things may have not happened as quickly as we would have liked, they are happening now!

Highlights for 2007:

- **Australian Volunteers International** - In September 2006 StarBright signed a MoU with Australian Volunteers International to recruit and place our Exchange Candidates. We are indeed fortunate to have the expertise of AVI to assist in recruiting and supporting our volunteer placements in South Africa. Although our first round of advertising early in the year was not fruitful we are proud to announce the successful recruitment of a candidate to pursue the AVI/AusAID/ StarBright co-funded Coordinator position. It is hoped that this placement will now take place in February/March 2008.
- **Lemon Tree Children's Centre** - It has been a long year waiting for the final permits to be issued to start the actual building of the Lemon Tree Children's Centre in Carlton, Vic. We are very pleased to now announce that building has commenced, the DHS application submitted and a first term 2008 opening expected. The Lemon Tree Children's Centre once operational will be the key to a secured and ongoing income stream to support the administration of StarBright and sponsor at least one exchange participant per year.
- **Rotary Tullamarine** - One of our committee members is also a Rotarian and has helped us to develop a most rewarding partnership with their club. In the past year we have held two fundraising events and raised nearly \$1000. We are now working with the club to develop a 'Matching Grant' through Rotary International and create a partnership with a Rotary Club in Cape Town.
- **Fundraising & Awareness** - On World AIDS Day 2006 we launched our first public fundraising event. It was a great success as we hosted a Movie Night featuring "Catch A Fire" which was filmed in Soweto and told a compelling story of living in Apartheid. We raised close to \$1500 on the night.

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### Project Outline

The aim of the project is to create a link with AIDS ravaged South Africa. To support and resource early childhood development programs with a focus to help children who are orphaned, infected and affected by AIDS.

There are over 5million people who are HIV+ in South Africa alone with over 1.1million children already orphaned by the AIDS death toll.

We want to develop a relationship with children, teachers, families and communities in South Africa so that we can learn from each other and grow our cultural understanding of each other's way of life.

We want to build a 'learning exchange' one from the other, and practically support our struggling neighbour to grow stronger in the aftermath of the AIDS epidemic sweeping its land.

Children are the key to South Africa's future. So StarBright wants to help support these children, to give them a better start on their life long learning journey.

The outcome of AIDS for South African communities and society as a whole is disturbing. They have lost a generation of adult income earners and the educated to AIDS, compromising economic and cultural stability.

StarBright believes that we need to start with the children, those who are often the forgotten face of the AIDS tragedy.

Research clearly shows that quality early childhood learning and care leads to higher levels of physical, cognitive and emotional well-being and better rates of long term learning and earning. Something that is vital for these children who will be leading Africa into the future.

#### We will:

- Listen to communities
- Interpret their strengths
- Not impose our western agenda
- Build onto what the community already does and knows.



**What's been happening.....cont.**

- **International Women's Day** - In March 2007 we celebrated International Women's Day and invited committee members and friends to share dinner and stories from South Africa and the personal experiences of a Victorian woman living with HIV. It was a great opportunity to raise awareness of living with HIV/AIDS and share time together as women supporting each other.
- **Conferences** - StarBright was given the opportunity to exhibit at three conferences over the past year, Together We Grow - Early Childhood Education Conference, Early Childhood Management Services staff conference and Rotary International.
- **Shoe Box with Soul** - this project was launched during 2007 to ask individual donors to purchase a Shoe Box that we fill with a selection of craft items and mail to early childhood projects in Cape Town.

So now we head into a new year and look forward to our planning and development coming to fruition with the opening of the Lemon Tree Children's Centre and our first exchange taking place in early 2008. We thank you for your continued support and hope that you will share our commitment and the journey of making a difference in the year to come.

*Karen Hill*

Volunteer Project Manager



**Cape Town Township – Nobubele - Nyanga – a Centre for Early Childhood Development Project**



*Conference Report – Carol Allen  
PRESIDENT  
Early Childhood Education World Forum –  
Malaysia May 2007*

In May of this year I was invited by the World Forum Foundation to join a 3 day HIV/AIDS Action Tank prior to the World Forum held in Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia in May 2007.

The Foundation invited people working with HIV/AIDS and children from all over the world. They came from the United States, Canada, China, India, Mexico, Namibia, Swaziland, Kenya, Malawi, South Africa, Rwanda, Ethiopia, and Australia. The mounting evidence from neuroscience and developmental psychology indicates that a child's early experiences have an enormous and lasting impact on how the brain develops, and has a lasting bearing on the lives of individuals and communities. Yet it is often the developmental needs of these HIV positive young children that are the most neglected in the initiatives to ameliorate the consequences of the AIDS pandemic.

Bringing together around 30 representatives from 17 remarkable communities, we highlighted and examined promising practices, that people from these communities have started in their effort to promote, recognise, respect and resource these grassroots practices that focus the attention on the youngest children. The aim was that we would determine a number of actionable items and leadership messages that will be the drivers of the next steps of the World Forum's early care and education community of practice. We hoped to help funders, policy makers, technical assistance providers, and researchers gain further insight from the grassroots and from each other so that we could further all efforts on behalf of young children.

Many of the representatives attending the HIV/AIDS Action Tank have organized themselves around supporting young children and their caregivers, whether they are sick parents, relatives or others who are caring for orphaned children. They have identified practices and employed strategies to support more broadly children's healthy development cognitively, socially, emotionally and physically.

I met some remarkable and inspiring people over the three days; here are some of their stories:

**Kathy Gau, from** Vusumnotfo, which means "to restart the economy", is a Swazi Community Based Development Organization in **Swaziland**. It serves nearly 50,000 people living in the northern Hhohho Region of Swaziland. This ECCD Program is aimed at all children. In-service training for preschool teachers; parenting education within community at large (this includes topics specific to abuse and dealing with death within the family); infrastructure development – through preschool committees. They also host an internship program with university students from Finland who spend time at selected preschools. Their aim is to:

- a.) provide multicultural/minority experience for Finnish students,
- b.) raise the profile of rural preschools, and
- c.) raise teaching methods of preschool teachers (indirectly).

Working with families and children aged 0-8 years they support the children in Swaziland.

I hope to make contact with Kathy when I am in South Africa in January 2008.

**Pastor Isaac Hoeb,** Hope for the Hopeless in Namibia is a faith-based program which delivers early childhood education through the pre-primary school. They also provide nutritional support through the feeding scheme, and a community garden. Their after school program provides spiritual, social, physical and school work activities and supports around 230 children

**Stephanie Kilroe,** from Etafeni Day Care Centre [www.etafenitrust.org](http://www.etafenitrust.org) is a non-profit organization providing preschool and after school care for HIV/AIDS in Cape Town. Additionally, they run an Income Generation program for HIV+ parents and grandparents of small children and a food garden and nutrition program as well. Social grants for AIDS-vulnerable families are accessed by their social worker, and they have 18 Community Care workers who support parents on Anti Retrovirals (medications). Their counsellors and community care workers refer children and their caregivers in to their program.

The Etafeni Day Care Centre is located in the middle of a very poor part of Nyanga (72% unemployment, 30% HIV infection) and clients have easy access to the facility. The Centre was built by previously unskilled and unemployed men and women, the parents of small children. The Etafeni preschool is very keen to work with StarBright and I will be meeting Stephanie in January next year. We hope to set up a regular supply of Shoe Boxes with Soul to their families.



**Yewoinshet Masresha**, from Hope for Children in Ethiopia was another remarkable woman who set up a sponsorship program, kindergarten, group homes, memory boxes for the children, formal education support; home based hospice care (including medical) and grief and other counselling, again with income generation activities for women, as well as training of volunteers. Supporting 664 children living in 372 households as well as supporting 1080 students with school fees and school materials.

**Kathleen Okatcha**, Orphans Rural Development Program (KORDP) in Kenya [www.kordp.org](http://www.kordp.org) is a national non-governmental organization using the community based care (CBC) approach, and the *Early Childhood Day Care Center (ECDCC)* model based on community volunteerism to help communities rebuild the capacity to care for the children. They facilitate 47 ECDC centres using Volunteer Committees to support 5,200 families at village sites where children receive medical care, meals, play, emotional support and basic learning skills for transition to formal school.

Their aim is to strengthen the care giving systems for needy families and the ECDC centres, food security and income generation initiatives are implemented on family and institutional levels.

Supporting 6,200 orphans and vulnerable children; approximately 5,200 family caregivers- surviving ailing parents, older siblings, grandparents, and very poor families; hundreds of youth, People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) and hundreds of thousands of indirect beneficiaries trained in HIV/AIDS prevention and advocacy.

**These are only a few of the people that I spent three great days with in KL. We all left promising to keep in touch and also to try a produce a book that would record their stories and promote the HIV/AIDS Cause. I am pleased to say that this book has now started to be produced. The experience in KL only reinforced my belief that we must keep going and get our teachers out there supporting some of these organisation that have in many cases set themselves up with even less support than we have.**

*Carol Allen*

**StarBright - President**



***Are you looking for unique professional experience in early childhood education?***

## ***Well look no further.....***

In the next few months, in partnership with AVI, we will start recruiting for a volunteer to undertake a 3-6 month placement to work with the AVI/AusAID coordinator at CECD and provide programming and training for day care centre staff and families.

Some of the key activities to be undertaken are:

- To establish links between children's centres in Australia and in South Africa and develop ongoing "sister centre" relationships between staff members, the children, their families and their local communities through the StarBright Learning Exchange.
- To build on the ECD programs currently being provided in the selected services in a sensitive and acknowledging way and to assist and support the delivery of early childhood programs to children with special needs with a particular focus on children orphaned, infected or affected by HIV/AIDS.
- To identify local daycare centers, shelters, orphanages within the high need informal settlements and townships where early childhood development training and support is required and where a three month Australian exchange placement could be beneficial.
- Assist in the development of culturally appropriate ECD programming for staff/parents/volunteers who are working with high need children to be implemented by the three month Australian exchange placement.
- To share ideas from current Australian teaching practices, programming, curriculum and resources with CECD and the identified end centers.
- A key objective is to assist with building self-sufficient programs within the South African ECD centres by providing ideas and promoting links to sources of funding in Australia.

**Want to know more? Then send us an email and we will put you on the candidate list to receive more information as it is developed.  
Email to [info@starbright.org.au](mailto:info@starbright.org.au)**

Our partner organisation



### **AVI vision**

We have a vision of a peaceful and just world; a sustainable world, where all people have access to the resources they need, the opportunity to achieve their potential, the right to make decisions about the kind of development they want and to participate in the future of their own communities.

### **AVI work**

International volunteering based on reciprocal learning through commitment, engagement and solidarity contributes to such a world. International volunteers share their knowledge, experiences and skills as they live, work and learn in response to needs expressed by local communities. Australian Volunteers International provides opportunities for Australians to become involved in this work and assists them in sharing the learnings from their experiences.

**Australian Volunteers International is guided by principles of equity, respect, integrity, diversity and partnership.**

### **AVI environment**

Australian Volunteers International is working in a changing world characterised by:

- Increasing polarisation of living standards – within and between nations – which is resulting in geopolitical uncertainty and instability in various regions. In our globalised world, there are increasing misunderstandings of differing belief and values systems. International volunteering has a role to play in breaking down barriers and building understanding and relationships between nations and cultures.
- The need to meet the challenges of a competitive market place and generating a variety of sustainable income sources.
- The need for flexible options in international volunteering arising from increasing diversity in opportunities for Australians who wish to work overseas, concurrent with an increasing demand from overseas partners for experienced and more highly qualified volunteers.



*Become a member today*

You can help us by becoming a member or making a donation and to tell others about StarBright Learning Exchange and encourage them to get involved too.

Annual membership fees:

- Individuals \$30
- Family \$50
- Early Childhood Centres \$60
- NFP Organisations \$150
- Corporates \$250

*Contact Information*

Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_

Company \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ P/Code \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Yes, I want to become a member       I would like to give a donation

Amount enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*Thank you!*

For starting this journey with us and becoming involved. Your contribution will be used to help sponsor an Australian early childhood worker to go to South Africa.

As a member you will receive:

- ★ a StarBright badge
- ★ project updates
- ★ access to candidate applications
- ★ annual report

Please fill in this form and send with your payment to StarBright Learning Exchange, PO Box 220 Camberwell VIC 3124

phone/fax: +61 3 9889 2307, email: [info@starbright.org.au](mailto:info@starbright.org.au), web: [www.starbright.org.au](http://www.starbright.org.au)