



Message from Rigby

Dear partners, donors and friends,

Once again it is my pleasure and privilege to report back to you, our support network, on another productive term at Bridges! The team have completed a whopping 11 camps this term and continue to go from strength to strength. As the team and programme are now well entrenched, the facilitators can focus on learners' individual growth with more confidence and experience. We are seeing children enjoy the wonders of nature, team building outside the classroom, improved relationships, getting to know themselves (and their potential and worth) better and enjoying the resources of camp.

We continue to hear such positive feedback from Principals and Educators who are enjoying the positive effects of camp, back in the class and school context. What a privilege it is to be investing into the lives of the most vulnerable children in our society.

We also celebrate improvements that have been made to the campus this term, as we continue to steward the space.

Thank you for once again supporting us in this venture and enabling the work on the ground to continue!

Kind regards,

Rigby

Chairman of the Board



Overview of Term 3 Camps

**CAMP
#1**

**PAARLZICHT, NEW ORLEANS, MAGNOLIA
& ORLEANSVALE PRIMARY SCHOOLS**
PAARL EAST
GRADES 5-7

**No. of Learners: 125
No. of Educators: 11**

We used the winter holiday season to introduce four potential partner schools to Bridges – Paarlzicht, New Orleans, Magnolia, and Orleansvale Primary. An organisation that provides psycho-social support to the learners at these four schools, Khula Education, assisted in selecting learners from Grade 5-7 who had worked diligently in the 2nd term and who had been identified as vulnerable to various forms of abuse, gangsterism, bullying and trafficking. Volunteers from Free to Fly led sessions encouraging learners to speak out against injustice and equipping them with the knowledge of who they should turn to for help. The learners brought positive attitudes and bright smiles that made the camp a joy for our facilitators. Learners were especially excited about the food, with multiple children commenting that they are not used to receiving three meals a day. Due to a generous donation of children's story books, we were able to include a book for each child as an extra gift in their toiletry packs. After seeing the impact that the camp had on the learners, our facilitators felt a renewed sense of passion for our programme as they entered the 3rd term.



**CAMP
#2**

TREVOR MANUEL PRIMARY
FISSANTEKRAAL
GRADE 6 (GROUP 1)

**No. of Learners: 24
No. of Educators: 1**

Trevor Manuel Primary returned to Bridges with their Grade 6's who attended the Outdoor Education Programme in 2022. Due to the high number of Grade 6's at this school, we split the grade into two camps. Unfortunately, due to a miscommunication between the school and the learners' parents, only half of the expected learners were able to attend this camp. However, the smaller group allowed for more intentional communication between learners, and our facilitators were able to easily identify and encourage leadership potential. Our team noticed a heart of serving amongst the learners, with many of them offering to help set up and pack up equipment for activities. This is especially encouraging since the focus of our Grade 6 camps is "social awareness" and learning to be mindful of others. The learners clearly latched onto those skills and put them straight into practice!





**CAMP
#3**

TREVOR MANUEL PRIMARY
FISSANTEKRAAL
GRADE 6 (GROUP 2)

No. of Learners: 99
No. of Educators: 3

Our second group of Grade 6's from Trevor Manuel Primary demonstrated a huge amount of growth since they last came to Bridges in 2022. Throughout the camp, learners communicated well with one another and showed excellent teamwork. There were high levels of trust and respect between learners, as well as great confidence when faced with challenging activities. We were proud of the outstanding behaviour that we saw in this group and are looking forward to their return as Grade 7's in 2024!

**CAMP
#4**

BONGA PRIMARY
GUGULETHU
GRADE 5

No. of Learners: 66
No. of Educators: 4

The Grade 5's from Bonga Primary brought a high level of energy and playfulness, which made for an exciting time on camp! Learners especially enjoyed their hike, and shared a special moment of singing together once they reached the top of the "koppie." The obstacle course brought about another highlight, where one of the girls felt that she wasn't strong enough to complete the activity. Her educators and fellow learners encouraged her by cheering "You can do it!" in isiXhosa and helped her along the course until she had completed the activity. Her beaming face reflected the boost in confidence that she gained through the support of her peers and being able to complete the course. Overall, we saw wonderful displays of sportsmanship and endurance throughout the activities. This class was a real blessing to have at Bridges!

**CAMP
#5**

ELNOR PRIMARY
ELSIES RIVER
GRADE 5

No. of Learners: 83
No. of Educators: 4

This was a fantastic week with Elnor Primary's Grade 5 learners! They showed an appreciation for the beautiful scenery and nature that surrounded them on camp. The learners especially loved hiking up the mountain and hearing the echo of their names as they shouted from the top. Grade 5's can often feel nervous about this new camp experience, especially since some learners expressed that they hadn't been on a school outing outside of their community before. However, Elnor's educators were active and invested during the camp, and we noticed a real boost in confidence when the learners had familiar faces encouraging them in camp activities. We've heard feedback that Grade 1's and 2's at Elnor Primary are already asking when it will be their turn to come to Bridges. We are eager to host them when their turn comes around, and we are confident that our partnership with Elnor Primary will continue to grow and flourish over the coming years.



**CAMP
#6**

SIMONDIUM PRIMARY
SIMONDIUM
GRADE 6

No. of Learners: 77
No. of Educators: 2

Simondium's Grade 6's returned to Bridges for their second camp, and we were excited to see a big change in behaviour since last year. Learners actively looked for ways to serve one another, which was especially noticeable at mealtimes. Learners were pouring juice and water for each other, clearing up each other's plates and cutlery after mealtimes, and waiting for everyone to finish their food before getting up to play. We also noticed learners stepping into leadership roles during their activities and communicating clearly with one another. Simondium's principal, a strong leader of leaders, brought their deputy principal for a visit during the camp, and it was great to show them on the ground what our camps are all about. Thank you Simondium for joining us for another exciting camp experience!

**CAMP
#7**

ALPHA PRIMARY
MORNINGSIDE DURBANVILLE
GRADE 5

No. of Learners: 62
No. of Educators: 3

A huge thank you to the educators who attended this camp! They were fully present, invested and communicative throughout the camp programme. This facilitated easy communication between our facilitators and learners and meant that educators could take the learnings from camp activities back into their classrooms. Although we experienced some negative behaviour from a few learners, our facilitators and educators managed those challenging situations well and we had an enjoyable camp overall!



**CAMP
#8**

WESEIND PRIMARY
FRANSCHHOEK
GRADE 7

No. of Learners: 50
No. of Educators: 2

We had an amazing camp with Weseind Primary's Grade 7's! Our facilitators noticed a significant improvement in learners' social skills from their Grade 6 camp at Bridges, and this lay a good foundation for this year's camp, which focused on self-management and leadership. We observed that some of the learners were slower to grasp new skills, but that didn't hinder their enjoyment and interaction during the camp. Overall, the learners demonstrated diligence and rose to the challenge in every activity! Well done Weseind Grade 7's!



**CAMP
#9**

WESEIND PRIMARY
FRANSCHHOEK
GRADE 6

No. of Learners: 59
No. of Educators: 3

The following week, it was Weseind's Grade 6's turn to come to Bridges for an exciting time away from home. A highlight from this camp was the sense of unity experienced between Afrikaans and isiXhosa-speaking learners. Activities were completed with an extraordinary level of teamwork and support for one another. The educators were incredibly supportive of their learners and encouraged them to participate fully in every aspect of the programme, which made a big impact on the success of the programme! Learners also showed care for the campsite by taking initiative to clean up after activities, which was much appreciated by our facilitators. Thank you Weseind learners and educators for a great camp!

**CAMP
#10**

SIMONDIUM PRIMARY
SIMONDIUM
GRADE 5

No. of Learners: 73
No. of Educators: 3

Our Simondium Primary Grade 5 camp was filled with laughter, fun and high-energy. Two challenges that our facilitators faced on this camp were that the students took longer to grasp new skills than some of our other Grade 5 groups, and the educators showed a lack of participation in activities. We felt that the educators missed the opportunity to connect with their students on camp and carry the programme's learning outcomes back into their schools for the learners to continue developing. However, this was an opportunity to reflect on how our team can draw educators into activities even more and help them to better understand their role in the programme. Overall, this was still a great camp and we saw the learners soaking up every moment of fun at Bridges.

**CAMP
#11**

ALPINE PRIMARY
MITCHELL'S PLAIN
GRADE 5 (GROUP 1)

No. of Learners: 55
No. of Educators: 4

Alpine Primary, a new partner school, came for their very first camp at Bridges, and we were blown away by their eagerness to be part of our programme! Educators commented that they saw a new side to their learners as they played and engaged in activities. They were inquisitive, invested and communicated well with our team of facilitators. During their camp, we noticed an improvement in hand-eye coordination and teamwork, as learners latched onto the opportunity to learn new skills. We were also visited by the principal of Alpine Primary. It was wonderful to see a principal who cares deeply about the programmes their learners are involved in and who will go out of their way to get firsthand knowledge of what our Outdoor Education Programme is all about. We are looking forward to the years ahead of partnering with Alpine Primary!



School Feedback

We have received very encouraging feedback from schools on our programme, especially through letters such as the one below from the principal of Alpha Primary:

“Our school community would like to express our sincere appreciation for you and your team's support to our school.

The skills and values that are passed on to our learners will stay with them for life. Your programme creates a sense of togetherness and school pride in our learners. You help build our school culture with the values presented to them on camp.

Our hope is that Bridges will grow from strength to strength. The values of communities in South Africa are under great pressure due to mismanagement and corruption, and only organisations like yours, schools, churches and volunteer organisations can protect against chaos and the decline of values.

Please convey our sincere thanks and appreciation to your team and the sponsors who provide hope in the darkness our currently experiencing.

*Your partner in education,
Sincerely,
M.G. November (Principal of Alpha Primary)”*



Total Impact So Far

IMPACT: TERM 3, 2023

- CAMPS: 11
- LEARNERS: 773
- EDUCATORS: 40
- MEALS PROVIDED: 5691

IMPACT: YEAR TO DATE

- CAMPS: 27
- LEARNERS: 2089
- EDUCATORS: 115
- MEALS PROVIDED: 15428



Thank You

The Bridges team is greatly appreciative of every donor and partner who has supported us throughout 2023. Thank you for catching our vision to see young lives impacted and coming alongside us as we pursue that goal.

With your support, we have been able to bring 2,089 learners to Bridges for an enriching camp experience. This number will increase as we head into term four, with another 4 camps planned before our partner schools head into exam season. This brings us to a total of 31 camps for 2023.

As mentioned in Principal November's letter, it has been exciting to see a change not only in individual learners and educators, but in entire school cultures. What a privilege to know that the work we are doing is bringing about a change that we have long hoped for in our communities. We are trusting that the seeds that have been planted in 2023 will continue to grow and flourish in the years ahead.

We look forward to another term ahead, filled with impactful camps and special moments with our learners.

Please continue to follow us on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn for regular updates, photos and stories throughout the year.



Website: www.bridgesretreat.co.za/education-programme/

Facebook: www.facebook.com/BridgesEduCamp/

Instagram: www.instagram.com/bridgesoutdoorcamp/

