



Message from Rigby

In the first part of this final newsletter of 2022, we have intentionally chosen to put the spotlight on the amazing people who are passionately committed to seeing the vision of Bridges both mature and flourish into the future. Within the whirl of endless activity, it's possible to be inspired by the results and feedback, without acknowledging the rich contributions of the dedicated men and women who make it all happen on the ground. As you read on you will see some of the names and faces of those who serve on various staff teams. So much of what we have managed to accomplish in this post-Covid season, comes down to these incredible co-stewards of our vision. I invite you to join me in celebrating their valued contribution. Our hope is that they will enjoy a well-earned break with their loved ones as things slow down over the Christmas holidays.

Finally, to you our friends and donors, 2022 has been the 'prototype' year where our education programme has been framed, improved and fine-tuned. Our confidence is really high for 2023. We now anticipate 3000 students and educators from 34 sponsored school camps, to be the beneficiaries of this life-changing endeavor in 2023. We have already secured funding for 12 of those 34 school camps. It would mean so much to us and ultimately these 'yet-to-be' sponsored schools, if you or your company would consider partnering with us, as we join together in pushing back the despair, one school, one grade and one life at a time!

Wishing you and your loved ones a restful and meaningful holiday,

Rigby

Chairman of the Board



Team News

Each term we spotlight some Bridges team members, this term we get to know Rene, Matthew & Geraldine.



RENE DANIELS
Housekeeper and Cook

Rene is a second-generation staff member at Bridges in her role as Housekeeper and Cook, which she started in 2012. Her mother, Rachel Daniels worked before her as Cook for the then Bridges Academy in 2007 before she passed away in 2013.

Rene says she loves children and is passionate about cooking for people, making them happy and continuing her mother's legacy. She enjoys working at Bridges, a team she describes as like-minded and respectful. She says she meets lots of different people in her role, and these people have built into her life, as she has built into theirs.

Rene passed her learners license this week, we are proud of her.

Matthew and Geraldine run the Bridges campus with efficiency and expertise. They have been with Bridges for the last 4 years, starting with the previous owners. Matthew uses his past work experience as a consultant in organisational effectiveness, strategy and leadership development, which he combines with his practical skills and problem-solving abilities to tackle every new challenge at Bridges. Matthew says, "I like seeing Change being implemented and I love working with people. I love the fact that we are working on a piece of land that belongs to God and that many people come here and have an encounter with God."

Geraldine, our admin ninja, is motivated by bringing a sense of order to work processes, helping the team to do what they need to and ensuring that customers have a great experience when they book with us. She is also a talented gardener and aspiring permaculturalist who is on a personal mission to rid the campus of every thorny weed that would detract from the great outdoor experience that is Bridges.



MATTHEW & GERALDINE NEWAY
Campus Managers



Staff First Aid Training

Six of our staff members (3 camp facilitators and 3 operational staff) completed a Level 1 First Aid course, facilitated by the experienced John Hambleton from Frontline Emergency Care, at Bridges Retreat Centre over 2 days in November. The team were trained, in theory and practice, on many different aspects of first aid, especially pertaining to child safety. They all passed with flying colours. Well done to Brent, Ray, Justine, Matthew, Rene and Patricia.



In Other News...

CORPORATE TEAM BUILDING

Our Education Team was asked to facilitate their first corporate team building morning, for one of our donor partner companies, who booked Bridges as their year-end function venue. This was a great experience for the Ed team, to share part of the Bridges camp programme with our adult donors who had great fun, tackling teamwork in a different environment.

GOLF DAY FUNDRAISING EVENT

The fundraising team worked together to pull off an incredible golf fundraising event that raised over R130 000 towards the Bridges Educational Programme. The golf day was organised and sponsored by Jay and his team, a big thank you to Jay for his unwavering support. The event was held at Stellenbosh golf course, where all the players heard about the Bridges Education Programme and great connections were formed as we work on extending our team of Bridges ambassadors. The golfers then enjoyed a night at Bridges after their day of golf as part of introducing Bridges partners to a 'lived experience' of the Bridges campus.

TOILETRY BAG AND BEANIE DONATIONS

Some of our generous donors have been sponsoring toiletry bags, to be given out to learners at camp. This has been happening over the last few months and already 644 toiletry bags- which includes a toothbrush, toothpaste, face cloth and deodorant- have been received by our learners and hundreds more bags are packed and ready to be given out early 2023. Thank you to Geraldine and now Jakes, our star volunteer, for coordinating the purchasing and packing of these goody bags over the last few months.

The Knitting Fairies, a volunteer group of knitters, delivered 800 beautiful handmade beanies to Bridges this year, which were given to children over the cold winter months. A heartfelt thank you to all the Knitting Fairies.

We know how much these gifts mean to our learners, there is always great excitement and gratitude when these goodies are distributed.



Overview of Term 4 Camps

CAMP #1 JOOSTENBURG PRIMARY, GRADE 5, JOOSTENBERG VLAKTE

Joostenberg Primary is a farm school, on the Joostenberg Vlake, just outside Durbanville. The learners from Joostenberg are from the under resourced surrounding community and as a Quintile 3, no fee school, they rely heavily on external care and support. Our Ed team visited the school, a week before camp, to help prepare learners to maximize their camp experience. The children enjoyed every part of the camp programme and participated with enthusiasm and minimal behavioural issues. The Ed team was impressed with the way the Educators from this school engaged with and spoke to their learners, with dignity and compassion.

No. of Learners: **79**
No. of Helpers: **6**



CAMP #2 BERGENDAL PRIMARY, GR 5, PAARL

Bergendal Primary is a quintile 1, no fee farm school from the South of Paarl. The learners were well mannered and worked well as a team. The activity outcomes were achieved and the teachers supported the programme with energy and enthusiasm too.

No. of Learners: **61**
No. of Educators: **3**

CAMP #3 TREVOUR MANUAL PRIMARY, GR 5 (GROUP 1), FISANTEKRAAL

Trevour Manual is a no fee school from Fisantekraal. Because of the large size of the grade, our team split the group into two separate camps, run over 2 consecutive weeks. The first camp was one of the best Grade 5 groups that our team has experienced. Given the harsh realities of the learner's social surroundings, the children were fully engaged in all the activities and quickly displayed trust towards their coaches in their respective groups.

No. of Learners: **93**
No. of Educators: **4**



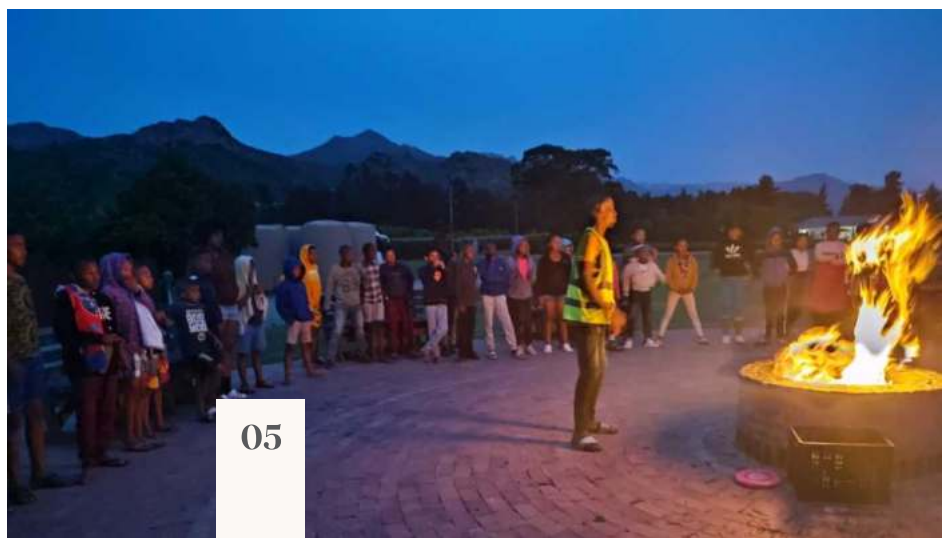
CAMP #4 *TREVOUR MANUAL PRIMARY, GR 5 (GROUP 2), FISANTEKRAAL*

This Grade 5 camp also included x10 Grade 6 prefects for 2023, that were included to trial the prefect camp to be held at Bridges with prefects from all our partner schools in Jan 2023. The prefect trial component proved to be a valuable learning curve as the learners displayed leadership qualities but lacked practical leadership skills. The Bridges Team were able to guide those learners through the LEAD model while sticking to the planned cognitive and motor skill activities. The educators observed how the learners adapted from their normal school behaviour towards servant leadership behaviour over the camp period.

No. of Learners: 58
No. of Educators: 3

The creative arts part of the programme proved to be the champion activity for the Grade 5 learners where self-expression through their creative art works was so beautifully displayed. Two boys were so inspired by the Bridges environment and space, that they performed a spontaneous, unrehearsed/ freestyle rap song around the campfire, all about their experience at Bridges. The learners were a rewarding group to work with, as they provided our Facilitators with a challenge in terms of coaching and the reward of seeing their young lives grow socially and emotionally over the experience.

We also include at the end of this Newsletter, some beautiful letters of appreciation and thanks, received from our partner schools this term. Enjoy reading their feedback on the impact the Bridges outdoor education programme has had on their learners, schools and communities.





Learner Feedback

This is what the Learners had to say about the Bridges Coaches this term (captured in their camp journals) :

- They were kind especially coach KD and Siya.
- I love coach AJ and Coach Siya
- The coaches was very happy to see us because they like children
- The taught us to face our fears
- Very nice
- The coaches were friendly with us
- They were friendly and nice and they respect us
- They are helpful
- They are cool
- Die coaches is baie lekker
- They are great and good next time I will come back
- Beautiful and strong
- Fun, funny, pretty, trustworthy and they listen
- Almal was mooi, vriendelik
- Hulle is goeie mense want hulle leer vir ons goede
- All of them was good. I like them because they are good persons
- Hulle was nie ombeskof nie
- They was very strict
- He help us when we want help
- They are good coaches I love her
- They were vary great
- They were like my friends
- I love it



Learner Feedback (continued)

This is what the Learners had to say about what they learned on camp:

- Ek het geleer dat ek respek het
- I learnt about myself is to swem I did never tink I can swem
- I learn not to listen to negative things
- Spanwerk en om in mekaar te glo
- Learnt about communication
- Believe the team
- Learnt about Leadership
- Not to shout
- It felt great because we were doing teamwork
- Don't give up, and speak with each other
- Listening to the coaches
- Listen to each other
- Not to yell at any one and not to bully anyone
- I thought I could not do the activity, but then I could do it
- I learnt hope
- Ek het gedink ek kan nie swem nie maar toe ek in the water klim en my bene en armes beweeg to swem ek
- Ek dink ek het geleer om my maat te vertrou en samewerking
- I learned how to do teamwork
- Not to shout at each other but to communicate with one another
- To trust others
- Not to give up so fast
- I learnt I get tired quick and to trust myself
- I'm a great leader
- I learned that I'm very unfit
- Ek moet nie krag weg gee nie
- Ek het geleer om hard te werk. Ek het gedink ek kan nie die goed doen.
- Om nie op te gee nie
- To work hard with your team, trust yourself and I learnt to much things
- Never work alone when you need help with it
- You must not skel
- Om my vrese te oorkom
- I should trust and never give up. To enjoy, eat, and laugh
- I learnt to swim in the pool and now I can swim a little bit
- To share
- I learned to swim
- Being responsible for others
- I must trust and work as a team
- Respect myself
- To respect someone and forgive
- It is to help others when they need help
- That I should not let anyone make me feel sad or afraid
- Waking up and make up my bed
- I learn that I must care for someone and help him or she when they are on the problem
- I learnt to never give up, never let anyone bully
- To be brave do things I never did and sharing and teamwork
- It was to communicate with others and always respect your coaches
- I learn how to support others
- Confidence
- Caring for people
- Respect, and we must trust each other and I will not forget the teamwork
- I have learned about respect myself and others and also help them
- I will never forget the pool
- I will never forget the nice work we do



REFLECTIONS FROM COACH CLAUDINE:

Story about a post camp, school visit

Last Friday, we went to visit grade 5 learners from a primary school that had their camp with us in May of this year. I was excited to see them and keen to know if, and how, two and a half days of camp had influenced their lives post-camp.

When we arrived in the courtyard, the learners formed a guard of honour for us to walk through while singing a song of thanks, and greeting us with smiles and much excitement. At the end of the line, one of the groups performed their camp-created war cry. To say we were deeply touched by this gesture would be an understatement.

I was assigned to go to each class and informally ascertain their current progress, as well as to leave them with some motivation and a reminder that we still believe in their greatness and potential.

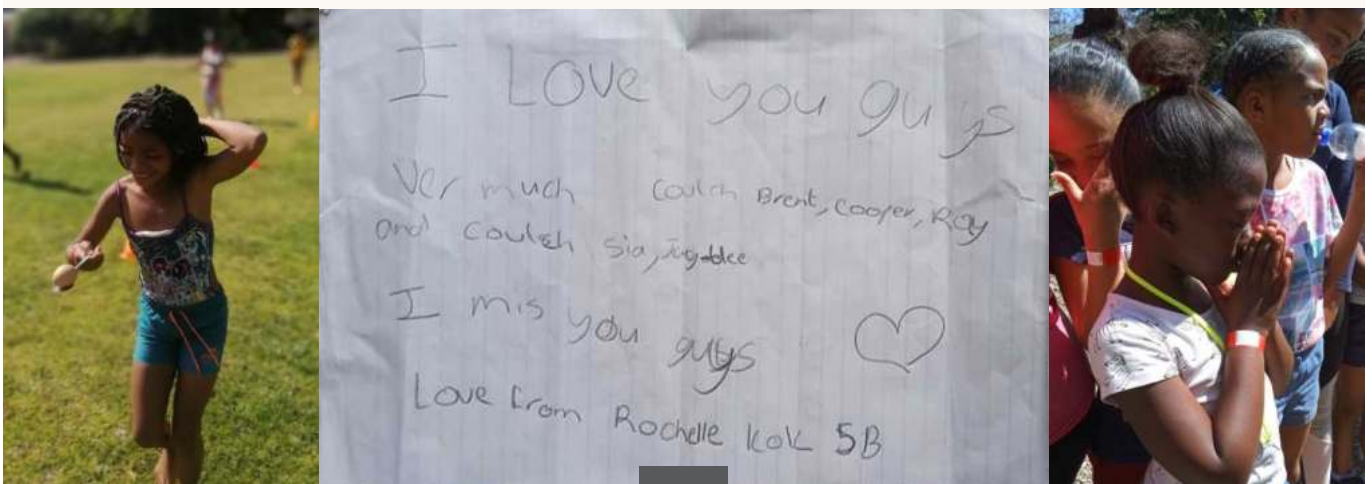
Three of the four classes indicated that they had applied teamwork, courage, respect, and trust both in class and at home. Many had also begun to practice "focusing skills," which is an important part of listening comprehension. Their progress, which included grade increases, was all confirmed by the class teachers who were present while I spoke with them.

However, three things stood out for me.

The fourth class admitted that they did not put the values and skills they learned at camp to use. Their brutal honesty and respectful manner in which they shared this astounded me. I thanked them for their candor and continued to motivate them. Internally, however, I was perplexed by their respectful truthfulness. The only answer I could come up with was that they still had that level of respect for me as a coach, and that even though they hadn't applied it yet, they had just done so.

Secondly, many learners told me about how they applied themselves at home. "Coach, I never listened to my mother. I always refused when she asked me to do something at home. I also had a negative attitude towards her. I've changed my attitude since returning from camp." So I asked her if there was something specific that happened at camp that made her decide to change the behaviour. "Well, coach, everyone at camp spoke to me with kindness and respect. You, the other coaches, and even the teachers who were there. So it made me think about how I speak to my mother and that I should change my attitude. So I did."

Finally, as I walked out of one of the classrooms, a girl handed me a note (see below). Keep in mind that their camp was 5 months ago. So, according to my theory, a single moment of positive connection and affirmation can have a long-term impact on a child's life. They will never forget how you made them feel.



Total Impact So Far

TOTAL IMPACT: TERM 4

- CAMPS: **4**
- LEARNERS: **271**
- EDUCATORS: **16**
- MEALS PROVIDED: **2009**
(x7 per camp, excluding snacks)

TOTAL IMPACT 2022

- CAMPS: **24** (Our target was 20)
- LEARNERS: **1869**
- EDUCATORS: **130**
- TOTAL LIVES IMPACTED: **1999**
- MEALS PROVIDED: **13993**



Thank You

I was amused to add up the total number of lives impacted this year and see the number '1999' just 1 person short of our audacious target of 2000, for 2022. Then it struck me that this number leaves space for you and me... I know my life, and probably the life of each person reading this, has probably also been positively impacted by the ministry that is Bridges this year. So yes, we have most definitely reached our target for 2000 lives impacted in 2022! Well done team!

A heartfelt thank you to all our generous donors who have enabled all of the above to take place this last year. Thank you for being an extended part of our team, for your ideas, encouragement, financial support and interest in the journey.

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/

May you rest well over the holiday season. We look forward to all that is in store for 2023, where we have 34 fully funded educational camps planned and a target of 3000 lives to impact!

BONGA PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Principal: Mr. A. Zita

11 October 2022

Bridges of Hope
Camp Director
Bridges Retreat Centre
Franschoek

Dear Brent DuToit

Outdoor Education Camp Appreciation

We are so excited and joyful to express our gratitude and thanks to Bridges Retreat Centre for inviting Bonga Primary School to the Outdoor Education Camp 2022 for our grade 5, 6 and 7. It has been a year of a special kind for our learners, educators and parents.

Thank you for the opportunity that you have given to our learners to come and learn new skills in a different environment other than a classroom, and your facility is so safe and of a world class standard. Your activities are educational and challenge learners to critically think, to be creative, communicate well and work as a team. These learning outcomes will help them to be solution driven in challenges facing young people at our school and in the community.

Our grade 6 & 7 were so excited as it was their first time to be out of township environment and away from their parents. We have learned so much from this experience. Grade 5's were so impressive and dedicated to complete all activities the camp can offer and were disciplined and respectful at all times.

This camp has been a life changing experience for our learners, and we hope to continue to participate for years to come.

Thank you to your amazing coaches, staff in the kitchen for preparing delicious food and everyone involved in making the camp a success.

On behalf of the school, parents and entire school community we are so grateful and happy with the work you are doing.

Yours Faithfully,

Mr. Mfusiyo Tshingilane
SGB Chairperson

Mr. A. A. Zita
(Principal)

EDUCATION FOR OUR FUTURE !!!!!

.....

BONGA PRIMARY SCHOOL

Date: 14/10/2022

N.Y. 144 GUGULETU 7750

WES-EIND PRIMARY

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30 September 2022

Bridges of Hope Education

The opportunity to be part of such an amazing camp during 2022 is/was such a blessing for our school because the camp has a holistic approach to education. Our learner's wellbeing and values are important to us and the camp really invest in that. Many of our learners come from difficult backgrounds and never have opportunities like this. For them, it's a great experience and a once in a lifetime opportunity.

The impact that the camp had on educators/learners are magnificent. Those who joined the camp are spreading the word with excitement to colleagues as well as parents. People are much more confident and are eager to get to know learners better. The camp environment is relaxed and positive and that allow people to reflect on a lot of areas as an individual. One of the educators mentioned that she now believes in teaching a child holistically and not only the subject or academically. Staff are confident to deal with learners and know how to address certain issues because they now know their character traits. The activities done with learners are very informative and educators learn to identify which learners struggle, working in groups and learners who have trust issues. What is amazing from camp feedback is that learners have a lot more of respect for staff and other learners. They feel very comfortable to confide in educators. Creating a safe environment for learners where they can open and talk freely about their emotions are of importance for the school. Activities and the consistency of core values taught on camp are implemented at school and daily reminders regarding this.

The fact that learners could learn problem solving, make social adjustments to new and different people, learn responsibility and gain new social skills to increase their self-esteem is outstanding.

My wish for 2023 and hopefully thereafter is that WES-EIND Primary and Bridges of Hope can still continue with what we have started.

Thank you once again for making the camp possible and thank you to the amazing, energetic and passionate coaches.

WES-EIND Primary

**F. September
PRINCIPAL**



CASCADE PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Tel: 021 879 4186

Email: head@cascadeps.co.za

Principal: Ms G. Adriaanse

Bridges of Hope Reference letter.

It serves me great pleasure to give reference with regards to Bridges of Hope.

From the onset, our initial encounter with the team, during, pre and post camp, it has been an absolute pleasure to work alongside such passionate, professional and dedicated facilitators. They assisted us with all documentation required for a seamless application process and offered our learners A-class facilities and an amazing camping experience. A value driven camp with activities which offers lifelong lessons and memorable moments that our learners will always be able to apply on their journey ahead. The friendly and energetic facilitators kept our learners engaged with activities that build capacity, help learners to conquer their fears and develop confidence in areas they never knew they had.

Many of our learners have never been beyond the borders of Mitchell's Plain and the mere drive in a luxury bus was an experience to behold and capture. Added to this experience were the warm showers learners could take after activities before they settled down to have a hearty - delicious meal.

Learner engagement offered each learner the opportunity to socialize across the four different classes and getting to know each other in a fun social context; where barriers of shame, being shy and being awkward were dismantled. Opportunities for trust and acceptance were also created.

After camp affects - these were the changes teachers noticed and celebrate these improvements daily.

1. Improved Discipline in certain instances
2. Teamwork - Team spirit
3. Ownership - picking up trash and cleaning up in class.
4. Better relationship with teachers and peers
5. Understanding accountability and taking responsibility.

Teachers reported that the above has become more evident in some learners' actions and changed behaviour was definitely evident in most.

Learner teacher engagement has also shifted from a place of reprimand to a place of understanding and fostering an environment of hope.

The camp was a unifying tool for the grade and also allowed for better collaboration between learner and teacher.

The camp has allowed for the alignment of school values with the learner experience

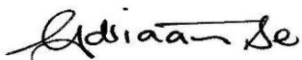
In conclusion, the tranquility and serenity of the camp surroundings is an escape from the socially despaired environment experienced by our learners daily. Being in nature detached our learners from the socio-economic factors which plague their lives.

Thank you Bridges for your kind and open hearts in striving to make a difference in the lives of those most marginalized.

May you be blessed and continue to serve.

God Bless.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G Adriaanse', written in a cursive style.

Ms G Adriaanse
Principal
Cascade Primary School.