

Term 3 2025 Newsletter

A Celebratory Milestone in the Bridges Story.

Dear Bridges Community,

This term marks a truly momentous chapter in the Bridges story, and we are thrilled to celebrate it with you!

We are overjoyed to share that the Bridges property is now fully paid off. Thanks to the extraordinary generosity of three donors, the final R4 million was settled - closing the bond in just five years instead of the 20 originally planned. This is nothing short of miraculous, and it positions us to step forward with greater security as we steward our 100-year vision of transforming young lives.

This milestone fills us with deep gratitude and fresh determination. Thank you for being an integral part of this journey - your support makes every story of hope, growth, and transformation possible.

We hope you enjoy reading about the highlights and impact from Term 3, made possible by your partnership.

With gratitude,
The Bridges Team

Term 3 Camps Overview:

This past term at Bridges was filled with life-giving moments, laughter, and significant growth. Over the course of **15 camps** with **11 partner schools**, we hosted 1015 learners and 50 educators, supported by **134 incredible volunteers**. Together, learners and educators shared in over **7 455 meals**, experienced the beauty of nature, and took part in meaningful activities that stretched their bodies, minds, and hearts.



Growth in Confidence and Self-Belief

For many learners, camp provided the chance to discover their own potential. Educators saw children overcoming self-doubt and stepping into leadership roles.



“I saw an increase in learner confidence – learners that are quiet and struggle academically opened up and shined.”

- David Isaacs, Educator, Riverlands Primary



“One learner told me he had no confidence but his teammates cheered for him and now he believes that he can do anything he put his mind to.”

- Divan Mentor, Educator, Wes-Eind Primary



“By the final day of camp, several learners who were initially quiet and hesitant had become active contributors, collaborating with peers and expressing ideas confidently.”

- Ms Abels, Educator, Riverlands Primary

Growth in Social and Emotional Development

Learners also made strides in empathy, discipline, and emotional growth. Educators observed learners showing greater respect, kindness, and relational maturity.

"I was so inspired when one of my learners spoke to me about self-awareness, we had a conversation about their strengths and weaknesses, so from there I've noticed that even their thinking and reasoning capacity has improved."

- Vuyolwethu Manqabashe, Educator, Bonga Primary

"Children who usually have discipline issues at school were so calm and respectful to the other learners and coaches on camp. The difference was night and day."

- David Isaacs, Educator, Riverlands Primary

"I noticed two learners who started having an argument about a petty issue early morning. I asked them to apologize which they readily did. In normal circumstances they would have continued to argue and refuse to apologize, which shows that they have grown in empathy."

- Nabeweya Martin, Educator, Alpine Primary



Teamwork, Leadership and Critical Thinking

From raft building to problem-solving challenges, camps gave learners the chance to shine as problem-solvers and teammates, often surprising their teachers.



"Many learners showed improvement in teamwork and holding each other accountable."

- Ishra Naicker, Educator, Alpine Primary



"During a team challenge, one group fell behind and was about to give up. But another group decided to stop and go back to encourage them. That moment captured the heart of Bridges."

- Coach Icy



"I witnessed learners who are usually misbehaving in class, but on this camp they were the ones leading the others well." –

- Ms Makiki, Educator, Bonga Primary



"It was an absolute pleasure to see the shy learners get out of their comfort zones. They participated and their personalities exploded. It was also a pleasure to see those learners who are busybodies in class shine and absolutely enjoy themselves in constructive ways."

- Naomi Claassen, Educator, Chatsworth Primary

New Experiences and Lasting Memories

For many children, Bridges provided a first-time experience - whether learning basic life skills, sleeping in their own beds, or discovering the joy of nature.



"Some learners learned to work in a team and others that are quiet at school actually came a little out of their shell and enjoyed being here."

- Tarryn Vermeulen, Educator, Groendal Primary

“Learners were exposed to a new environment. They were very eager to participate in activities. Their self-confidence and social skills developed.”

- Stephnol De Wet, Educator, Groendal Primary

“Teaching the learners how the showers work and how to take their bedding off... these conversations were eye-opening and remind one to be humble and grateful.”

- Dillon Henwood, Educator, Elnor Primary

Positive Role Models and Relational Connections

The role of coaches and volunteers stood out as a highlight of the term, creating a supportive environment where learners felt safe, valued, and inspired:

“From my experience with learners, knowing their backgrounds, I can tell that some of them are indeed rehabilitated. I feel like they needed this space and words of encouragement from the coaches.”

- Vuyolwethu Manqabashe, Gr 5 Educator, Bonga Primary

• *“There was a boy with little discipline but he amazed us all – on camp he was helpful, thankful and the one at the end of the day who took the lead. This child has lost 4 family members this year to gang violence and he wants to break the cycle.”*

- Coach Anita

“The coaches are positive, full of energy, enthusiastic and have lots of patience.”

- Marius Moses, Educator, Alpine Primary

“One learner shared privately that they’ve always felt ‘invisible’ at school but felt seen and valued during our camp sessions. He said, ‘I never thought my voice mattered until now.’”

- Coach Icy

Across the 15 camps, the common theme was transformation. Learners grew in discipline, empathy, leadership, confidence, and joy. As one educator summarized:

“Bridges gave hope to our kids. They were introduced to a better, more meaningful experience than what they are experiencing on a daily basis.”

- Stephnol De Wet, Educator, Groendal Primary

We are so grateful to our partner schools, educators, coaches, and volunteers for making Term 3 an unforgettable success. Every camp was a reminder that when children are given the opportunity to learn through play, teamwork, and connection to nature, they don't just grow—they thrive.

Together, we are shaping futures, one camp at a time.



Term 3 Impact



15
CAMPS



1,015
LEARNERS



50
EDUCATORS



2,130
WARM BEDS &
SHOWERS



3,780
FACILITATOR
/ COACHING HOURS

7,455
NUTRITIOUS MEALS



1,424
VOLUNTEER HOURS

11
PARTNER SCHOOLS



240
CURRICULUM
ALIGNED ACTIVITIES

Learners Feedback

Here is some feedback from our Grade 5 learners who visited Bridges for the first time this term.

"I will never forget sleeping in my own bed and enjoying yummy food."

"We had so much fun on camp."

"I will never forget sleeping nys and koel."

"I will always remember the obstacle course, it was so fun."

"I will always remember enjoying yummy food."

"I will always remember figuring out a good strategy for a game."

"I will always remember that you must work as a team."

"I will always remember solving a problem with my team."

"I will remember all the activities."

"I will remember swimming at camp."

"I will always remember about the fashion show."

"I will remember us singing in the kitchen when we were done eating."

"I will remember playing games, knowing all the people and eating all the yummy food."

"I will always remember the coaches faces."

"I will always remember the nice food and the nice coaches."

"I will remember making new friends."

"I will remember to respect another and they will respect"

"I enjoyed the camp fire."

you.”

“I will remember the fun I did have and also the fashion show.”

“I will remember about team work.”

“I will remember balancing and moving carefully on the low ropes obstacle course.”

“I remember that us playing together.”

“I will remember the fashion show and the kindness of the teachers.”

“I will remember the games and the love you gave us, that is what I will never forget that.”

“I always wanted to sleep on my own bed and also swimming.”

“I will remember making new friends and sleeping in my own bed.”

Thank you Letter from Elnor Primary:

Dear Shernel and the entire Bridges team

On behalf of Management, Grade 5 educators, learners and parents , I would like to extend our deepest gratitude for the exceptional hospitality and incredible learning experience you provided during our recent camp.

The camp was more than just a trip, it was a pivotal educational and personal growth experience for our learners. The activities and the guided hike were perfectly tailored to challenge our learners and helped them build confidence, resilience and teamwork skills.

They left the camp with cherished memories and valuable life lessons. They have been back at school for a week, but cannot stop talking about their awesome camp experience.

Please convey our thanks to your dedicated team. Their hard work, behind the scenes to ensure the safety, comfort and enjoyment of our learners, did not go unnoticed.

We look forward to the possibility of returning next year and value our partnerships with the team at Bridges.

Thank you once again for always creating such a positive and impactful experience.

Warm regards
Chrislane Verlaat
Deputy Principal, Elnor Primary School



In Other News

Takealot Partnership

We are delighted to announce a new partnership with Takealot, who have come alongside Bridges in an extraordinary way. Not only are they sponsoring a camp this year and next, but they also surprised us with incredible generosity - sending four trucks filled with items from our wish list. From sports equipment for the Education Programme to new pillows and curtains for our bedrooms, their support will help us ensure that the Bridges campus continues to provide a world-class experience for every learner who comes through our gates.

We are deeply grateful for this meaningful partnership and excited about the impact it will have in shaping young lives.



100 Bishops Volunteers

On Wednesday, 30 July, we were delighted to host 100 Bishops boys and 12 educators who spent their Mandela Day volunteering at Bridges. With great enthusiasm, they helped weed lawns, create a new obstacle course, lay stone paving, and then joined Grade 5 learners from Alpine Primary for games and sports.

It was a wonderful day of connection, learning, and partnership - and we look forward to welcoming the Bishops boys back again next year as this relationship continues to grow.



Bridge the Gap

Thanks to the incredible generosity of our supporters, we've reached 80% of our annual fundraising goal! To complete the journey, we're seeking partners to help fund the final seven camps (R170 000 each). If you'd like to join us in making this possible, we'd love to hear from you.

[Donate](#)



Snap Scan



Peach Payments

Thank You!

We end this term filled with deep gratitude for the generosity and support that sustains our mission. Every camp, every smile, and every moment of growth is possible because of you. As we look ahead to Term 4, we're excited to continue building bridges of hope and opportunity for more children across the Western Cape.

With love,
The Bridges Team



Bridges Retreat Centre

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