

# Term 1 2026 Newsletter

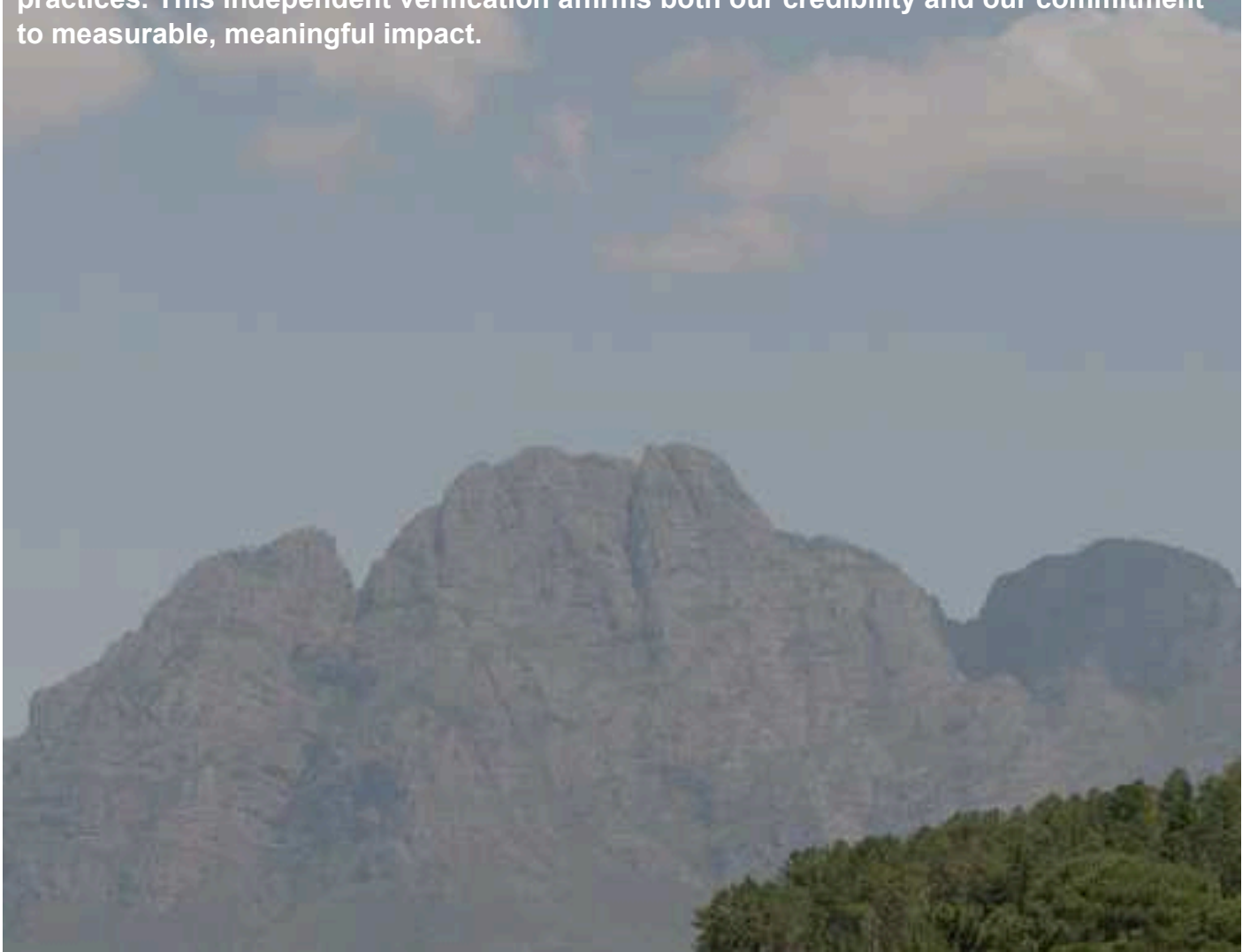
## 5th Year of Impact and a 5-Star Rating

Dear Bridges Community,

As we begin our fifth year of delivering fully-funded outdoor education programmes, we pause to reflect with deep gratitude.

What started in February 2022 with a single pilot camp of 40 learners from Mitchells Plain and Langa has grown into a movement of impact across the Western Cape—reaching thousands of young people with transformative experiences in nature.

This term Bridges received a 5-star rating from Izinga Assist, recognising our compliance, governance, financial management and rigorous monitoring and evaluation practices. This independent verification affirms both our credibility and our commitment to measurable, meaningful impact.



# CERTIFICATE OF VERIFICATION



THIS CERTIFICATE IS PROUDLY PRESENTED TO:

*Bridges Retreat Centre*

COMPANY REGISTRATION no.: 2020/624631/08; 309-176 NPO

Has been assessed and is verified as compliant with Legal, Governance, Financial Management Requirements and conducts sound Monitoring and Evaluation processes to prove impact.



1 March 2026

Date Of Issue

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Henk'.

Signature

**HENK SWANEPOEL**  
CEO – IZINGA ASSIST

We are also grateful for God's protection over our site during the recent Franschhoek fires.

Thank you for being part of our journey. Your support is what makes this possible!

## Bridges In The Media

This term saw increased visibility for Bridges across radio, print and digital platforms.

Highlights included:

- Radio features on Smile FM, 919 FM and Matie FM
- National and regional media coverage
- A feature in February Real Estate Investor Magazine
- Coverage of our partnership with the Cheslin Kolbe Foundation

These platforms are helping to build awareness, attract support and share the Bridges story across South Africa!

**Joy News:**

[Read Article](#)

**Good Things Guy:**

[Read Article](#)

Weekend Argus Online:

[Read Article](#)

Bolander Lifestyle:

[Read Article](#)

## Partner School Engagement: Strengthening Collaboration

In March, we hosted our annual Principals Lunch, bringing together leaders from our partner schools.

Rather than simply sharing updates, principals experienced the programme firsthand - participating in teamwork and communication activities that their learners engage in on camp!

This time of connection continues to strengthen trust, alignment and shared commitment to holistic learner development.



## Measurable Impact: What Schools Are Seeing

We surveyed all partner school leaders to understand the impact of the Bridges programme within their school communities.

The results are encouraging:

- 100% report a positive overall programme impact
- 100% see clear impact on learners
- 100% affirm alignment with school priorities
- 100% confirm meaningful skills and values development

### **Building Confidence & Self-Worth**

A recurring theme in the feedback was the growth in learners' confidence, identity, and sense of self:

*“The program help learners grow into confident, responsible, and socially aware individuals who are better prepared for school, leadership roles and everyday life.”*

*“Personal development; the learners come from difficult backgrounds and they are equipped with the skills to navigate their own self.”*

*“The improvement of their self confidence was most obvious after their return. They learnt to say “No” when coerced into the wrong situation.”*





### Stronger Relationships & Social Skills

Teachers highlighted improved peer relationships, teamwork, and conflict resolution:

*“There is definitely more teamwork and compassion amongst the majority of the learners. Conflicts are resolved better. Learners are more confident and proactive.”*

*“Learners have stronger bonding with classmates. Leadership skills improved and I saw how some took ownership of their environment.”*

*“Learners who visited the camp become more independent, and are willing to work as a team.”*





### Leadership & Responsibility

Feedback also showed us that many learners return from camp with increased leadership capacity and initiative:

*“They are taking on leadership roles and peer mentoring has increased.”*

*“Build learners character, also help learners with anti-social barriers.”*

*“The learners discovering their own leadership style while also learning how to work effectively with other leaders. Through teamwork activities and shared responsibilities, they learn when to lead, when to support and how to respect different leadership approaches. This will result in the learners working well with others in the classroom and be respected leaders.”*





### Exposure Beyond Their Environment

For many learners, the experience offers a rare and powerful shift in perspective:

*“They learners are exposed to something different and better than what they go through everyday at home in their community.”*

*“They are give an opportunity to engage on a social level in a different environment created for such activities, which is not always possible in a classroom or at school.”*





### **Alignment with School Values & Learning**

Educators also noted that the programme reinforces school values and supports holistic education:

*"It enforced our school values."*

*"Camp aligns with our SIP (School Improvement Plan) as it focusses on life skills and academic support. The strategies have been incorporated into classroom practices and extra curricular activities."*

In summary, 100% of our partner school leaders report positive impact across all measured areas.

Their feedback shows that the Bridges Outdoor Education Programme is making meaningful and lasting impact on learners, particularly in their social, emotional, and personal development.



## Prefect Camps: Shaping the Leaders of Tomorrow

We began the year with our Prefect Leadership Camps, hosting 114 Grade 7 learner leaders from across our partner schools.

These camps set the tone for the year—equipping young leaders with the tools to influence their schools positively.

Through immersive, hands-on experiences such as raft building, A-frame challenges, market day and values-based leadership sessions, learners developed confidence, communication skills and a strong sense of responsibility.

One of the most powerful outcomes was seeing hesitant learners step forward—finding their voice, owning their role and leading with courage.





## Term 1 Camps Overview: Growth You Can See

Following the Prefect Camps, Term 1 continued with a full programme of Grade 7 camps, reaching a further 638 learners from partner schools in Strand, Elsies River, Mitchell's Plain, Malmesbury and Gugulethu.

Across these camps, learners engaged in curriculum-aligned activities, supported by dedicated educators and facilitators. A consistent theme was the visible growth in confidence, courage and self-expression. Many learners arrived feeling shy or uncertain, yet over the course of the camps, stepped boldly into activities—from public speaking and fashion shows to teamwork challenges—often surprising themselves and their peers.



The camps were marked by a strong sense of joy and gratitude, with learners embracing every aspect of the experience, from programme activities to shared meals and campfire moments. Leadership development was especially evident, as prefects and emerging leaders took initiative, resolved peer challenges, and modelled positive behaviour.



Coaches and educators also noted significant growth in emotional awareness, responsibility, and decision-making, with learners beginning to better understand the impact of their choices. By the end of each camp, there was a clear shift—not only in individual confidence and resilience, but also in how learners supported, encouraged, and worked alongside one another.

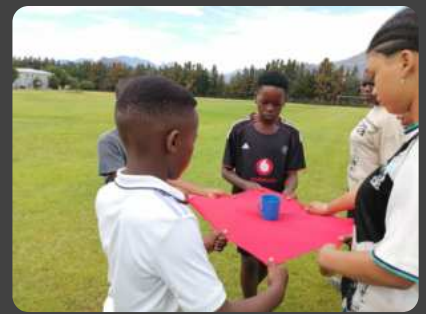


## Global Volunteers: Expanding Perspective

This term, we were privileged to host volunteers from the USA, including team members from [Glorieta Adventure Camps](#).

Their presence brought energy, mentorship and global perspective to our camps. We have already implemented a number of great ideas that they shared with us from their US summer camp experience!

*“It was a deeply rewarding, impactful and fun experience. Knowing the incredibly difficult backgrounds the learners come from was humbling, yet SO hopeful to see how the kids blossomed so much during camp. Our group of volunteers was able to slot right into the camp activities.” — Kath Southwood*



## 2026 Impact to Date



**10  
CAMPS**



**752  
LEARNERS**



**35  
EDUCATORS**



**1,574  
WARM BEDS &  
SHOWERS**



**5,509  
NUTRITIOUS  
MEALS**



**6  
PARTNER  
SCHOOLS**



**3,400  
FACILITATOR  
/ COACHING HOURS**



**7  
VOLUNTEERS**



**220  
CURRICULUM  
ALIGNED ACTIVITIES**



## Fundraising Update: The Opportunity Ahead

Thanks to your generosity, we have already reached 59% of our annual fundraising goal.

To complete the year, we are seeking funding for the final 13 camps, at:

- ZAR 170,000 per camp
- ZAR 1,700 per learner

We also have key operational needs:

- 2 staff laptops
- A new Bridges vehicle

## Help Us Reach Our Goal

If you'd like to join us in making more camps like this possible, please contact Catherine  
catherine@bridgesretreat.co.za.

Donate



Snap Scan



Peach Payments

# Thank You!

Your investment is not only funding camps.

It is restoring dignity.

It is building leaders.

It is changing life trajectories.

We are deeply grateful to walk this journey with you.

With gratitude,  
The Bridges Team



**Bridges Retreat Centre**

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You've received this because you've made a donation or are interested in Bridges.

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