

# TERM 2 | 2026 NEWSLETTER

## An Island of Hope in a Sea of Despair

Dear Bridges Community,

We often speak of Bridges as ‘an island of hope in a sea of despair’ — this term, those words felt more literal than ever. Franschhoek and much of the Western Cape were hit hard by devastating floods, with homes, schools and lives disrupted across the region. At the same time, the community of Groendal — where many learners from our partner schools Groendal Primary, Dalubuhle and Wes-Eind Primary live — was shaken by a wave of gang violence that claimed five lives.

Against that backdrop, what we witnessed on camp this term was all the more powerful. While the world outside felt uncertain, learners arrived at Bridges and found something they deserved: safety, warmth, belonging, and joy. This newsletter is dedicated to them — their voices, their growth, and their stories.

We were also delighted to welcome Jean de Villiers, former Springbok captain and now Head of Philanthropy at Citadel, to Bridges this term. He experienced our Education Programme in action and left inspired — and he kindly signed rugby balls that our facilitators used as prizes for winning teams on camp! We look forward to exploring what a future partnership with Citadel could mean for more learners.



# Bridges in the Media

This term, Bridges was featured in a wonderful article by Jacqui Mills at Everything is Written, spotlighting how our Outdoor Education Programme is delivering measurable impact in the lives of thousands of children across the Western Cape each year. We're grateful for every platform that helps tell the Bridges story and connect us with new supporters.

**Read the full article:** [An Outdoor Education Programme Building Resilience in Western Cape Learners](#)



## Investing in Our Team

Our facilitators are the heartbeat of every camp — and this term we invested in growing their skills. Naye and Siya completed a week-long facilitation training programme, run by the Adventure Institute, and four of our staff attended a morning workshop focused on child protection. A stronger team means a better experience for every learner who walks through our gates.

# Term 2 Camps Overview

During Term 2, Bridges hosted 12 camps, welcoming 753 learners and 42 educators from our partner schools across the Western Cape for transformative three-day outdoor education experiences.

Despite some winter weather, learners arrived with enthusiasm and left with greater confidence, stronger teamwork skills, and a deeper understanding of the values explored throughout camp.



Educators and coaches observed encouraging growth in leadership, social awareness, participation, and positive behaviour, with many learners stepping out of their comfort zones, supporting their peers, and embracing new challenges. Across all camps, it was inspiring to see learners fully engaged, forming meaningful connections, and discovering their potential in an environment where they felt safe, valued, and encouraged to thrive.



# In Their Own Words

## What Learners Will Always Remember

At the end of every camp, we ask learners what they will always remember. Their answers say it all:

**“I will remember teamwork and sportsmanship, to speak more than before. I became very confident.”**

— LEARNER, CASCADE PRIMARY, GRADE 7



**“I will never forget that the teachers and the coaches made me feel safe and at home. I love you guys so much.”**

— LEARNER, ALPINE PRIMARY, GRADE 7

**“I will always remember that I am a leader. I will always help my teammates and support them.”**

— LEARNER, CASCADE PRIMARY, GRADE 7



**“I will always remember when it was the fashion show, everyone was laughing and cheering and working together.”**

— LEARNER, ALPINE PRIMARY, GRADE 7

**“I will always remember how the coaches took us into their hearts like a family.”**

— LEARNER, ALPINE PRIMARY, GRADE 7



**“Thank you for everything. I hope you keep up the good work and the fun for the other children.”**

— LEARNER, CASCADE PRIMARY, GRADE 7



# Learner Impact

## The Changes We Are Seeing

The Bridges Outdoor Education Programme is built on evidence — and Term 2 continued to deliver results that are consistent, measurable, and deeply human. Here is a snapshot of what learners, educators, facilitators and principals are reporting:

### Keisha's Story — From Tears on Day 1 to the Front of the Fashion Show

Keisha arrived on the first day of camp in tears — so overwhelmed she needed to move to a different team. By the afternoon, her peers' warmth and her facilitators' encouragement had started to shift something. On Day 2, she was fully engaged and participating independently. By the Fashion Show on Day 3, Keisha was at the front.



**“From being shy to being in front at the Fashion Show — that was my highlight of the entire camp.”**

— COACH ANITA, BRIDGES FACILITATOR, SIMONDIUM PRIMARY

That three-day arc — from tearful withdrawal to confident self-expression — is one of the most powerful demonstrations of what Bridges makes possible. And Keisha is not alone.

### Peers Solving a Problem Before the Teachers Even Knew

A learner at Christmas Tinto Primary arrived at camp having left home while her mother was at work — and realised she'd forgotten her backpack with all her clothes. When her campmates discovered this, they didn't wait for an adult. They gathered spare clothes and sorted it out themselves. When they reported the situation, it was already resolved.



**“This showed empathy, leadership skills, and maturity. They said they knew they should care and respect others — something I realised they were being taught through Bridges.”**

— THANDOKAZI QOTOYI, EDUCATOR, CHRISTMAS TINTO PRIMARY, GRADE 7

# Learner Impact Continued...

## What Educators are Observing

**“Learners who were too shy to speak for themselves developed as they gained more confidence. Making new friends also assisted with it as they had mixed groups.”**

— CHANDRE HENDRICKS, EDUCATOR, CASCADE PRIMARY, GRADE 7

**“What stood out was not just the completion of the task, but the transformation in the group. Learners who had been competing for leadership began supporting one another, encouraging quieter voices, and celebrating success as a team.”**

— MARTELIZE FREDERIKS, EDUCATOR, WES-EIND PRIMARY, GRADE 7

**“Learners have become much more mature. They are able to distinguish between right and wrong. They are able to practice tolerance between each other and mainly show love, care and respect.”**

— SUKAINA MILLER, EDUCATOR, ALPINE PRIMARY, GRADE 7

## What Our Data Shows

Our monitoring and evaluation is ongoing and growing.  
Based on our pre- and post-camp assessments:

**95%**

of learners could name a specific value they intended to carry back to school

**+49%**

positive shift in trust and teamwork responses, pre to post camp

**100%**

of partner school principals report positive impact across all measured areas

**70%**

of principals “Strongly Agree” that camp skills transfer back into the classroom

This term we also piloted digital tablet-based assessments for the first time — cutting data capturing to under 10 minutes per learner and enabling real-time analysis.

Our full Impact Report for 2026 will be sent to all our donors separately and contains the complete data, more learner stories, and a deep dive into each of our five impact areas.

# 2026 Impact to Date

Behind Every Number Is a Story

Already this year, your support has enabled:

21

CAMPS

75

EDUCATORS

1,505

LEARNERS

12

PARTNER SCHOOLS

11,060

NUTRITIOUS MEALS

3,160

WARM BEDS & SHOWERS

7,140

COACHING HOURS

462

LO-ALIGNED ACTIVITIES

Behind every number is a moment of dignity restored, a friendship formed, a child who felt — perhaps for the first time — that the world has a place for them.

## Fundraising Update

Thank You — and One More Push

Thanks to your incredible generosity, we have already reached 70% of our annual fundraising goal. We are so grateful. To complete the year, we are seeking funding for the final 9 camps, at:

**ZAR 170,000 per camp**

**ZAR 1,700 per learner**

If you'd like to help make any of these camps possible, please contact Catherine at [catherine@bridgesretreat.co.za](mailto:catherine@bridgesretreat.co.za) or use the donate link below.



SNAPSCAN

[Donate](#)



PEACH PAYMENTS

# Thank You!

Thank you for making this possible.

Because of your support, learners experience not only adventure and growth, but also dignity, belonging, care, and hope.

We are deeply grateful to walk this journey with you.

With gratitude,  
**The Bridges Team**

