

WELCOME 2012!

We wish all our loyal friends and colleagues a very blessed 2012, full of new things, amazing experiences and opportunities to changes the lives of those in need. Let's all work together to make this year count!

A Recap on December

Last year this time, we reported on our wonderful partners, the Department of Geography at the University of South-Africa, who, selflessly, gave up some of their December holiday time to spend time in our community. This year is no different. Once again, we are humbled and grateful for the enthusiasm and dedication with which they engage in our area, even during holiday times. We caught up with them in Mathopestat and in Reagile, where respectively, they investigated the possibility of a piggery, and did AIDS counselling and training during December.

On the 9th of December, Retha Coetzee and Gillian Viljoen visited Reagile, near Koster, to undertake a session with victim counsellors at the Emmanuel Hope Centre. We at the GRCF have been working with these volunteer counsellors during 2011, facilitating empowerment. Their main task on a daily basis is dealing with HIV/ AIDS related issues, and therefore, the Department of Geography agreed, at the request of the Emmanuel Hope Centre, to facilitate a session with these counsellors. The main objectives was to facilitate a conversation around stigmatisation, own beliefs regarding HIV/AIDS and discrimination. Breaking away from the typical school-class seminar, the lecturers from UNISA used an informative DVD called "Life above All" to facilitate this conversation. This method proved to be very successful, and opened a platform for judgement free discussions. Thank you Retha and Gillian for the time and effort you put into this, we are looking forward to the follow-up sessions!



A few days later, on the 12th of December, the geographers from UNISA also visited Mathopestat, our pilot community where we did our first Community Asset Mapping Program towards the end of 2009. This time around though, they were accompanied by their colleagues from the department of Agriculture and Animal Health, with the main aim of investigating the viability of establishing a piggery for the community. We spent a very fruitful day in Mathopestat. Some viable recommendations were made, and informal exchange of knowledge also took place. Once again, the dedication with which UNISA has engaged in this project cannot be reduced to words, and we are so grateful for their participation and assistance.



We also want to congratulate Melanie Nicolau, Chair of the Department of Geography at UNISA for being presented the Executive Dean's 2011 Achievers' Award from the College of Economic and Management Sciences, in the Category Community Engagement: CEMS Honorary Citizen. We are proud to have you as our partner!

STILL CAMPING IN SKUINSDRIF

After spending a lot of time in Skuindrif in the Groot Marico area towards the end of last year, facilitating Community Asset Mapping Programs on the behalf of British American Tobacco, we were invited back to the area by an organisation called "Southern Cross Missions" to facilitate another CAMP. This time around it was in a village called "Vergenoeg", for our English speaking friends "Far Enough". Once again, a humbling experience, where the drive of the community was evident, to better the own quality of lives. Here's a small excerpt from the thank you letter they sent us:

"Presentation of the Community Asset Mapping Program at Groot Marico 09 – 12 January 2012

Please accept a special word of gratitude from all the organisations and individuals who had the privilege to attend the abovementioned programme which was so meticulously presented by the GRCF. All involved not only learned new methodology to use when engaging communities, but also profited through the journey of self discovery that they were professionally led on by the facilitators. Please convey our heartfelt appreciation to Christine and the rest of the staff for their sterling input during these four days. We trust that the relationship that was formed during these processes will grow into a formidable force for true constructive change within our Province." – Daan van der Merwe (Southern-Cross Missions)



This is always a unique experience, when community members physically map out their environment. We've also seen many pieces of art, when the community starts getting creative!



Not always an easy task, to put down on paper what your real desires for your life are.

Watch this space!

We are delighted to announce the arrival of a new emerging Community Foundation in our midst. The Morningstar Community Foundation is giving their first steps in becoming a fully operational Community Foundation, and will operate within the remaining three districts of the North-West province, as well as a district in the Northern Cape. We will endeavour to assist and participate on the development of this fledgling and wish them all the best in their journey ahead!

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Right: *During January we received a visit as part of a Peer Learning Program from the Ghana Social Investment Fund, together with Senior Officials of the Department Social Development, both National and Provincial. After a presentation on the GRCF and our CAMP interventions were done in the office, we took them to Mathopestat to also show them context of the more theoretical presentations. It was very well received by both the Ghana SIF and the Department of Social Development.*



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