

What We Do

The Melkbos Care Centre - Current Projects

The Melkbos Care Centre is a registered non-profit care facility for children. It is free of charge and is so run by volunteers and financed by sponsors and donors. The centre primarily serves the underprivileged children residing in the Rietvlei Bush area in Melkbosstrand, Cape Town.

These children live with minimal running water, no electricity and limited toilets shared between the whole community, in an environment rife with physical, emotional and substance abuse. There is little positive mentorship or encouragement for a better life. Below are details of projects currently being implemented by the Melkbos Care Centre to break the cycle of poverty in these children's lives and empower them to fully participate in South Africa's social, economic and political life in their adult years. **STAY IN SCHOOL PROJECT**

Prior to the establishment of the Melkbos Care Centre the children attended a farm school where the level of education was of a very poor standard. One of our learners aged twelve (12) years could barely read or write and the others were in similar circumstances. Their school attendance was inconsistent and there was little motivation to complete their school years. One learner aged nine (9) years had never been to school before. Since the inception of the Care Centre in 2005, we have successfully enrolled thirty-seven children into local schools offering a higher standard of education. We believe a good education is a crucial building block in the growth of an able and ambitious young adult.

Primary Objective

To ensure that all the children are attending school and receiving a high level of education and complete their Matric year, allowing for further education.

Activities

Registering and applying for birth certificates so children can be enrolled into the schooling the correct school for the particular learner (our learners currently attend 10 different schools in and around Melkbosstrand). Completing of enrolment forms and the enrolment process (many of the children's parents are illiterate). Transport children to and from school on a daily basis. Payment and supply of all schooling needs and expenses. Daily change of clean school clothes. Packed school lunch. Motivation and reward for daily school attendance and intellectual efforts (we monitor and incentivise school attendance and performance). Building and maintaining relationship's with the children's teachers and parents. Benefits Children receive a good education and are encouraged to continue their education further. Children are motivated to excel in their school work and praised for their efforts, which encourages the children to become industrious and to take pride in their work. Children are established into a routine which gives them a sense of calm and control. Routine helps to reinforce positive behaviours in children and minimizes negative behaviours. **AFTER CARE AND EXTRAMURAL ACTIVITIES PROJECT** The Melkbos Care Centre has a dedicated and professional team of staff to implement and ensure the success of the aftercare project. Swimming is one of the extramural activities offered by the Centre. This is a very important life skill for these children in particular because they live in walking distance of the beach. **Primary Objective** Provide a safe and stimulating environment whereby children can come after school and during school holidays to do their homework, receive extra lessons, extra mural activities, computer lessons, rest, eat a healthy meal, receive medical care and are motivated to attend school. **Activities** The following activities are implemented daily: A warm nutritious meal and vitamins. A bath and clean school clothes. Assistance with homework, research and projects. Access to our own Internet computer centre for research on projects, as well as free time to play games and develop their computer literacy skills. Revision of all schoolwork on the Evalunet E-school software programme. Extra remedial lessons. Evaluations by an Occupational Therapist and activities implemented to develop the children further. Full medical care (doctor visits, dentist visits, general health checks, eye tests). The children participate in extra mural activities outside of school such as swimming, dancing, karate, art, pottery, extra maths, chess etc.

Benefits Children's basic health needs are provided for; they eat healthy meals with vitamins, able to have warm baths, clean school clothes to wear and receive medical care. The vital homework assistance allows the children to stay on an acceptable educational level with their peers. Children learn acceptable social behaviour; table manners, etiquette, greetings. Children receive love, attention and support which helps to develop a healthy self concept. Self-confidence and self-esteem are developed through the extra mural activities and through the Centre's caregivers expressed interest shown in the children's development, welfare and companions. The children's intellectual efforts

are valued and praised which encourages them to be industrious and take pride in their work. This provides the environment for them to believe they are competent. Children's home situations are monitored to ensure their rights are not being violated.

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Since 2005 we have successfully enrolled 16 learners into pre-schools. Due to the high cost of pre-school education in South Africa these children would not have had access to pre-school education without the assistance of the Melkbos Care Centre. Pre-school education is of utmost importance for these children as they lack the basic skills such as being able to differentiate between colours, how to hold a pencil and the ability to build puzzles. Without these basic concepts and skills they are at a distinct disadvantage when they enter Grade 1. They are left far behind their peers often causing them to repeat Grade 1, which negatively affects their self confidence.

Primary Objective

Ensure that children receive adequate stimulation in their formative years. Ensure children are not left at home unsupervised while parents are at work.

Activities

The following activities are implemented: Registering and applying for birth certificates so children can be enrolled into the schooling system. Completing of enrolment forms and the enrolment process (many of the children's parents are illiterate). Transport children to and from pre-school on a daily basis. Packed school lunch. Payment and supply of all schooling needs and expenses. Daily school attendance monitored and encouraged. Identifying of any special needs; ADD, FAS. Building and maintaining relationship's with the children's teachers and parents. Benefits The following benefits are derived from this project: Children are given the opportunity to be on a par with the other learners when entering into Gr 1. Socio-emotional development; sharing, being considerate, dealing with emotions, handling conflict, health self image. Normative development; learning responsibility, speaking the truth, being honourable and respectful. Language development; expressing emotions, communication, use of correct words. Physical development; children given opportunity to exercise muscles, practice balance and co-ordination.

LOOK, LAUGH AND LEARN PROJECT

There is nothing more wonderful than hearing the sound of children laughing freely and seeing them in an environment where they are just having fun. Cultural and environmental outings form an important part of the Melkbos Care Centre. These outings are both educational and fun and are used to motivate children to attend school each day. The rewards programme implemented at the Care Centre has given the children goals to work towards during the year and this has helped to ensure that the children develop holistically. Outings are also an important 'eye opener' for children, where they get to see life outside of the informal settlement. This gives them insight into possible opportunities that await them in life, such as career choices, personal goals (such as owning a home), and healthy social interactions (hobbies and sports).

Primary Objective

Educational and fun activities and outings outside of the day-to-day routine.

Activities

The following is implemented: Identifying of educational and stimulating outings.Booking and arranging outings.Transport to and from outings.Supervising and facilitating outings.Helping the children to become aware of different career opportunities for the future.Teaching the children about our environment.Explaining life outside the informal settlement and demonstrating.Educational activities (MTN Science Centre, Zoo, Monkey Land, World of Birds). Environment where they just have good healthy fun. Benefits Children learn acceptable social behaviour and get to practice table manners, etiquette and greetings outside of the Centre.Children can show case their strengths by working towards a goal, which is an effective way to ensure they feel good about their achievements, increasing their self esteem which is vital for success in life.Children are provided with choices which allows for growth and self understanding.

.. SEX EDUCATION AND HIV/AIDS AWARENESS PROJECT

The South African Government has adopted a policy known as ABC (abstinence, be faithful and condomise) in its fight against the HIV/AIDS epidemic which is decimating the youth of our country. In response to this policy, the Melkbos Care Centre offers a life skills programme called 'No Apologies';

Primary Objective

The No Apologies programme approaches sexuality by seeking an understanding of the five developmental areas of the human person: intellectual, emotional, social, physical and ethical – all involved during the sexual decision-making process.

Activities

The following workshops are implemented: Issues facing teenagers today – explores the pressures of teenagers to partake in sexual activity.Why we all want healthy relationships – explores the difference between love, lust and infatuation.Media literacy – evaluating how our behaviour and attitudes are influenced.Pre-marital sex has consequences – looks at the sexual-decision process and sexually transmitted diseases. HIV/AIDS: A generation at risk looks at the social impact of HIV/AIDS and the myths and truths. Abstinence, it works every time – uses role play to respond to negative peer pressure, both in a one-on-one situation and a group situation. Marriage does matter – explores the value of marriage and the skills necessary for becoming a good marriage partner.

Benefits

This project has derived the following benefits for the children. Life skills are developed; confidence, assertiveness, respect of self and others, and informed decision making abilities.Children are motivated to live up to universal moral principles, even if they differ from their surrounding societies values.Children are able to make informed decisions about their sexuality.