

On your Doorstep...

Poverty's Child- Hear us, See us, Know us.

Remember, no matter how far away the tribulations of the world seem to be, the world is truly "on your door step"

...we are on your doorstep....this is our voice, the voice of poverty's child



Welcome to a new e-medium, helping the world's most vulnerable people to communicate with you.

"On your doorstep" is a forum to tell the stories of those who have no voice - no writing or reading skills - no internet and no mobility...the children of poverty and the mothers in desperation. It is HERE that they express to you their hopes and dreams.



It is our continuous goal to help make these hopes and dreams come true through you...the reader.



A window....bringing in the light

Meet the Kosa family:

In the Kosa family there are 7 family members living under one small leaky rusted roof, including a new born baby, Sara. The place reeks of gas fumes and refuse.

This family has felt the wrath of aids...and all suffer from TB. Living in a shack without windows, there is little fresh air or sunlight, both of which are desperately needed to help overcome TB, in conjunction with their daily cocktail of pills.



With the rising rate of TB taking over in Southern Africa, on top of the pandemic of HIV and AIDS, we are left with many families severely sick and dying.

Mario and Rianna, local South Africans, notified COLORS of this family and suggested building a new home for them since their falling down sideways shack was un-repairable.

Luckily, a sponsor to build them a new home (just under \$1000 per home) was found and work began within the week. Mario and another trusted co-worker Jappie, whom COLORS has known over the last 7 years, both dedicated themselves to building the Kosa family the new home...with windows and even mattresses to sleep on.

Can you imagine the difference a new home like this makes to such a huge family, sick and suffering with little hope in sight? Now they have a new home, they know that there are people out there that care, and a hope that they will recover from TB and gain enough strength to take care of their new baby Sara, who luckily has been declared HIV free thanks to mother to child preventative drugs.



Thank you to Neil and Lesley, who have donated funds to make homes like these a reality for those that need them most. And thank you to Mario and Jappie for your tireless hard work and efforts, building in wind and rain during your free time.

*We are now moving forward and building a pre-school for 40 children currently cooped up on a small dirt kitchen floor. Here is a photo of Lesley and Melinda from Canada, who visited the kids of this soon to be new crèche, while helping with our outreach distribution projects during their vacation to South Africa.



Linda's Story:



Linda was another volunteer who came to South Africa and gave her valuable time to help in ways that she could. Here is a story giving you a view into some of her experiences.

Broken cars anyone!

Yes....we still have a sense of humor, By Linda Theiu

Everyday is an adventure here in South Africa. Our volunteer days always start with the bakkie aka the truck.

The back is falling off. It's always "locked" but really the doors always open. The steering wheel is held together by twine. Actually, I think the whole truck is held together by twine. We sit on pillows because we can't reach anything including the pedals. There's no horn on the steering wheel, but we just found the horn on the floor. And it works. And we drive on the opposite side of the road. The truck starts with any key, screw driver or hair clip. It only starts on hot dry days after lunch. We tried to start the truck yesterday for a half hour and pushed it around the block. Then we gave up, left it on the road and walked to work.

The other day on the way to see the sick children in the hospital the bucky trucky broke..haha again.... The shifter on the truck came completely off, as sunny held it up in the air just as we were turning into a gate. I jumped out of the truck and pushed. I think I spend more time pushing this truck than anything. We rolled into the hospice. It wasn't something we could fix with twine, but luckily Sunny's friend Mario can fix anything. I made a note to put duct tape in the trucky. I got to meet the workers in the hospice. **They love Canadians!!! They say we're the best volunteers because we're so nice and easy going, always happy to be helping them.**

Sunyata likes to pick up hitchhikers and they ride in the back. She only picks up children, women with children, people missing limbs, frail old people, and injured animals. Sometimes they find left over food in the tires in the back of the truck that have been there for who knows how long and eat it.

I guess I should explain a little better what I'm doing here. I'm working on a couple of different projects. I spend a lot of time at a German run Crèche that sunny is filling in for the directors. Crèche is the word for pre-school, daycare, after care. We made a promise to ourselves never to make plans for anything, because everything goes in the opposite direction, and some times we just have to laugh. Everyone's motto is "we'll play it by ear!"... TIA...This Is Africa.



Because the truck didn't want to work yesterday, they gave us a station wagon today to pick up all the kids and Mahmi (mommy) in the township of Thembaalethu. A "township" is a fancy word for slum ghetto. The station wagon **doesn't have reverse.** *Only sometimes it has breaks.* The radio also falls out. According to the Africans, the breaks are fine, you just have to press them a few times until they work. ...but when we say "the truck and car are broken!" the Africans all say "no it's fine". Broken in their heads means broke FOREVER! So then we asked if these vehicles stop working a lot, and they say "YES! all of the time!!!"

COLORS really needs a car. Their own car..that works..with breaks.

In Thembaalethu, they really have nothing and the pre-school we visited has over 50 little ones in one dark room. The ages range from babies to maybe 6 year olds. We delivered the very important nutty buddy peanut butter infant formula mix, bananas and oranges. When we come now, they get very excited to see Sunny and her volunteers. They know they will get to eat and do a fun activity. Sunny and volunteers have worked really hard to be accepted into this community. It was so cute to hear 50 little voices all saying "molo Linda" in unison. We made flowers and snakes out of pipe cleaners as a tool for us to build positive relationships with each child....they love it and scream with excitement.

I really like working with the little kids here...even though I work as a scientist in Canada. It was a very positive experience and amazing to see what an impact one person can do in a very short 3 weeks.

Live like you mean it!

Linda-----



NEW CAR FOR COLORS- We got it!

After Linda's visit, COLORS was able to get a Car within the month thanks to the Choyce and the Whalen vehicle contributions.

These photos say it all best:



Elton's Story: Beating the odds and catching babies

Feature story for book to be published!

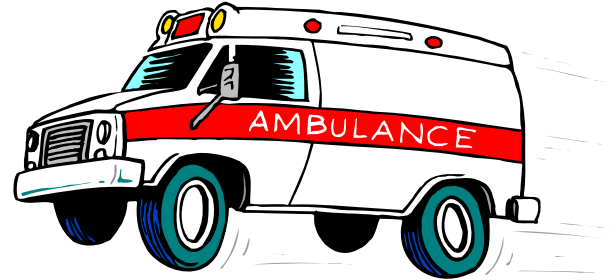
Imagine living and being raised in a South African children's home

Can you picture the challenges you would face and the struggles you might find later on in life?

But, what if there was someone there to help you at the end...

Meet Elton:

Elton is an amazing young man who has grown up in a children's home in George, South Africa. Elton's lifelong dream is to become a paramedic, but he was told that because of his grades in science plus the huge expense of the training, this would not be possible. However, Project COLORS recognized Elton's dedication and persistence to achieving his life goal. With this, Elton was paired with a sponsor from Canada to receive a full training scholarship through Project COLORS "Sponsor a Life, Education Fund." It was only through pairing Elton with a sponsor, that Elton's dreams could now become a reality.



We are proud to announce that Elton has just returned from finishing his Basic Ambulance Assistance course in the Eastern Cape and is now registered with the national ambulance association. Elton is currently home in George, fulfilling a 6 month internship with George Ambulance Services, where he seeks to find further employment, so he can help his two teenage sisters who have babies on their own, and hopefully adopt his youngest brother in the future.

ARRIVAL FROM CANADA

Elton's Sponsor Mr. Lesley Choyce, has traveled to South Africa to meet Elton after hearing of his achievements in pursuit of his dreams.

It is because of this meeting that the wheels have been set in motion to create a book for teen readers based on Elton's life. Pottersfield Press, a Canadian publisher has already hired interviewers and transcribers to work with Elton on the book. Elton will also be the recipient of 50% of the writer's royalties once published!!

When Elton finally met his sponsor, Mr. Choyce asked Elton why he wanted to be an ambulance assistant so badly...and Elton replied, "*I just want to help people and have a job I can be proud of.*" For a youth like Elton, growing up at a children's home next to a hospice, he was exposed to death and dying every day. There are always hearses and ambulances coming through the gates. Sunyata Choyce, Director of COLORS, then asked Elton, "*What was your most stressful moment volunteering in the evening shifts on the ambulance?*" Elton replied "*Catching babies.....sometimes the babies like to come out before we reach the hospital.....so I need to catch them.*"

WOW...what a life changing experience for young Elton.

It is through sponsorships like these that our communities here in South Africa can begin to be uplifted through our youth taking action and believing that they can make a difference.

We hope that more people will STEP UP and assist others to reach their dreams so we can hear more of these good news stories...and less of the bad & sad ones.

For those of you who are new readers.....we are adding a copy of a tribute to two of our special children below. It is important to us that their stories live on.



Rachel Motties

Rachel Motties died at the age of 15. It is important that her story be told, and important that you hear it, since it is only the people reading stories like Rachael's, who can light the way of the future for girls like Rachel.


Rachel spent most of her life living at St. Mary's Children's Home. She was raised by the wonderful women of the Rosemoore community lovingly called "tunnies" by many of the children living there. Rachael loved art and creating something out of nothing. She longed for swimming lessons whenever she could get close to the water. She was very imaginative, curious, and always asked many question trying to learn more about this world. Unfortunately, like many children coming from desperate and impoverished situations, Rachel found regular school to be very

difficult and her self esteem was very low. Like all children, Rachel longed to be loved and cared for. She wanted to fit in everywhere, but at the same time be the centre of attention.

As she got older, life made less sense to Rachel, & she longed to know what she was missing out on in the world outside the children's home's doors. It was because of Rachel's big heart and desperation to be loved, that she quickly learned the dangers of this world earlier then others. A world which takes advantage of kind hearts living on the street...a world that tries to gain something from another's misfortune...a place Rachael came to know

well living on the streets of George....until one day that world went too far.

Last year Rachel created a self esteem book with the encouragement of Becca & Sunny from Project COLORS Canada. In it she wrote “ *I like to make jokes with everyone, I just want to be good & I know that God don’t want to see sad faces, so please help put a smile on my face*”. COLORS staff read this piece at Rachel’s’ funeral and spoke of all the activities, workshops & friendships..... our found memories of Rachel.



As individuals...we choose to care, or not to care...

We see poverty or choose to ignore it.

Children like Rachel are out there, struggling to survive, struggling to be accepted everyday.

So next time you see a chance to make a difference in a child's life, please remember the words of Rachel Motties.

“...God don’t want to see sad faces, so please help put a smile on my face”.

A day in the life of Elvis

By Brittany MaConaghy

I met Elvis one month after I arrived in George, South Africa. I was working in the Hospice at Bethesda through Project COLORS Canada. I was immediately drawn to Elvis, a young patient at the hospice, as soon as I was introduced to him. There was something about him that made people want to be around him all of the time. He had the most positive alluring energy, and while his short time on this earth he spent everyday largely bed ridden, hooked up to an oxygen machine for survival. Despite this he spent the time he could learning and living life to fullest extent that he could, considering his circumstances. He spent his days learning.....learning about anything and everything he could about life, people, and culture. He was one of the most incredible people I have ever had the pleasure to meet, and I am sad to have only had the opportunity to know him for a short time.



Often, I would find myself sitting with Elvis for hours playing cards, drawing and learning to speak Xhosa. Elvis spoke 3 languages - Xhosa, Afrikaans, and English. When walking by his room, you would find many people surrounding his bed. He was by far a very popular 11 year old. Not only would the nurses and staff choose to spend their breaks and spare time chatting with Elvis, but the children from the orphanage would also be "hanging out" with him any chance they had. Elvis waited patiently for the day he would move into the boys cottage at the orphanage with the other children. To him, living at the orphanage was as close as he would ever get to living a "normal" life as a "real boy".

At the tender age of 11 years, Elvis was dying of AIDS. He was brought to the hospice after spending 6 months in the hospital. According to the nurses, Elvis spent most of his childhood in and out of hospitals, and had already lost both his parents to AIDS.

Sadly, Elvis died before ever having his day to move in with the boys at the home. I think this was one of the things that the international volunteers working with Elvis found the hardest pill to swallow. Why did everything take soooo long here? Why was he not moved in with the boys months ago while he could have enjoyed being a “real boy” even for just a bit, away from wards of elderly dying patients, which was his daily reality?

In the cottage, a wheelchair ramp was already made for Elvis and the nurses were just steps away. His death is another reminder how important it is to take action when we see opportunities for good. Sometimes just the smallest action can make such a big difference to those less fortunate and weaker than us.

I have never had children, so I don't know what it is like to lose a child. But I loved Elvis, and I do know that the love that I had for him is true and could be comparable to that of the love of a parent.

Elvis taught many things through the short time I had to spend with him, and for this I am truly grateful. One of the most important things Elvis taught me was life..... He taught me the importance to take the time each and every day to truly be thankful for life; for the opportunities that you have fortunately experienced over your time and for the love you have. But most importantly the love you unselfishly give to those who mean the most to you.

Thank you Elvis! We love you and will miss you dearly!

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Project COLORS International

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