

SAPartners

Fall 2011

Inside 2011 Education Tour

2011 Education Tour

Introducing Joanne Guzzi
& Open Books, Open MindsMeet Consul General George
Monyemangene

This past summer a group of nine educators from the United States toured South Africa, visiting cultural and historical sites, schools and other organizations doing work in the community. The sixth annual South Africa Partners Education Tour was led by SA Partners staff member Brenna DeCotis and Phillips Academy faculty member Peter Merrill.

The tour offered ample opportunity to converse with many educators and local leaders in Johannesburg, East London, and Cape Town. To better understand South Africa's history, participants also visited many cultural and historical sites including Constitutional Hill, the District Six Museum, and Robben Island. A new addition this year was a trip to the Cradle of Humankind and Sterkfontein Caves, where recent archeological findings have strengthened arguments that hominins first appeared in Southern Africa.

During the two week tour, participants visited several schools and educational settings, ranging from primary to tertiary level, and were inspired by the commitment to education and students. Among the highlights were the Kliptown Youth Project in Johannesburg, the A.W. Barnes School in East London, and the LEAP School in Cape Town. One participant said of the Kliptown Youth Project, "It's an amazing program and it gave me a lot



The 2011 Education Tour Participants and A.W. Barnes Primary School Principal Geoff Gamiet, Top Row, Right)

to think about both personally and professionally in terms of service, privilege, and ways to make change."

As in years past, impromptu visits and conversations throughout the country were also a feature of the tour — including a spontaneous, inspiring performance in the streets of Soweto by the Diepkloof Tap Dancers, a group of young people with a goal of teaching other children to dance.

One participant summing up the experience of being in South Africa remarked, "I was most impressed with the optimism of the South Africans, their passion for education and their constant effort to recognize and address challenges." Said another, "I was so struck by the energy, passion, and vitality of all South Africans we met—they all have stories to tell and want to tell them."

Introducing Joanne Guzzi & Open Books, Open Minds

On her first trip to South Africa as a member of the SA Partners Education Tour in 2008, Joanne Guzzi was struck by the dedication of the teachers and administrators in the schools she visited. Joanne, a SA Partners Board Member and first-grade teacher at the Runkle School in Brookline, says of the teachers she visited, “The daily challenges that they face are enormous, yet they do it with the belief that it is through education that South Africa will blossom ... They have inspired me to think beyond the four walls of my own classroom to see the potential of what we can do if we work together to educate the children of the world.”

Imagining the opportunities that would arise from staying connected to South African teachers inspired Joanne to establish *Open Books, Open Minds* in four schools: A.W. Barnes, Parkside, and Pefferville Primary Schools in East London, and Yamala Primary School in the Melani Cluster outside of Alice.

The goal of the literacy project is four-fold: to work with teachers as they select books that will improve the level of instruction in their classrooms, to solicit funds to purchase new books for use in the classroom, to collect gently used books from schools in the United States to be added to classroom libraries in South Africa, and to provide professional development opportunities for teachers based on their most pressing instructional needs.



Joanne Guzzi shares a book with learners at A.W. Barnes Primary School in East London

In 2010, Joanne raised more than \$20,000 to purchase quality fiction and non-fiction books for the A. W. Barnes and Parkside Primary Schools, working with teachers to select books that would be purchased. Joanne says, “During my return trips, it has been particularly rewarding to see teachers implementing things we talked about in the workshops and to see the students so engaged in those lessons. The pride shown on the teachers’ faces and the enthusiasm in their voices were music to my ears. The excitement within the schools that resulted from the students getting a chance to enjoy the books we have sent to date warmed my heart.”

Joanne is continuing her efforts to donate more books and provide more professional development, saying, “I know that what I have done to date, with the support of others, is only a drop in the bucket...but a bucket will never get filled unless we continue to add to it.” The children of South Africa are thirsty for knowledge and they deserve this kind of support.

Meet Consul General George Monyemangene



Since assuming the post of Consul General for South Africa in New York in January of 2011, Mr. George Monyemangene has focused on maintaining strong bilateral relations, and the fostering and heightening of trade and investment relations that exist between the United States and

South Africa. Having worked in government for many years prior to attaining this position, the Consul General says he has always possessed “a passion to contribute in anyway that would be positive to the development of my own country.” He says that his transition to live in New York was a flawless one, thanks to a solid team at the South African Consulate and many welcoming friends of South Africa in the Eastern Seaboard.

In particular, the Consul General has focused his efforts on

ensuring that South Africa is seen as a ripe environment for investments. He points to the fact that, of the ten fastest growing economies in the world, six are on the African continent, a sign that South Africa and the rest of the African continent are seen as the next frontier of economic growth.

Another objective for Consul General Monyemangene is ensuring that both countries continue to learn from their shared cultural and social histories. He says, “The anti-apartheid movement in the United States played a significant role in helping us to achieve our liberation and democracy. We are thankful for those who helped South Africa to become a democratic state. Now that the scenery has changed, it remains critical to continue to transform the energy that went into the anti-apartheid movement into key areas of need, philanthropic and socio-economic development.”

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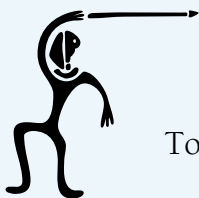
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I ACT (Integrated Access to Care and Treatment), promotes early recruitment, referral, and retention of newly diagnosed people living with HIV and AIDS into care and support programs.

This process will ultimately reduce the high loss to follow-up from the time of HIV diagnosis until successful commencement of treatment.

SA Partners developed I ACT in partnership with the Eastern Cape Department of Health (ECDOH) and several nongovernmental organizations, including Justice Resource Institute, with Emergency Plan (PEPFAR) funds provided by CDC South Africa. IACT is currently being implemented in all nine of South Africa's provinces.



Want to Learn More About I ACT?

To receive more information, contact Brenna DeCotis at **617 443-1072**
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