

Ubuntu Projects Abroad™



Volunteer Govert Van Berckel organizes a World Cup Football Tournament to Parkwood Primary School students

Projects Abroad South Africa Newsletter Vol. IV

February 2008

Director's Corner

Read what is new and happening in South Africa from Director Dana Myers

Page 2

World Cup & World AIDS DAY

Read about Volunteers Govert Van Berckel and Chantelle Terrio initiatives.

Page 9 & 10

Human Rights Day

March 21st is a Public Holiday for Human Rights day in respect for the Sharpeville Massacre

Page 3

Socials and Weekend Trips

See what volunteers have been up to on their time off from work!

Page 11-13

New Care Project

The Seawinds Educare is a new Care project in Retreat where volunteers painted a playground

Page 4

Conservation Update

Read about what is happening up north in the Legodimo Reserve

Page 14

New Animal Care Projects

If you like working with animals, we now offer Animal Care placements in Cape Town!

Page 6

Volunteer Stories

Volunteers tell stories about their experience in South Africa

Page 15-17

New Human Rights Projects

We are offering new Law projects in Cape Town, for those interested in Law and Human Rights

Page 7

New Host Family

Meet our featured host families- The Martin Family and the Valley Family you families!

Page 18

Habitat for Humanity

Volunteers came on a sunny Saturday to help build a foundation for a home in the townships

Page 8

Volunteer List

See who is coming and going, accommodation and more!

Page 19

Director's Corner



Since our first volunteer arrived in June 2007 ...

60	Volunteers who have worked in Cape Town
25	Families that are hosts for our volunteers
21	Volunteers who have worked in Legodimo (conservation)
12	Number of countries our volunteers come from
4	Crèches we support and work in
5	Schools we support and work in
2	Playgrounds built
2	House foundations dug and poured
5	Law organizations we support in downtown Cape Town
1	Water sport project for street children

Summer has finally come to Cape Town! Volunteers are now lathering up with sunscreen during the peak of the afternoon and cooler windy nights are welcomed with great pleasure after a full day's work.

We would like to extend a warm welcome to a new member of staff, **Melanie Geen**, who is helping doing the airport pick-ups and drop-offs as well as weekend socials! Welcome Melanie, we are so happy to have you on board!

I am looking forward to a busy and productive 2008! We have seen a lot of positive changes in the communities we work in and feel grateful for the people who have helped make this happen, well done to all our hard working volunteers!

Dana Myers
Director for Projects Abroad - South Africa

Month of March



Human Rights Day 21st March

The new democratic constitution of South Africa provided the establishment of the South African Human Rights Commission, in order to promote respect for human rights, promote protection, development and attainment of human rights and to monitor and assess observance of human rights in South Africa. 21st of March is celebrated as a Public Holiday in order to pay tribute and respect to those who died or were injured during the Sharpeville Massacre, where peaceful protesters rallying against the Pass Law were shot at by the police as well as all the other human rights violations that occurred during the Apartheid era.

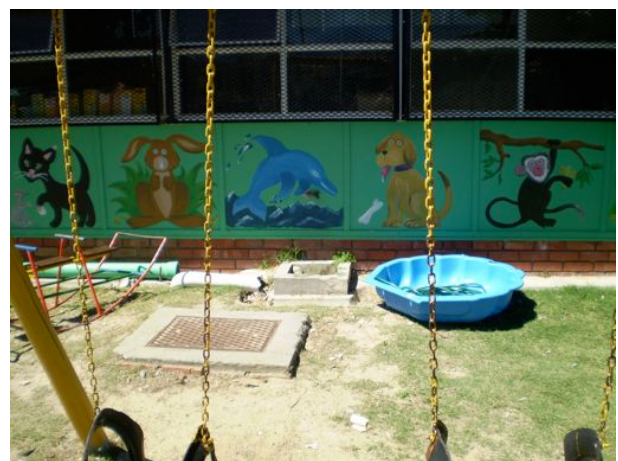
The South African office will be closed on account of Public Holidays, Friday the 21st of March and Monday the 24th of March.

New Care Project

Seawinds Educare in Retreat



Our newest Care Project at the Seawinds Educare has undergone quite the transformation in the past couple months already! Volunteers Tom Pocock, Aitor Grandes, Nicco Zachara helped paint the playset, build a new walkway and create an animal mural on the side of the Educare. Thanks to them the Educare is a bright and friendly place to come to everyday for all the children and their families. Our volunteers have been busy at work helping with the young babies and also the older children, teaching them songs to sing, reading books, playing games and introducing healthy eating and dental care. We look forward to having future volunteers here to help!



New Animal Care Projects

Volunteers now have the opportunity to come to Cape Town for Animal Care projects! Volunteers can work with abandoned domestic animals or help rehabilitate African penguins in order to release them into the wild. Read below to find out more about these exciting new placements!

SPCA Animal Shelter



The SPCA is a non-profit organization whose main focus is protecting and rescuing domestic and wild animals from abuse, neglect and poor treatment. The SPCA center in Grassy Park is in need of volunteers to help in various different departments:

The Kennels Department- strays, abandoned, rescued and donated cats and dogs. The aim is to find suitable and loving new homes for these animals or to reunite stray animals with their owners. Volunteers are needed to work directly with animals here, caring, feeding and cleaning.

Animal Hospital treats sick and injured animals that come to the SPCA. The Hospital has 3 permanent in-house vets and a team of nurses and orderlies. Veterinary treatment is subsidized to make care affordable.

The Mobile Clinic operates in the informal settlements around Cape Town, providing veterinary care for the animals there and educating owners about the pet care. The mobile clinics will also bring animals in to the Animal Hospital for treatment, and return them when they are recovered.

The Inspectorate investigates reports of animal abuse and neglect and handles over 700 cases a month. Our inspectors rescue maltreated animals and instigate legal action against animal abusers. Volunteers helping the Inspectorate assist with their administration or making pre and post adoption home checks.

SANCOBB

SANCCOB was established in 1968 in response to the increasing numbers of oiled sea birds in the Western Cape. Throughout the last 39 years, SANCCOBB has responded to every major oil spill along the South Africa coast and attended to the chronic influx of ill, injured, and oiled seabirds, in particular the African penguin.

As a volunteer, your weekly schedule is quite strict. This placement is good for anyone who has a serious passion for bird conservation, you will learn a lot, work hard and gain real life experience at one of the largest bird rehabilitation centers in the world.





Projects Abroad Volunteers help build homes in the Mfleni Township



A special thanks to our volunteers for giving up their sunny Saturday to help build homes for Habitat for Humanity in the Mfleni Township, a half hour drive from Cape Town city. Our team of ten volunteers started the work day with digging deep ditches to create the foundation for the house. We spent the day digging foundations for homes as well as mixing and pouring concrete. Talk about a full day! We were tired and sore after a full day of labor, but pleased to be able to help a local family build a space of their own.



After a grueling day of work, some of the volunteers sat down with the locals and were able to try traditional South African beer called "umqombothi" (the "q" is a clicking sound). This beer has been home brewed all of South Africa, it is made with sorghum and millet mainly, then mixed with with maize meal, water and yeast and left to ferment, making it a beer rich in B vitamins. The taste isn't as refreshing as a frosty cold pint you would find in an English pub, it is served at room temperature, or in our case, fairly warm in the midday sunshine, and tastes quite sour and thick!

Parkwood Primary's World Cup 2008!

Teaching volunteer, Govert Van Berkel, worked in Parkwood Primary for two months, helping in the classroom, teaching the children maths, English and a little bit about his home country, the Netherlands!



During his two months at Parkwood, Govert took it upon himself to get involved with Sport, as the children are incredibly enthusiastic about it. He organized a school wide World Cup tournament, in light of the upcoming World Cup 2010. Each team chose a country name, learned a bit about its history, culture and language and made a flag to represent their team!

The World Cup Tournament 2007 was a complete success, the final games took place at the school on a sunny Saturday, where the boys team Portugal and the girls team the Netherlands took first place! Parents and friends came to watch. Families came with food and drinks to sell to raise money for the school and it was a great success.

What a fun and exciting event for the children of Parkwood,

Well Done Govert!



Volunteer Chantelle Terrio

International AIDS Day

December 1st 2007



International AIDS Day calls citizens all over the globe to recognize that HIV/AIDS is a worldwide pandemic and move people to take action in order to educate, treat and save people's lives.

Volunteer Chantelle Terrio organized an HIV/AIDS march in Lavender Hill, where she lives and works, to hand out red ribbons and pamphlets educating about HIV/AIDS infection. The HIV/AIDS infection rate is unknown in this area, but most likely close to 30%. The march was also to voice outrage at violence against women. Lavender Hill is plagued with unemployment, drug use, domestic violence, lack of education, alcoholism, etc. We marched through the streets of Lavender Hill talking to some of the local residents, we had a lot of receptive people taking interest.

Thank you Chantelle for all your hard work!

(Read about Chantelle's experience on page 16)



Host mother Lucinda Evans, volunteers Tom Pocock, Christel van Roon, Aurelien Billy, Alyssa and Dana Myers

Socials & Weekend Trips

Capsicum Cooking Class- Traditional Cape Malay



The Cape Malay Cuisine has dated back for hundreds of years, originating from Cape Malay slaves brought. The first group of Malaysian state prisoners landed on the shores of South Africa from Java and the neighboring Indonesian islands in the late 1600's. They brought the Muslim faith and fine architecture, they also brought with them a unique cooking style, introducing mixtures of spices that has influenced traditional South African cuisine immensely. We learned how to make bobotie (a curried ground beef and egg custard dish), lamb curry, Potato Pudding with Stewed Fruit, Snoek, yum! Smaaklike ete! Lekker eet!



- * 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- * 2 onions, peeled and sliced
- * 2 1/4 pounds good quality lean ground beef
- * 1 thickish slice of white bread
- * 1 cup milk
- * 1 tablespoon medium curry powder (or hot for the hale and brave)
- * 1 1/2 tablespoons sugar
- * 2 teaspoons salt
- * freshly grated pepper (about a half teaspoon)
- * 3/4 teaspoon turmeric
- * 1 1/2 tablespoons malt vinegar
- * 1/2 cup seedless raisins
- * 2 tablespoons strong chutney
- * 2 bay leaves (or fresh lemon leaves if available)
- * 2 medium eggs

TRADITIONAL SOUTH AFRICAN BOBOTIE RECIPE



Preheat oven to 350°F.

Heat oil in medium sauté pan. Stir in onions. Cook over medium heat until transparent. Add ground beef. Cook until lightly browned and crumbly.

Soak bread in half the milk, squeeze out excess milk and mash with a fork - DON'T TOSS SQUEEZED OUT MILK! Pour it straight back into remaining milk. Set milk aside.

Add curry, sugar, salt, pepper, turmeric, vinegar, raisins, chutney to the beef mixture. Spoon the mixture into a greased baking dish, and place bay leaves on top.

Bake for 50-60 minutes in preheated 350°F oven.

Beat egg with remaining milk and pour over mixture approximately 25 - 30 minutes before end of baking time.

Serve with steamed rice (traditionally yellow!) and extra chutney.

Pure South African comfort food! Especially nice in winter, or cold with a salad in summer.

Serves: 6

(Socials & Weekend Trips Continued)...

Weekend Trips

Garden Route to Jeffery's Bay



The weekend trip for way back in November was down the Garden Route to Jeffery's Bay, the most popular surfing spot in South Africa, with the famous "Super Tubes" wave. Some of us also braved the 216 metre Bungy Jump at the Bloukrans River Bridge, everyone managed to survive! 😊 For those who wanted a smaller dose of adrenaline went on Canopy Tours through the Tsisikama National Forest. We relaxed on the beach, went surfing, hiking, and all in all had a great time together! The drive was scenic and incredible and the weather bright and sunny!

Stellenbosch Wine Tasting



For the February weekend trip, volunteers ventured by train the hour journey to Stellenbosch to visit the quiet, historically Afrikaans, university town to indulge in wine tasting and to learn a bit about what it means to be a local South African in the context of a wine making region. Families for generations have been growing grapes to make wine, including the lesser well known red wine Pinotage, which is a grape mix from Pinot Noir and Hermitage. We learned quite a bit about how wine is made, its health benefits, how to recognize one type of grape, and the five S's of wine tasting- See, Smell, Sip, Suck and Swallow.

(Socials & Weekend Trips Continued)...

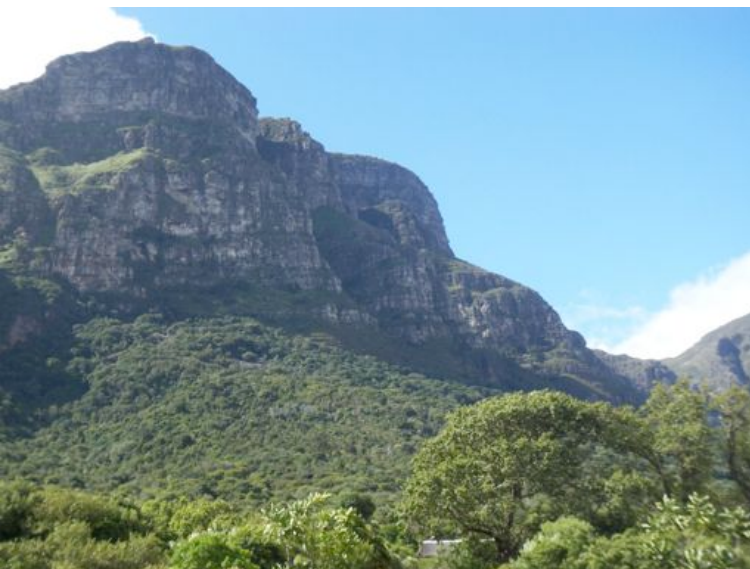
Cape Town Music

Freshlyground Concert



Freshlyground is one of South Africa's most popular bands, they formed in 2002, and the members are from South Africa, Zimbabwe and Mozambique. Their music is a blend of Afro-fusion, jazz, folk, blues and pop. Their performances symbolize the cultural integration of the Rainbow Nation that South Africa inspires to be. Volunteers came together and watched the concert, dance and now have a favorite South African group to share with family and friends back home.

Kirstenbosch Botanical Garden Summer Concert



The Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens is not only the best place to have a picnic, take a walk or a hike, but also to see the Summer Concert series, which happen every Sunday night during the summer. We had a big picnic with cheese and crackers and wine and listened to Vusi Mahlasela who is known as the Bob Dylan of South Africa. His performance was powerful, emotional and full of hope for South Africa. His music is featured in the film Tsotsi and he also played at Nelson Mandela's inauguration in 1994.

Conservation Update



7 months into the project and were still going strong, after completing our first water hole a short walk along the river, we have decided to begin another right in the front of the camp, this will eventually mean the further attraction of wildlife making the Legodimo camp even more of a paradise retreat.

In our last update I commented on the progression of the Elephant hide we were building in the north of the reserve, since this the Elephants sadly destroyed all of our hard work, they were obviously not keen on the design or location, we are now looking at possible new areas for the hide taking into consideration the Elephant tastes.

Brian the Porcupine is still up to his old tricks, he has began bringing his lady friend to the camps kitchen restaurant, all cannot wait for the eventual long line of Brian juniors, he has now become so tame we can even get down to give him a stroke, yet his demanding hunger gets out of hand when no ones home, the state of the cuboards, cooler boxes and anything else for that matter are no sight for sore eyes.

A current social activity is dance classes from fellow volunteers, and I can't be the only one who wants to see that, our director Gerrit doing jazz and modern dance...priceless!!!

That's it for this month, let's hope next time we can share some good news on the dreaded viewing hide.

Harry Kent – Desk Officer Conservation

Volunteer Stories

Volunteer Stories are a way for our volunteers to write about their experiences in South Africa, whether it be a funny happening, cultural misunderstanding, travel and leisure, anything! Living in a new place, far from home, there is bound to be comical encounters and interesting insights gained from learning about new cultures and ways of thinking. Also, upcoming volunteers are encouraged to introduce themselves and tell a little bit about what you expect out of your time here in South Africa!

Written By: Leslie Schocknesse

Care Volunteer, Rainbow Educare Centre in Vrygrond

Leslie was given an interview upon her arrival back in the United States after 2 months of working in the township of Vrygrond in Cape Town.

What are your responsibilities in your school?

Everything! My daily tasks range from reading stories to the children, to leading morning introduction, to assisting in setting up activities, to redesigning the school logo, to organizing the school's themes, to creating new training guides for the teachers, and so on. While I originally thought I would spend most of my time working with the children and leading the class, the school is in need in so many different areas that I am able to provide help in more ways than I ever thought possible.

Describe the school a bit...size, location, what types/ages of students attend.

Rainbow Educare (the crèche I have been working at in South Africa) is located in Vrygrond, which is one of the many townships in the Cape Town area. There are 85 children enrolled, and while not everyone comes everyday, daily totals generally range from 65-80 children. There are three classrooms: 1) Toddlers – 1.5-3 year old children, 2) 3-4 year old children, and 3) Preschoolers – 5-6 year old children. Most of the children that attend the school live in Vrygrond, or very nearby. There are currently 5 staff members: Principal, 3 Teachers, and a Cook. Next year, Rainbow Educare plans to increase the staff by hiring a new teacher with the intention of having lower teacher to student ratios (which are currently 1:20 for toddlers and 1:30 for other two classrooms).

What are some memorable moments so far this semester?

There have been so many memorable moments so far, but because I have written so much for some of the other questions I will only name one. The most memorable thing I did while here in South Africa was going to visit the home of Chantal (age 5) and Keenen (age 2). From working with the children at the crèche, there was something that just stood out to me about those two children. (They are brother and sister.) They were extremely happy children, but they craved love and attention more than any other children that I have ever encountered. After forming a very tight bond with both of the children, I had unrealistic dreams of adopting them, and I soon realized that since adoption was not possible, I could sponsor them. I wrote up a Trust and will be sending a check to South Africa once a month, and the money from the check will be used to buy things for the children. As long as their mother sends proofs of purchases (receipts), I send money for the children. After signing the Trust agreement, Chantal and Keenen's mother allowed me to visit their home. After seeing where they live and hearing some of her stories, I was in tears. I saw that two children that I had grown to love and care for very much for forced to live hard lives at a very young age. The experience of visiting their home helped me to see, to an extent I never thought possible, just how lucky and privileged I am. It also has made my love for the two children grow stronger and my understanding of township life in Cape Town is now much deeper as well. I was also very inspired by the children's mother, who works very long hours, at very little pay and is clearly doing it because she wants to give her children the best she possibly can regardless of all the struggles she has experienced. Meeting, talking to, and seeing the children's mother helped remind me that although there are many inadequate parents in the world, there are also tons of great ones!

Volunteer Stories Continued...

What are some challenges you've dealt with and overcome?

I think my biggest challenge over the last two months was everything about the first two weeks I was in South Africa. The culture shock was absolutely crazy. I had heard of the term culture shock before and lots of people have said it often happens when living in a foreign country, but I always wondered how it would be possible to be "shocked" by being in a new culture. Now I understand.

The overall lifestyle here is very different from what I am used to at home. I must walk or take the train to get to anywhere I want to go; I obviously don't have my own car here and it is not considered customary for me to ask my host family to drive me places. This was a big change for me. An even bigger "shock" was the fact that everything shuts down after dark. Trains do not run past 8:00pm; minibus taxis do not run past 9:00pm; most stores close between 5:30-8:00pm; not to mention that we are strongly discouraged from being out after dark. This was one of the hardest things for me just because it is something we don't really think twice about back at home. In Chicago, where I am from, trains run until the late hours of the night; most stores are open until at least 9:00pm, some 10:00pm, and some 24 hours; and as long as you know where you are & where you are going it is not a problem to be out a night. The transportation circumstances and being in the house by dark were only two of many things that contributed to my culture shock.

Written by: Lindsay Smith

Care Volunteer at Rainbow Educare Centre in Vrygrond



Hello everyone! We have been working here at Rainbow Educare for about 8 weeks, during which there have been more and more improvements. Including, a whole new classroom, a new toilet, and a very much needed new floor in the toddler's classroom. Up until now, the floor was very uneven due to wonky floor boards and a carpet on top which made it very difficult to clean up any mess! Our donations have enabled the Creche to fund the new floor. We are all very excited to see our new floor. As well as all our hard work, we also have lots of fun and laughter. Sometimes it's not just

the children that get messy... One day Lindsay had a bit of an accident – between teacher and toddler, they managed to splatter her in red paint from head to toe! She was not amused but everyone found it very funny, especially the kids!



Some days the children are a little too energetic – one day they all grabbed Teacher Loelie's legs, causing her to lose her balance and fall to the ground! When finished laughing, Teacher Jolanda went to the rescue and helped Loelie to her feet.

All in all it has been a very positive experience with lots of laughs! I am going to miss it here!

Volunteer Stories Continued...

Written by: Chantelle Terrio

Care volunteer at the New World Foundation in Lavender Hill

It sounds like a cliché but it was always a dream of mine to go to Africa. I accomplished this dream through the amazing organization Projects Abroad. I went into the experience with an open mind; however I had high hopes and great expectations. I had just recently completed a four year honours degree in Health Studies at McMaster University, prior to my departure from Canada. Therefore it is no surprise that I am passionate about health, health promotion, and about how socioeconomic factors affect health. My stay in Capetown was an extremely quick two months. At the beginning of my second month, I had the extraordinary opportunity to volunteer at an NGO (non-government funded organization) located in my township, New World Foundation (NWF). At NWF I was able to lead, plan, and organize a project, along with my African mom, who is also the program co-ordinator at this NGO. The project was a World AIDS Day march in my own township of Lavender Hill. To make the situation even more outstanding, it was the first AIDS march to ever be held in my township.

In preparation for the march, I contacted many organizations to ask for information, such as pamphlets, posters, signs, and t-shirts. We wanted to not only draw awareness to AIDS, but also educate the people who lived in my township about this important issue. I went to many of these organizations to talk to them about things they have done in the past that were both successful, reached people, and in addition to gather information which I could distribute. We were able to have t-shirts donated from an organization in Johannesburg, which were flown into Capetown. I also went and gathered my own supplies. I made 400 ribbons, for the march, in a mixture of white and red. I also designed a banner, which asked the question "Are We An AIDS Friendly Community?". I chose this question with the intention of not only provoking thought to those who read it, but also because I wanted people in my township to actually think about how they individually deal with HIV/AIDS, and specifically how they treat and interact with people who are HIV positive, meaning people they love and also those who are mere acquaintances or strangers. I also had the hope that this question, and the reflection I anticipated it would prompt, to result in each resident to not only question but negate any and all negative stereotypes they have about this issue. Further, I had the hope that it would also trigger the residents to let go and work against the stigmas that are still attached to this issue as a whole and those who suffer with and fight against HIV/AIDS everyday. The banner also had among other things, male and female condoms attached to it. The purpose of the male and female condoms, were to demonstrate how the residents can actively protect themselves from the risk of contacting HIV/AIDS and also to show them that they have choices. Condoms are becoming better known, and more common in Capetown, however there are still misconceptions, and we wanted to show some of the options available to the community. The week before the march, I went, accompanied with some of the youth volunteers at NWF to hand out flyers we made, which advertised our event. The youth and I went to between 300-400 of the homes located in the flats in Lavender Hill, knocking on each door, and speaking to whoever lived there. We explained what we were doing, the event, and invited his/her household to join us on December 1st. It was a wonderful experience, and one that I can honestly say none of the residents had previously experienced.

After all of the planning and preparation, December 1st, International World AIDS day, finally arrived. Some of the Project Abroad volunteers, along with Dana and Alyssa Myers met at my home in the morning. We got ourselves organized all wearing t-shirts, and began our march through the township. We marched on the streets, therefore my African father followed behind us in his car to ensure our safety from other vehicles. Some of us were handing out ribbons, others carrying the two banners we had, others handing out information about HIV/AIDS, including such topics as protection, treatment, risks etc, and all of us were greeting and talking to my fellow residents of Lavender Hill that we encountered.

I am so grateful, and cannot describe how privileged I feel that I was able to do this. This was an extremely large event for my township, nothing of this nature had ever occurred in the past. I truly feel that this march and the wonderful people who partook in it, helped to break down stereotypes, barriers, and walls, which many people in my township still have. I am referring to stereotypes, barriers etc. in relation to not only the issue of HIV/AIDS, but also race, culture and change. I am so grateful I had the opportunity to organize and be a part this event, because I know it will become larger and larger in the years to come, and I will have the joy of knowing I was part of the first march to occur in Lavender Hill which focused on HIV/AIDS. I was extremely upset when I left Africa, but the incredible memories I have from my time there will always be with me, and have both changed me and become a part of me.

New Host Families

Our host families are what makes Projects Abroad here in South Africa possible, we would like to take this opportunity to recognize new host families who have opened their homes and hearts to our volunteers, and shown them what it means to be a true South African.



The Martin Family is excited to host international volunteers in their home. They are a busy family, they are now since retired, but make the community a priority as every Saturday morning they transport food goods to disadvantaged communities throughout Cape Town. Armin always has a project he is working on around the house, and Priscella is busy in the kitchen cooking for all her new “children”. We are happy to have them on board!



The Valley home has just starting taking volunteers, meaning they not only have four of their own daughters, but this month have had four more! The volunteers living at their home work at Fairview Primary School, located just a walk away. The Valley family enjoy the cross cultural interaction, including one volunteer Melissa Krosiak introducing them to an intense game of Monopoly! Their host mother Nazeema has been busy at work in the kitchen preparing for so many women! Thank you Nazeema!

Welcome to Catherine Franks!

Catherine has joined Projects Abroad many times including Ghana, China, Romania and Argentina! She will be doing Law here in Cape Town and we look forward to her arrival the 16th of March!