

Masi-Mail

A newsletter for our friends

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Did you know this about MasipCorp?

- We were founded by John & Carol Thompson in 1999
- Since then we have built: 23 houses, 2 crèches, a youth community centre and the library. We support the 19 award-winning library outreach programmes, we have awarded over 30 educational bursaries.
- Last year the library issued over 11,000 adult and over 24,000 children's books. During the same period the outreach activities were attended by more than 34,000 participants.
- Every year we help the most needy children at the primary school with school uniforms—last year over 70
- We have a team of over 75 volunteers who give their time and talents to run our projects and programmes

Greetings from Masiphumelele....

We are very pleased to send you our news—the last few months have been busy and productive.

We hope you will enjoy reading about our work.

Masi-Mail has all the latest about the library extension and the careers indaba that took place in the long school winter holidays.

See the letter from John and Carol Thompson about their continued work for us—they have been very busy too!

Check-out the article on page 3 on the

launch of our new web site. Do please take a look at the new site and do tell us what you think—it has many new sections.

This past Cape winter has been very wet, cold and long—life in a shack is never good at the best of times but it has been grim for people this year.

We are living through tough times in another sense and like most, our donation income is well down on previous years—about 60% less.

We are determined to

find our way through this crisis—we have increased our fund raising efforts and we have very carefully cut expenditure on anything not absolutely essential.

Despite the difficulties, we are in good spirit and our work for the people of Masiphumelele continues apace. Our fantastic team of volunteers send you their best wishes and thanks for the interest and support you give us.

Andrew Smith
President & CEO



www.masicorp.org

Announcement!

It is with much pleasure that we can tell you Jill Stirrup and Elize Taylor have been appointed as Directors of Masiphumelele Corporation. They have both worked with us for many years. Their contribution to MasiCorp is fantastic. Without them we could never achieve all we do. They give their time, energy and expertise and we are lucky to have them on our team. Congratulations to both!



The Library extension project—up, up and away!

Good progress has been made. The face brick exterior walls are very attractive and the quality of the work is clearly visible. Some of the aluminum windows are in as are some door frames.



At 18th September



Ron Forbes, of Peninsula Beverages appreciated the visit and met with Sue Alexander and Graham.



Peninsular Beverages have donated over R800,000 of the R1.4m we need to build the shell but we need more to fit out and furnish. If you or anyone you know would like to help with this very important project and would like more information – please be in touch with us or John and Carol.

Donations of any amount are welcome. R200/\$25 will buy a chair, R400/\$50 will buy a tree for the courtyard, R6500/\$500 will buy an additional computer, R40,000/\$5000 will provide the equipment for the cinema room

Or

Buy some bricks for R100/\$10/£10 each and have your name entered on our wall of donors in the new Library courtyard—you can donate online on our new web site!

www.masicorp.org/MasiDonate.htm

Bursary students update...thank you!

We are delighted to tell you that thanks to the generosity of some established and some new donors, we will have enough funds for five or six student bursaries this coming year—a record for us!

This is a vitally important programme for the young people of Masiphumelele.

Please continue to help us— education really is the route out of poverty.

We are very keen to expand our bursary programme—do please contact us for further information if you would like to consider sponsoring a student

Sponsorship can be for an individual student by either a single donor or shared between donors. Per year:
 residential at a university
 R40,000/\$5000/£3000/€3,500
 and at a local college
 R25,000/\$3,000/£1,900/€2,200
 Sponsorship can also be arranged for students not individually supported at any amount from
 R2,500/\$300/£200/€200 per

A new web site for MasiCorp



We are pleased to launch our new web site — www.masicorp.org

It has many new features and plenty of information about what we do and why we are working for the people of Masiphumelele

- M** You will find something about all our projects and programmes and if you want it, background information about the township and us.
- M** You can download a brochure about most of our funding opportunities for donors—so please download away and use the documents to help tell your friends about our work!
- M** You can read all our latest newsletters and reports and you can send us e-mails direct from the web site.
- M** You can make a donation on line by credit card or PayPal which is a feature we hope will appeal to new supporters who find us on the web—and most often, tax exempt!
- M** With plenty of photographs, we hope you will also obtain an idea of life in Masiphumelele—do try this page for starters! -

[Life in Masiphumelele www.masicorp.org/MasiTown.htm](http://www.masicorp.org/MasiTown.htm)

The new web site was designed and produced by Julia Musgrave—she gave her time and talents as a donation to us and she has paid for the web hosting and agreed to act as our webmaster without fees. Thank you Julia.

Careers Indaba at the Library

JO-ANNE SMETHERHAM

It is rare to see a large crowd of teenagers paying attention to every word a speaker says, then to see hands flying up in enthusiasm, one after the other, during question time.

This was what happened after almost every address at the recent two-week careers indaba at the Masiphumelele library which, learners said, “took me from dark to light.”

“It was the best thing I’ve ever done in my life,” said another in his evaluation.

The indaba, held during the July holidays, aimed to give about 55 of the most motivated learners from Masiphumelele a leg-up into the world of tertiary education and work. Like learners across the country, those in Masiphumelele get very little career guidance at school.

“I’ve never felt such power in one room. I loved every moment,” said Denise, one of the 20 WorldTeach vol-



unteers from America who ran the event.

Sue Alexander, co-coordinator at the Masiphumelele library, was the chief organiser of the indaba, which was the second of its kind – the first was held last year. It is hoped that career indabas will take place in many more communities in years to come.

The first few sessions of the indaba helped the learners explore their own interests and talents. This was followed by a host of speakers - from a computer programmer to a nurse, doctor, environmentalist, actor, artist, fireman, engineer and several entrepreneurs - explaining the nature of their work.

There were workshops on how to use a computer, the internet and email, as

well as how to draw up CVs and apply to universities and colleges and bursaries. Universities and colleges held expos during a special open day and the learners also visited Tsiba, a free business university in Thornton, to hear about opportunities there.

Alexander and the other organisers linked up with IkamvaYouth and the learners are now all part of an IkamvaYouth tutoring programme, which will last until their final year of school. They will attend extra tutoring classes several times a week to help them get the best possible Senior Certificate result. About 70% of participants who have taken part in these IkamvaYouth programmes in other parts of Cape Town have gained university entrance with a full-scholarship.



In the second week of the indaba, three young residents of Masiphumelele described how the indaba last year had changed their lives.

“I am thankful to this course. I came last year, and I managed to get a scholarship. Then I registered at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) and got another bursary – not an easy thing to do,” said Seni Nqindi, who is now studying to be a teacher at CPUT.

Surprise Bontshi is now studying Construction and Engineering Drafting at Rosebank College. “I got a bursary from the WorldTeach volunteers who were helping with the programme,” she said. “But that is not enough to pay my fees, so I am also working part-time. I have to travel to town every day – it’s three hours there and back. But it’s all about taking responsibility at a young age.”

“Our parents work hard to put food on the table, so the best gift you guys could give

back to them is to let them see you blossoming into the person you really want to be.”

“You guys are crude oil. You have no idea how rich you really are,” said Ziyanda Mwanda told the learners, referring to the opportunities available. Ziyanda, who also attended last year, is now studying biotechnology at UWC.

The WorldTeach volunteers told the learners they could apply to study in the United States, as well as South Africa.

The participants this year were in Grades 9 and 10, but several youth who left school and could not find a place at university or college also attended.

English teacher Patrick Jordi, gave an address about a career in teaching.

“Career fairs of this kind are a vital link, informing young people of study and career possibilities,” he said “There is a continuing need for this on a wider scale.” Acting provincial head of education Sindi Lingela gave a fiery talk in which she exhorted the learners to “rise above where you come from.”

She told her own story – of watching all her brothers drop out of school, while her mother struggled to feed them all. Her physical hunger gave rise to a hunger for knowledge, she said. “Show the world that that even in Masiphumelele, we have geniuses,” she said, to



cheers of approval.

The learners flocked to her afterwards to thank her and ask for her advice.

The indaba had done wonders for them, she said. “They are so confident, and ask so many good questions. I am quite sure they were not this way when they first arrived here.”

Jo-Anne Smetherham is an independent journalist who is regularly published in the South African national press. She is also a good friend to and supporter of MasiCorp.



A letter from America...

from John & Carol Thompson
in America

MasiCorp has always been a personal business. Supporters have given money, ideas, sometimes clothing, books, games, stationery, sports equipment – and always encouragement. These supporters are individuals, families, churches, organizations and corporations. There has never been a plan to take MasiCorp “to scale”; the search for quality in our actions for the people of Masiphumelele has always been more important than the size of the expenditure.

With new management and renewed energy, the past few months have been a time for re-thinking

how to continue to earn the interest of our supporters. Our financial support dropped off in the terrible year of 2008 and has not recovered in 2009, so far. The stock market may be better now than it was in March, but philanthropic organizations are still reporting that this is a very difficult year for donations.

We have complete records on who gave us what each year and how the money was used. We have decided to assess whether interest is still there and to write each of our recent donors a personal letter asking them if they would

like to continue with the financial support they have given us in the past. Personal letters because it is still a personal business. It always will be.

Look for yours in the mail. It is a personal invitation to continue with us on this journey improving the lives of the people of Masiphumelele. You have only to read the new website (www.masicorp.org) and the Masi Mail to see what you have already accomplished.

Thank you!
John & Carol



So that's what they mean by a 'support group'!...

As part of the Library outreach programme our librarian, Sue Alexander, with some help from WorldTeach, initiated a teenage girls support group this year.

It meets every Monday to discuss matters relating to girls. There is a box where the girls can leave their questions anonymously.

The group discusses a different subject every week or have a workshop on something specific. It is run by young adults to whom they can easily relate.

Life can be tough for young people in Masiphumelele and the new group has met with much enthusiasm and interest.

Masiphumelele Corporation and Trust

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We're on the web!



www.masicorp.org

For donations in South African Rand—write or e-mail us

You may transfer direct to our account or send a cheque made payable to 'Masiphumelele Fund':

Private donors - Masiphumelele Corporation is a registered NGO in South Africa [NPO 040994] Registration with SARS is pending and the registration number will be sent to donors as soon as it is available
Corporate donors - to the best of our knowledge, donations will comply with the Corporate Social Investment guidelines for the B-BBEE scorecard.

For donations in US Dollars—send a check made payable to 'Masiphumelele Corporation' to our founder:

John Thompson
PO Box 221, Centre Harbor, NH 03226

Or you may make a secure donation online—www.masicorp.org/MasiDonate.htm

Masiphumelele Corporation is a tax exempt private operating foundation under section 501 © 3 of the Internal Revenue of the U.S. EIN number 02-0511758.

For donations in GB Pound Sterling—send a cheque made payable to 'Masiphumelele Trust' to our UK trustee:

Sandra Dodson
The Wheelhouse
Moor Park
Harrogate HG3 1QN
North Yorkshire

If you are a UK taxpayer, we can reclaim tax on your donations – at least 25p for every £1, at no cost to you. Or, you may elect to reclaim the same amount as a tax deduction. The relevant declaration and details will be sent to you on receipt of your donation.

For donations in other locations – please contact us for further information

'Tens years a volunteer'—extracts from a note by Caroline Brawner

I moved from California to Fish Hoek in 1999, a qualified teacher but without a work permit. I soon found myself volunteering about the year round woman-on-the-ground for Masi Corp, and was immediately caught up in her enthusiasm for working with the people of Masiphumelele to create change. We discussed what I could do and determined that I would teach Thinking Skills and Hero Books. The latter involves a Grade 6 class coming to the library every

we'd hoped to get >>>> The good news is that a lot of that is changing in Masi with better resourced crèches and a library where kids of all ages have access to books, reading programs and a variety of after school activities >>>> What keeps me going back year after year despite the many frustrations? Mostly because I keep learning from the kids—I learn something new about them and myself in each and every class >>>> And I do see a change in the kids I have taught >>>> The future of these kids depends on their education—and while the schools are doing a poor job of it, I reckon that anything I do, however small, will help in some way.

Caroline Brawner



of having ever read of story book before and lack of ever being asked a question that required thinking rather than rote memorization means that we have had to start practically from scratch >>>> It's now October and we have made progress but we are only half as far as

Please contact us if you would like a copy of the complete version of Caroline's note. If you are interested in helping us as a volunteer, please see the information on our web site www.masicorp.org/MasiHelp.htm