

The Link

Connecting you to the children we support

INTRODUCTION

Kidlinks is proud to introduce the first of our quarterly newsletters! These newsletters are called The Link and are designed to give all of our supporters more information about upcoming events, ways to get involved and provide updates on our projects in South Africa. The newsletters will be emailed to you each quarter and they will be posted on the Kidlinks website (www.kidlinksworld.org) so they can be viewed at any time. Please feel free to email us with questions and/or information you'd like to see in future newsletters.

UPCOMING EVENTS

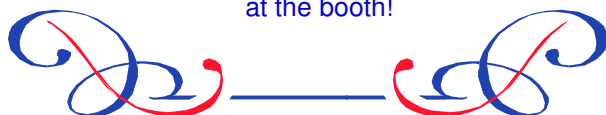
- May 2nd and 3rd – Kidlinks booth at the Going Green Expo at the Alliant Energy Center
- August 1st – Africa Alive at the Capital Brewery in Middleton
- August 15th – Kidlinks booth at Africa Fest at Warner Park



Highlight

The Kidlinks booth at the 2009 Garden Expo was a very successful fundraiser again this year, grossing over \$5,300 which is more than any other year! A huge thank you to Avant Gardening and Landscaping for sponsoring the booth and to Trisha Gamm, Robyn Reed, Michelle Storm, Diane Budyak, Barbara Ebert, Veena Brekke, Sharon Anderson and Jeanette Jordon for volunteering

at the booth!



Kidlinks booth at the 2009 Garden Expo

NEW PROJECT PARTNER

Kidlinks is very happy to announce that we have expanded our reach and taken on another project partner in South Africa called Sigiya Sonke. Sigiya Sonke is a dance group that was started by a husband and wife team, simply as a way to get children off the street and out of trouble, but this project has grown into much more than that. Sigiya Sonke has become an inspiration and a second home for many of the children. They practice six times a week, perform a wide variety of dances and they're always looking to learn new styles. Our fundraising partner in the UK, Gumboots, has been involved with Sigiya Sonke for the past year and we are happy to join them in supporting this amazing project!

NEWS FROM SOUTH AFRICA

Cristianne was in South Africa this past December and January and while she was there she was able to visit Ikageng, Leratong and our new project, Sigiya Sonke. Here's her report on the projects.

Being back in South Africa was wonderful, seeing the progress that our projects have made was even better! I spent the most time at Ikageng in Soweto, where they

are now caring for 1,600 AIDS orphans, spread throughout about 500 households, so the size of the organization continues to grow, but so do the services. Ikageng now operates so that one fieldworker is assigned to each house and after years of hard work they have achieved complete household files on every family, including birth certificates, photos of each child, death certificates of parents, special needs and more. This is a huge administrative accomplishment!

The garden that the Kidlinks team created in August of 2008 is looking fantastic! We were able to make a few additions, including some new plants, replanting the vegetable garden, working with the care taker on how to tend and harvest the vegetables, putting in a stone walkway and purchasing benches and picnic tables for the children to use for studying as there was not enough table space



inside the new computer lab. This whole memorial garden has become a very special place that the children use often.

Leratong Preschool, in Alexandra, is also doing great. They have completed construction on a new classroom, which was in use when I visited, and they are in the process of creating a library. There are eight children who have been orphaned and live at Leratong, so they are also in the process of building some additional rooms for these children. Leratong is definitely growing and the children are doing great!



One of our generous, local supporters donated 129 beautiful, handmade dresses which I took to Leratong for all the little girls. As you can imagine,

they were very excited to receive these dresses!



And the best part about visiting Leratong is seeing all of the energetic, smiling faces!

Much to my delight, I was also able to get a brief introduction to our newest project partner, Sigiya Sonke. Unfortunately, none of the students were there practicing their dancing, but I was able to talk with Jack and Beauty, the inspiring husband and wife team who run the dance project. They are remarkable and their energy to enhance the children's lives through dance is truly amazing! The dance center is located on the second floor of an abandoned warehouse, but it is colourful and lively, complete with a dance floor, changing area and now, with Kidlinks' help, a learning center so the children can come to practice their dancing, but also have a safe, quiet place to study.

My trip was absolutely fantastic and heart-warming; we really are helping make a difference in the lives of these children! Thank you for all your continued support!

- Cristianne

WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

- Attend an event planning social
- Volunteer at an event
- Make a donation
- Find sponsors for upcoming events

There are many ways to get involved and make a difference, so please contact us if you're interested to learn more and/or if you have new ideas.

CONTACT DETAILS

www.kidlinksworld.org

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If you would like to make a donation, you can mail a check or visit our website and click on 'Give'.