

# THE PARTNERSHIP

## The Partnership

## Once upon a time . . .

By Kanthie Raidoo

Life is a story, everything we know about the world and ourselves is a story we keep living. Our life story forms who we are, impacts our relationship to the world and ultimately how the world sees and relates to us.

We learn from stories, are inspired by them and grow from them. Stories are a natural means of understanding, they enable us to imagine different options, it allows us to dream of an ending that can be of our own making. It can tug at our heart strings, bring smiles to our faces and move us to action.

In this partnership, we share powerful stories of eight young boys who share their heart, their fears and their dreams for a better future.

Their stories started long before Youth for Christ made contact with them. Their stories include loneliness, fear, hunger, no parents, police harassment, cold, homelessness and stealing. Their story took a different path when Youth for Christ staff, Happy and Nathi (Outreach Team of Tennyson House) found them on the streets in Durban and decided to listen to their stories. The stories shared made staff believe in them, motivated staff to come alongside them and to invest in their future.

Tennyson House invests its energy in the prevention and early intervention initiatives with children, youth and their families from at-risk communities struggling with the issue of homelessness and other unhealthy forms of street life. The intention is to ensure that families stay together. The Outreach Team is part of the Tennyson House project, whose focus is to build trusting relationships with children who are living on the street. The aim is to reunite children living on the street with their families.



Part of their story with Youth for Christ was a 3 day camp (13-15 May 2009) that took them away from the streets of Durban, to L'Abri - an Outdoor Centre run by YFC. Through this camp, the stories for their future was shaped with affirmation, love, belief in who they are and what they can become. At the end of this

camp, eight young boys decided to change the path of their story to a positive one, when all of them decided to return home.

### Read with us and be inspired:

#### Why do you want to go home?

We want to change our lives • We want to go back to school • We want to have good friends • We want to gain respect • We want to be successful in the future • We want to get on with our lives and live like normal people.

#### What made you change your mind about the street life?

The life I was living on the street was not good, every bad thing I did to other people came back to me • Life on the streets is dangerous, you can die at any time • Life was not easy on the street, because we fight, stab each other and the police harass us, etc.

#### What do you dream about (think about doing when they get back home?)

We are willing to behave and change our bad ways • I want to play sport • Change the friends who have a bad influence on us • Go back to school • Stop stealing.

#### Are you scared of going back home?

- Yes. People in the community might not accept us, and think that we will be a bad influence to their children.
- I am scared because of my bad behaviour before I left home for the streets. I was

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chased away by my family and no one was willing to take me back. I am uncertain whether they would accept me back home.

- I left home 3 years ago and my father was very sick. I am uncertain if my father is alive as there was no one to care for him. I am also afraid of what I will eat when I go home, because my father was so sick, he was not working and there is no food at home.
- Some of the boys were scared of how neighbours would react to them, that they would look down on them, and if anything goes missing they will be the first suspect and that the community might not accept them.



**How has the Outreach team helped you?**

They really helped us to realize that there is no place like home. They gave us love and care. They gave us respect and spoke to us appropriately. They gave us food and clothes. They gave us discipline. They kept their promises to us.

**How has your behaviour or attitude changed?**

We are now thinking positively about our lives and school. Decided to quit drugs as it did not help us, instead it gave us more problems. One boy mentioned that in the past no one trusted him with money and would not send him to buy items at the shop, as he would steal the money. Now, he does not think of stealing anymore. He was sent to the garage to buy yeast and was given R 10. He came back without thinking of running away with the money. He is so happy that there are people who can trust him.

**How did the camp help you?**

The camp made us realize that we are still young and have the opportunity to make positive changes in life. We learnt to talk and listen to people. We know that we can openly share what is on our hearts and we do not have to sit alone with a problem. We know that education is important. We learnt that stealing is not good. The camp helped us change our negative thoughts to positive thoughts.

This story honestly reflects the heart of the eight boys who in their own words shared part of their life with us. The YFC outreach team will continue a journey with them as they work out some of their fears and uncertainties of the future. There will come a time when they will be empowered and confident to continue their life story without the help of YFC, but we will be forever grateful to have shared in the success story of their lives.

**STAFF SPOTLIGHT**

**Nathi Masoeu**

I'm a handsome guy by the name of Nathi, I was born in 1981. I am currently working in the Khayaletu Project, as a child and youth care worker in the boys shelter (PMB). I have been working with YFC for the past 5 years. I have 3 beautiful kids. I have grown a lot in this field of being a youth worker, and I'd like to thank Mr TC Nzimande, Bra Sox Mabaso, the late Musa Mbanjwa, the late Mam Thandi, and the late Viznett Zuma who have groomed me to be what I am today.



**Makho Zondi**

My name is Makho Zondi and I have a beautiful son who is 2 years old. I live with my brother and my sister-in-law. I started working at YFC in June last year. Working here for me it not just a job but it feels good to work for an organisation that I know is helping people, yes we can't help all those that need help but we can help some. The other thing is that I got closer to God. I got a chance to have a relationship with him, and I am growing spiritually and mentally. Now I am glad that I went through the pain I went through in the past because I think it is that which has made me strong and has shaped me and also God who never left my side. I am a shy person but not shy on paper. I love writing that is the way I express whatever I am feeling, and I enjoy listening to music.



**Sanele Ngcobo**

**"OUR BEHAVIOUR DETERMINES OUR FUTURE"**

I started in YFC in 2008 as a volunteer in the project called Yazini and I served there for one year as a co-facilitator in a program called Gold. I gained a lot of leadership skills in working with young people. In 2008 I was chosen to serve in May'khethete Project as a school facilitator. I am very excited to be in the program. I am determined to lift up the YFC May'khethete project flag. My vision is to see the youth of our communities taking informed decisions about their future and giving them skills on how to deal with obstacles which they face. My favorite verse is Romans 12 verse 6-8 as it gives me courage, develops my character and relationship with God. **"YOU CAN BE BORN POOR, BUT RICH IN MIND AND BE SUCCESSFUL"**



**Sbongile Msomi**

I have been a staff member of YFC for the past 3 months as a receptionist in the Durban office and I am impressed with the organisation and the work they do. I am a God-fearing person, a mother of a gorgeous baby girl, who is my inspiration and also positive people inspire me. Song of Songs 2 verse 5 & 6 and Romans 8 verse 24 to 27 inspire me a lot. I am a member of Leisure Book Club and a part time Child Psychology Student. I am truly blessed to participate in this type of ministries. "Here I am Lord send me".



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