

Volunteer bumper issue following two church trips to Amasango – be inspired!

## Trip 1: St Peter's, Wellesbourne – Kate Mier

In 2016 I spent just one week in October at Amasango. As ever I was made extremely welcome by Linda Ngamlana and all the staff, and the singing and worship in staff briefing each morning was inspirational. I was joined by a young first-time volunteer, Hannah Peters, who spent two weeks supporting learners in maths and English. Hannah had such a great time she is going back for longer in 2017.

I found the school in good heart: there is a calm atmosphere and good learning going on. I was invited to help support learning English with Grades 4 to 7, and I was really encouraged by how engaged the learners were, and by the standard of teaching. Having consistent Class Aids in each class throughout the day really helps things to run smoothly. The numbers attending school are lower than the school would like, and the staff are trying to encourage young people to come to school. I think that non-attendance is indication of the hopelessness these children growing up in such poverty and deprivation experience.

When I asked Grade 6 learners what they most enjoy about Amasango they were really positive about the school, responding with things such as: 'the friends I have,' 'the lessons,' 'the teachers – they care for us.'

Before I arrived the school marimba players had won a regional competition in the Eastern Cape. During my stay the under 13s football team won a match against another school. There are two pottery wheels being used in the pottery, and several sewing machines being well used. So the holistic and vocational aspects of the education are continuing and developing well.

I taught the children Christian songs with actions. On my last morning, at breaktime, two small boys came up to me and asked to sing the song again, and we spent some time singing and doing the actions to their great delight. I found this very moving in that the children were behaving just like children; they are experiencing security and care at Amasango that is allowing them to grow and develop. Jesus said 'I have come so that you might have life – life in all its fullness'. To me, Amasango enables severely deprived and damaged children to experience something of that fullness of life. Thank you to Linda Ngamlana and all the staff for all that they give week in week out to the children, and to everyone who supports the school financially.

Students busy in an Art lesson  
and the football team who won  
their match





I have recently returned from spending two weeks volunteering at Amasango and I truly had the most incredible time. Being picked up by the school bus on my first morning I had a mix of emotions; I was both excited (primarily) and nervous (understandably!) to see what the next two weeks had in store for me. But within hours of arriving at the school, my nerves had gone, replaced with enthusiasm and I couldn't wait to get stuck in. I knew I had to throw myself into Amasango life as I had such a short time there and within a few days I felt part of the Amasango family. I found myself instantly bonding with the lovely pupils of Grade 4 who were so full of warmth, vibrant and loving! I looked forward to heading to the school each morning as I'm sure anyone who has visited the school will agree that no two days are ever the same! To say that I didn't find this experience challenging would be lying after listening to story after story of the tricky situations that the children and staff alike, however I was truly inspired by several of the staff at the school and how passionate they were about helping these children, even with so few resources. There were so many extraordinary highlights for me like when I went to watch the school's football team. Whilst we were driving through the township to the game, the energy on the bus was electric. To see the lads out of the classroom and just playing around and acting how children should act was so lovely to see.

I knew I wasn't going to change every child's life I came into contact with at Amasango but if I could inspire one child to come back to school the next day and have them leave school with a smile on their face, I knew I had done what I set out to achieve. Thank you for this wonderful opportunity and I can't wait to get involved with the Friends of Amasango charity here in the UK!

**Thank you for your ongoing support of the children and young people at Amasango**



Trip 2: All Saints, Fulham – Meet the Team! (Excerpts from the blog  
[allsaintsamasango7.wordpress.com](http://allsaintsamasango7.wordpress.com))



The Amasango 7 – **Julia Chittell** the oldest youth worker in town! **Polly Fryer**, nurse with a great sense of humour! **Penny Seabrook**, vicar...enough said! **Pam Davies**, our most compassionate, caring person ever! (Taking the photo) **Ade**, Warden and builder of oh so many things... and our body guard! **Sherife** our fantastic and funny youth worker... Finally **Christina Thomas**, our team leader and inspiration!

**Christina's third trip. Here's what's the same:** The warmth of the welcome from Linda Ngamlana, the principal and the staff, is unchanged, neither is Linda's conviction that we can be of benefit while we are in the school. The singing at assembly was as uplifting as ever and the Christian nature of the start of the day – prayers in the staff room and bible reading and a homily from a member of staff – remains the same. The children are still receiving breakfast before the start of the school day, a midmorning snack and lunch.

**And here's what is different:** The school somehow looks neater and tidier. The store room is much tidier and does double-duty as a classroom. The old assembly room is now a sewing and craft room with a couple of sewing machines.

The children seem much calmer than before, though today is Monday and some may not have made it to school this morning. One boy turned up in a track suit and was roundly told off for not wearing uniform.

**First day at the school:** After the staff meeting and assembly we had a meeting with Linda and the volunteer committee which consists of one of the classroom aids, a form teacher and a social science teacher. This was followed by an extended tour of the school to help orientate us.

Penny disappeared into a maths class. Sherife disappeared into the reception class and was not seen again until the end of the day. Julie started work on organising the library, Ade wondered off to the pottery. Polly worked out a programme to divide her time between needlework and English, Pam went in search of little ones to read to, and I went in search of a timetable.



*If you'd like to volunteer, find out more or require a speaker, please email [amasango.news@gmail.com](mailto:amasango.news@gmail.com) and a Trustee will be happy to help. We look forward to hearing from you!*





Thanks to the generosity of folk at All Saints we were able to go out and buy underwear for the children. Polly and Julie pictured here at PEP choosing what to buy. Here you see volunteers being searched on the way in to school, everyone, principal included, is searched. Forbidden items include any kind of weapon, dagga and cigarettes.



On the left the contents of this week's food parcel, toiletries are given out once a month. Nowadays families are asked to come in to collect the parcels so that children aren't intimidated into giving or selling the contents. If families can't, or won't collect, then the drivers take them to the children's houses when they deliver them home. Only boys living in the shelter don't get parcels. Sanitary towels are also provided, but they are given direct to the girls.



Pam and Sherife went to the running races and supported the runners and handed out vast quantities of bananas and water. The children were rewarded with KFC at the end of the event, a rare treat. We wonder what kind of a weekend the children of Amasango will have. For sure most of them will go to church in the township, they may play netball or soccer, and they should wash their uniform. Linda, the Principal, has been to meetings about science and technology in the curriculum, staffing and vaccinations against worms and cancer of the cervix and the need for parental consent. There's never a dull moment! We will keep the spirit of Amasango with us when we return.

**Thank you for your ongoing support of the children and young people at Amasango**