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 **WOZA
MOYA**

NEWSLETTER



GREETINGS

September has been an inspiring and yet somewhat turbulent month here at Woza Moya! We had the opportunity to review the new National Strategic Plan for HIV and AIDS, STIs and TB, 2012-2016, a most impressive and comprehensive document, with 4 main pillars, ranging from universal HIV testing and TB screening, to sustaining health and wellness, increasing safety and reducing vulnerability, to changing societal norms and values.

More challenging this month, has been our own growing awareness and concern about the re-engineering of Primary Health Care in KwaZulu-Natal, which will have a direct impact on our Home-based Care programme and CCWs at Woza Moya. The information available is scant and confusing. We have however been encouraged by the strong and eloquent response of our CCW team, who came together to discuss their future roles in HBC and how they envision health care happening in their own communities. This process was beautifully captured by our Social Media team. Watch the video on <http://www.wozamoya.org.za/community-care-workers-discussion.html>

Clowns without Borders South Africa (CWBSA) spent a week with us at Woza Moya, beginning with a Storytelling Workshop for all of the CCWs and then visiting our support groups in Ofafa. Director, Jamie McLaren Lachman aka Jabulani Nene Mshengu, describes one such meeting...



DANCING WITH TEARS IN MY EYES

Today - on a brisk, foggy day typical of the Ofafa hills - we have returned to be part of Woza Moya's on-going support groups. Sibongile, Annabel, and I are joined by Sue Hollingsworth from the School of Storytelling in the United Kingdom (www.schoolofstorytelling.com), as well as Woza Moya staff, Thembi, Dingeni, Bonakele, and Zamekile.

When we arrive at the Mahlathini community hall, the guardians are already waiting for us. So many familiar faces and bright smiles greet us! Since this is a combined support group with gogos (grandmothers) and people living with HIV/AIDS, there is also a slight tension in the room. The two groups rarely have the opportunity to

integrate and connect with each other. However, this tension soon dissolves as Bonakele leads the group in a rousing song, prayer, and physical warm-up. We then teach a traditional song, "Skorokoro," and offer to share some stories that the guardians could then tell their children. Sibongile tells a story about stone soup bringing community together. Dingeni tells one about a how children mirror their parents. Sue has us rolling in laughter with a tale about a magical pot and an elderly couple. In the listening, the group seems more at ease with each other. But then, the magic really begins...with dancing!

Chairs are cleared and bodies begin to move to music. It is amazing to see how eager the women (and one man) are to dance together. Excitement and joy echoes in the hall as the rhythm and movement kicks up dust from the floor. It is clear that the highlight of the day is the dancing. In reflection afterwards, some guardians share that they feel a lightness in their bodies. Some can't remember the last time they danced to music. Others recall dancing only as a child. "We love dancing. It is important that we have a space where we can do it without our children seeing us. That way we can be free."

We look around the room and see a remarkable change in the atmosphere. Faces are glowing. Eyes are bright. People have connected. The session continues by sharing stories of positive things that happened during the preceding month. We then eat lunch and close with one last song and dance in a circle - "iZola Budd." The singing goes on for a long time with each guardian taking turns to traditional dance in the middle of the circle. At this point, tears of joy well up in my eyes to see the strength of each woman dancing proudly with others supporting her. It is the recognition that though life may be difficult and the burden of responsibility in the family great, there are also opportunities to reconnect to a sense of joy and happiness through the simplicity of play, song, story, and dance. As we finally end our day with them, one grandmother shows us that someone has forgotten her walking stick in her excitement!

AFRICAN PROVERB

When was the last time you told stories?

When was the last time you sung a song?

When was the last time you danced?

If you cannot remember or if it was a long time ago,

The time is now.



PLEASE SUPPORT

A dynamic effective care worker team requires on-going training which needs funds. To bring all our care workers, from the outlying areas in to our Community Centre for one day of training, costs R 1,400.00 in taxi fares. Please support us by contributing to <http://www.wozamoya.org.za/monetary-donations.html>



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