



Ronny Sekwela, Rover Chairman Morula Crew, World Youth Community Builder 2010.



Scouts from 1st Mbhekwana Scout Troop pledge support and unity to each other as scouts.



World Youth Community Builder of the Year. As you read this, Ronny will have just completed a Diploma in Information Technology. "Were it not for Scouts, I would probably be smoking, doing drugs and dying from AIDs like many of my former friends. This has changed my life completely," he adds.

Investing in the future

Founder and Director Louise Batty is originally from Australia. She came to South Africa over a decade ago as a

KEEP THE DREAM 196

The late pop diva Whitney Houston could have been singing about Keep the Dream 196 when she sang "I believe the children are our future, teach them well and let them lead the way ..." in her hit "The Greatest Love of All".

Using the time-honoured Scouts movement as the catalyst, the Limpopo-based organisation is providing a holistic suite of support and life skills training that is helping thousands of orphaned, poverty stricken and otherwise vulnerable children identify their strengths, overcome challenges and learn coping techniques that will stay with them for life.

One such child is Ronny Sekwela. He joined Scouts through Keep the Dream 196 in 2004, at the age of 14.

"Before I joined the Scouts, I was somehow a terrible young man. I was the kind of person who liked swearing at other people, going out to the streets with my friends during the night, and I was a great gambling animal. Lying was always on the tip of my tongue. I would steal ... so I could gamble with the money. I would play dice with older people, who would force me to drink alcohol and have many girlfriends. Scouts and Keep the Dream 196 have changed my life completely. I am away from all those hectic things I was doing in the past," he explains.

In 2010, Ronny won the South African Youth Community Builder of the Year award and was selected to go to India for 10 days, where he was selected

A groundbreaking non-profit organisation is assisting thousands of children to overcome difficult life circumstances by building resilience, so they are able to realise their full potential and contribute to the building of South Africa.



Children from 1st Mawa Cub Pack with birds created from recycled paper during the Climate Change Awareness programme which ran for eight months.

SCOUTS

Keep the Dream 196 uses Scouts as the vehicle to assist underprivileged and needy children to grow holistically and see themselves as valuable members of their community and the country. Founded in 1907, today over 26 million people across the globe are involved in the scout movement, which offers age-appropriate skills development, leadership training and the building of self-esteem and resilience.

volunteer through Australian Volunteers International under the Department of Health, and fell in love with the people, especially the children, of South Africa. Louise has a background in community health, combined with a long history of being involved in the scouting movement, and decided to combine these skills and interests in a bid to alleviate some of the poverty she witnessed in Limpopo.

“The essence of Keep the Dream 196 was created in 2003, as a direct response to a situation analysis

performed by a group of home based care volunteers. They identified that their biggest heartache was not caring for people who were dying of HIV and AIDs, but watching the village children, particularly orphans and vulnerable children, drop out of school, become pregnant, become infected and get involved with drug and alcohol abuse. I had seen how Scouts, and the skills taught through the movement, could transform the lives of children and that is how we got started,” she explains. ■■■



Parent Committee after attending the Journey of Life training to support their children's Cub Pack or Scout Troop.

Since its humble beginnings in 2003 as a pilot project working with 13 kids from the Greater Tzaneen area, the programme has grown exponentially. In 2012 almost 2 500 kids from 85 villages are involved in the programme, which is supported by two full time staff, five part time staff, 160 volunteers from 25 different community-based organisations and 24 parent groups. Innovations include the Food for Life programme, in which over 1 400 kids have been assisted to build their own food gardens, learning about recycling and the environment at the same time.

The organisation does not just support children – training in a broad range of practical and life skills is provided to home-based care workers, guardians and parents, service providers and anyone looking to further themselves.

Field Officer Rosemary Nkwashu, affectionately known as “Mum Rose”, is one such person. “Before I joined Keep the Dream 196 I thought I was a reject. I didn’t speak English, I didn’t use a computer. Now I can see that nobody in the world is a reject. I’m helping children in our communities to become good leaders, and I can speak English and use a computer. That is Keep the Dream

196, this company builds adults and children!” she says with a HUGE grin.

Progress through partnerships

“We have managed to achieve a huge amount in a relatively short space of time, thanks mainly to our partnerships with organisations and funders who share our vision,” says co-founder Elizabeth Mabuza, a trained teacher who is passionate about making a difference through education. The SA Scouts Association, Children’s Rights Centre Durban, ACCES and SANAC Children Sector Network, Old Mutual Legends Programme, National Development Agency, Oxfam Australia, Kindernothilfe and the Kings Court Christian School are just some of the partners involved in this groundbreaking project, which is always looking for new partnerships and support to increase its impact.

“People in our area have noticed how the kids doing Scouts are different; they are heading in a fruitful direction in their life. We are taught that the hands that serve are blessed. We try our best to make a good impact every day,” explains beneficiary Nhlanhla Khoza.

Cultivating such attitudes looks like a very sound investment in our country’s future. 🐾

“Keep The Dream 196 has given me hope and the chance for a future that I didn’t think was possible. I know I will succeed!”
– Harry Malatji, beneficiary



Two Cubs from 1st Shiluvane Cub Pack during the Food for Life project.

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