Supporting schools in KwaZulu-Natal

This year, Wordworks has had the privilege of working with two schools in the rural area of northern KZN, St Christopher’s Primary and Zilungisele Primary. Wordworks gave training on delivering the Home-School Partnership programme to facilitators at both schools, who then ran the seven-week course in the second term.

After attending the programme, one parent fed back, “There is a great improvement at home and my child won’t go to sleep unless we make some school activities.” The passion and commitment of the parents was clear when many of them walked long distances in the heavy rain to attend a follow-up session in the third term (see photo).

We have also been very encouraged by the feedback from facilitators, one of whom told us:
“I have noticed the importance of the programme as even in my classroom I have seen a difference in those learners whose parents are part of the programme. What I can say is that Wordworks programme has opened parents’ eyes to treat their children well, give them time to learn, to tell them stories and read stories for them.”

Curie Ma Daniels, Curriculum Advisor, Metro South Education District

Supporting schools in the Eastern Cape

In July this year, coordinators from 11 schools in the Eastern Cape participated in two days of training and received materials to start Early Literacy Programmes at schools in the coastal area from Port Alfred to Alexandria. In October, we visited the schools and were delighted to see how much they have achieved in such a short space of time.

The coordinators had recruited volunteers from the local community and met with the teachers to identify those children in need of extra support. Almost all of the coordinators and volunteers are parents who want to improve their own children’s literacy as well as help other children from their communities. Our thanks go to Dr Elna Barnard from the local Education District and Nola Johannsen and the Rotary Anns in Port Alfred for their support in getting the programmes started.

Wordworks! This success is directly attributed to the teachers’ dynamic attitudes and commitment to the children, despite the huge challenges that they face on a daily basis.

Agnes Mgabhi, the Grade R teacher at St Christopher’s Primary, summed up the response of the teachers when she told us, “I’m old and getting tired, it’s nearly time for my retirement. But with this programme I feel alive and I don’t want to retire!”

Wordworks’ annual report for 2011-12 has been published and is available on our website. We have used a fun and innovative postcard design again, so that all the key information about our growth and progress last year is at your fingertips. Our audited financial statements for 2011-12 are also now on the website.
Can you help?

We are delighted that Wordworks has now been accepted as a beneficiary of the My School My Planet programme. Thank you to everyone who made this possible by nominating us.

If you have not yet nominated Wordworks as a beneficiary on your My School My Planet card it is not too late! You are allowed up to three beneficiaries and you can choose Wordworks to be one of yours by:

- going to your nearest Wordworks store and picking up a form, or
- clicking on this link www.myschool.co.za/supporter/apply/ if you do not yet have a card, or clicking on this link if you have an existing card www.myschool.co.za/supporter/update/.

Woolworths will donate 1% of the amount you spend at their store to Wordworks. These funds will help us to deliver our programmes in 2013 and to ensure that more children learn to read and write successfully.

Contact Us:

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Looking back at 2012...

2012 has been a year of amazing growth for Wordworks – upwards and outwards! Many special relationships have been formed and valuable links have been made with new partners. The charts give a sense of just how much the reach of our work has increased, with many more children, families and schools being touched by our programmes.

Between January and July of this year, over 400 volunteers tutors provided regular support to 1441 children – compared with 59 volunteers and 364 children in total in 2008. The number of schools and libraries running the programme has also grown significantly, from 6 in 2008 to 49 in 2012.

In partnership with the Foundation for Community Work, this year Wordworks trained 36 home visitors in Atlantis who each support 20 families, helping them to develop their understanding of activities and techniques that can support early education in the home.

Finally, one of the highlights of 2012 has been the expansion of our Grade R teacher training. We have delivered training and ongoing support to 52 Grade R teachers from 20 schools, and provided them with materials and resources to help make their teaching of reading and writing more impactful – and fun!

We have been delighted by the feedback from teachers. One Grade R teacher reported: “The Wordworks programme has made a major impact in my classroom. The children’s confidence level and language improved tremendously. I felt so proud of them knowing that in Grade One they won’t have a problem doing comprehension. The resources were an excellent help to me. Thank you very much. Together we can make a difference and achieve much.”

End of year message from the Wordworks team

To everyone in the Wordworks family, in the Western Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Eastern Cape, to our volunteers, funders, partners, facilitators, coordinators, parents, mentors, supporters and friends: THANK YOU ALL for being the change that you want to see! We wish you and your families a peaceful and happy holiday season and we look forward to working with you again next year, harnessing our collective efforts to transform lives through literacy.

Our mission:

Wordworks aims to strengthen early literacy and language development in disadvantaged communities through targeted early intervention and the delivery of proven programmes and resources. Wordworks seeks to enable all children to fulfill their learning potential by empowering parents, teachers, community members and volunteers to play a meaningful role in facilitating the early acquisition of reading and writing skills.