

**Inkathalelo Yabantwana Nolutsha:**  
Incwadi ebhalelwe abantu abasebenza nabantwana  
abaneengxaki nolutsha olujongene neengxaki

# Child & Youth Care

**Child & Youth Care ISSN 0258-8927 June 1999**

A Journal for those who work with troubled children and youth at risk





# EDITORIAL

**M**uch is said of moving into a new millennium. In the field of child and youth care in this country, the concept of *transformation* is no doubt in the vanguard of the movement of our profession into the year 2000 and beyond. Two historic NACCW events precede and mark our move as a profession and field of practice into the 21st Century, both embrace the idea of *transformation*.

The one was the NACCW Forum held in Kroonstad last month (see photos on page 19).

The other is Masihambeni, the 12th Biennial Conference scheduled for 5th, 6th and 7th July 1999 – the programme for which is available in detail at the time of writing.

The impression given by both is of hope, of enthusiasm and of promise.

The Forum discussions left little doubt that child and youth care practitioners in all the NACCW Regions and Sub-Regions of this country have the capacity, potential and will to make the transformation process work and to do it for the sake of the children and youth and families of this country.

The National Chairman of this Association for the last 12 years, Ashley Theron, can be proud of the Association he is now handing over to the new incumbent. The National Forum showed that the NACCW is an Association that is vigorously pursuing the professionalisation of Child and Youth Care Workers.

The network of forums and activities throughout the country is inspiring.

A feature of the Forum was the vision that is carried in the minds of Child and Youth Care Practitioners that we have something unique to contribute to the field and that is our *Africanness*. The NACCW was encouraged by its leaders to nurture and grow its African connections and its African leadership, to reach the developmental needs of African family life, to manifest transformation through African models and to grow the profession with our African knowledge.

This spirit also pervades the Masihambeni Conference Programme.

So the NACCW captures something of the spirit of our time in South Africa and of the phrase that has encapsulated it – the *African Renaissance*. It is not that we are jumping onto a popular political wave and going with it – it seems to me that with our political liberation has come a freedom to release, explore and celebrate our unique *Africanness*. Deep down we know as a profession that it has a value that must not be lost to the child care world.

This Journal is an ideal medium in which to publish what we know is effective in our African experience. Through this Journal we can learn from each other the skills programmes and styles of intervention that work for us and share what we do with the rest of Africa and the child care world.

Reading the Conference programme it seems that its timing could not be better.

The Conference theme and its programme promises to start this process to provide answers to the questions that many child care workers have about practice in the midst of transformation and to give examples of practice needed for transformation in the context of Africa.

So – Masihambeni – let us go together into the new millennium.

**Barrie Lodge**

## NACCW

The National Association of Child Care Workers is an independent, non-profit organisation in South Africa which provides the professional training and infrastructure to promote healthy child and youth development and to improve standards of care and treatment for troubled children and youth at risk in family, community and residential group care settings.

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**Cover Picture:** Young people from the Professional Foster Care Project at the launch in March 1998 at the City Hall, Kimberley





## Interview with HAROLD MALGAS

**Harold has been appointed Manager of the new Secure Care Centre to be opened in Kroonstad**

**T**he newly erected custom-built secure care facility in Kroonstad is very shortly to be opened. An interesting aspect to the facility is that although built and owned by the state, the service provided will be managed by an NGO. Child and youth care worker, **Harold Malgas** has been appointed to manage the facility. **Jeanny Karth** spoke to him on the eve of the opening. Child & Youth Care will check in with him again shortly to watch this exciting development.

**C&YC:** What does it feel like to be a CYCW chosen as manager of the Secure Care in Kroonstad?

**HM:** Overwhelming and wonderful! The enormity of the task only hit me on the bus back home after the interview. There is also a huge change involved in being employed to being totally responsible. It is also an honour. When I left Rosendal in 1993 my parting words were "I want to be manager of a child care facility in 10 years time." I have realised this vision in 6 years.

**C&YC:** You left George for Mpumalanga for 6 months – can you tell us about that experience.

**HM:** It was something quite different and new. I helped set up a secure care facility, meeting with architects, contractors etc. This was an eye opener for me and I learnt a lot. The training I did up there too was a way of implementing my knowledge. I felt I was part of building capacity in the province.

**C&YC:** Tell us about the secure care centre.

**HM:** The building is brand new, modern with soft colours and is child-friendly – it does not look anything like your typical institution. We will take 40 young people and the ratio of staff to youth is 1-5. We are busy appointing staff now and we have tried to appoint as many local people as possible but also have a few trained CYCW's. We expect to take in our first youth in June. There are special features in the building such as the doors which open outwards. There are 4 beds in each room with a cleverly designed packing space underneath which can be locked from the outside. We have 6 single rooms – these can be used as incentives for boys and also for those needing to be separate from others for developmental reasons. There are panic buttons in each room connected to the CYCW's office – we expect these to be misused until the novelty wears off. Corners have been rounded off where-ever possible; the gates are electronically controlled and blend in beautifully with the other features of the building. Instead of barbed wire all over, the design of the roof



has half-rounded metal cylinders which serve the purpose of enclosure very well without making the building look like a prison or endangering anyone. It is effective in keeping the boys in and outsiders out. There is a small but functional swimming pool and very big grounds. The perimeter has a double fence with a huge gap between the two which should prevent things being thrown in or out.

**C&YC:** What about the programmes Harold?

**HM:** We hope to appoint trainers rather than teachers. We have made provision for 4 trainers. These trainers will work with CYCW's in facilitating developmental programmes on a daily basis. Some of the ideas are to

have a choir, sports programme of course, life skills training and we expect to make use of the trade training facilities at the local prison in an integrated way. We hope to also establish vegetable gardens and become self-sufficient as well as teaching this skill to the young people. We hope with the help of NICRO and our own staff to involve the community's children in our programmes.

**C&YC:** What sort of problems do you anticipate?

**HM:** Possibly some negative reactions from the community as expectations regarding employment ran high and we could not satisfy this need. The usual teething problems with inexperienced staff, but with effective su-

pervision and teambuilding I expect these will be quickly overcome.

**C&YC:** How does it feel to work for an NGO after all these years in the state employ?

**HM:** I'm fortunate to have a considerate and supportive supervisor in Magda van Niekerk and our different work experiences complement one another well. Remember that this is a state facility run by an NGO- quite a novel idea! One of the good and positive things has been how easy the process of appointing staff is as compared to the state!

**C&YC:** Well Harold we wish you all the best for your opening and will be talking to you again in 3 months time. □

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#### More about Harold Malgas

1989 - entered C&YC field at Rosendal Place of Safety

1990 - completed BQCC

1993 - promoted to senior CYCW and assumed duty at Outeniekwa House in George

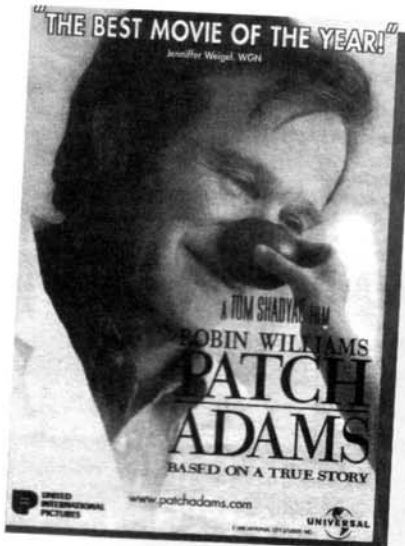
1993 - completed NACCW Supervision and Training of Trainers

1995 - completed UNISA Certificate in C&YC

1996 - completed Junior Management Course

1998 - seconded to Mpumalanga to assist in establishing Secure Care Centre

1999 - attended Leadership Training facilitated by IMC.



The movie **Patch Adams** is one of those movies which just makes perfect sense to those in our line of work. It is based on a true story about a medical student, who challenges the medical model in every possible way. It is a

story of courage, of an individual who wants to make a difference and who dares to tackle everything to make that difference. What struck me the most is how it brings together all the three aspects in the KSS-model which forms the basis of effective child care practice. It demonstrates that knowledge and skill are worth very little if you do not know how to use the self to its fullest.

Look out for the story lines that relate to the following:

- knowledge, skill and the use of the self
- equal partnerships
- attachment and relationships
- the importance of humour (appropriately) in working with people
- commitment and calling for the work we do
- courage to challenge a system (the medical system of all systems!)
- having a vision (looking beyond what we see on the surface)
- working with strengths
- unconditional belief in the potential of each person to make a difference in their own lives and practising being different
- team work
- wholeness

The underlying theme throughout the movie focusses on health being about quality of life and not the elimination of illness.

It is essential viewing for all working in the developmental model.

**André Viviers**

## Thinking About Friends

I thought a friend  
would be someone to talk to,  
but now I realise I was wrong.  
It seems that a friend is not always  
what you want her or him to be.  
I wish I could have a friend  
whom I trust  
and depend on  
and believe in.

Is it so difficult to have somebody like that?  
Is it so difficult to find somebody like that?

I've been looking hard for that someone.  
When I thought I had found her,  
something told me  
she wasn't thinking of me in the same way.

Who could the right friend be?  
Is it her or is it that friend still out there?  
Should I look or should I stop?  
I wish I could find out soon!

*Judy Cita,  
a 14-year old from **Ons Plek**,  
Cape Town*



### CYC-NET

is an e-mail child and youth care discussion forum with nearly 400 members world-wide — students, on-line workers, trainers, administrators — which you can join by sending mail to [cyc-net@icon.co.za](mailto:cyc-net@icon.co.za).

It is also an informative web site which you are invited to visit at [www.pretext.co.za/cyc-net](http://www.pretext.co.za/cyc-net)

### CYC-ONLINE

is a monthly on-line magazine for child and youth care workers around the world which you may view at [www.pretext.co.za/cyc-net/cyconline.html](http://www.pretext.co.za/cyc-net/cyconline.html)

**The International Child  
and Youth Care Network**

# Ricardo's Move

*A story about transition*

Jeanette Kopp

**We are asked by the minimum standards to ensure that transition for young people is helpful for them. However, these processes can often be very complex and require strong child and youth care skills and careful teamwork as is illustrated by the story of this young boy's transition.**

The beginning of this story is too long and complicated to relate here – suffice to say that Ricardo was a victim of the system – a strong-willed powerful little fellow with a gentle heart crying out to be taken in and loved by someone. He had finally been rejected by everyone. The children's home now no longer felt able to meet his needs for containment. But we still held out hope for him and believed he could flourish, given the right environment. So, thinking carefully of his needs, it was decided to send him to a School of Industry close to his home where he would be surrounded by strong male role-models who could provide him with the holding he so sadly needed. I met him at half-past five at the airport – sad and quiet but otherwise fine. It was his first plane

trip so he asked questions and inspected things carefully. He chatted happily in the plane while munching on the biltong I had bought him – his favourite snack. When we reached our destination he waited outside for me while I used the bathroom at the airport and then got a little anxious as there seemed to be no-one to meet us. I eventually found Mr September who was there to meet us and we set off for the School of Industry – a journey of 1½ hours.

Ricardo dozed for a while and I used the opportunity to fit in his story for the teacher who was going to be working with him in his cottage. About ½ hour from the destination I noticed that Ricardo was very quiet in the back so I decided to climb over and sit with him. He started to cry and then got very angry insisting that he would run and nothing would keep him there. I tried many different things – to no avail. He only got angrier and when we arrived at the school he got out of the car and started walking away down the road. I tried to reason with him a few more times and then went to meet the principal. He sent a teacher in the car to pick him up. Mr September cleverly took along two of the bigger boys and sat him between them in the

back of the car.

The principal and I spoke a little and he then decided to fetch Ricardo. He flung himself into the office and started what turned out to be a marathon eight hour resistance. At first the principal and I tried to talk him down – to no avail. He reverted to his gangster pose, using the foulest language which persisted the whole day. At one point he grabbed the metal letter opener and threatened us both – I stood in front of him and asked for the knife – in turn, he said "Asseblief Tannie, staan uit my pad, ek wil jou nie seermaak nie." After repeated requests he finally flung the knife back on the desk.

The day proceeded in a similar vein with brief rest periods in which he engaged with the principal and chatted amicably about sport. But then would take off again. He attempted to force the door a number of times as well as to bash the windows in. He repeated over and over again to anyone in the room, "Ek wil nie hier wees nie. Ek wil huis toe gaan. Ek sal nie hier bly nie. Ek sal die plek afbrand." All of this with choice expletives words added.

The psychologist came in and decided to gather four boys from his dormitory to tell him what it was like at the facility. He just



glared at them. The head boy was brought in and told his story of deciding to make the best of his life and to use the opportunities offered him at school – to no avail.

Mr September was brought in again. We promised to arrange for him to go home the following weekend. We reasoned, we pleaded, we cajoled – to no avail. He accepted a coke at one point and then later threw all the things I had bought him onto the principal's desk telling me what he thought of me. I was the bad person who had brought him to this place and now I was going to leave him there and go back to Cape Town.

By half-past one we were exhausted, but not Ricardo. I suggested we go to the cottage for lunch. A number of boys were gathered to walk with him as he took off down the road again. We continued to the dining room and he arrived surrounded by the boys. The meal was very traumatic for all the boys and the other staff who had never witnessed such anger. I had discussed with Mr September that he needed to feel that someone else, stronger than him was in control. And from then until half-past six a battle of wills played itself out in the dining room. I stayed close but in the background, keeping eye contact with Ricardo all the time. Mr September stayed very close to him while he made various and many attempts to either dash for the door, kick it down or physically attack Mr September again. Intermittently he quietened down and made conversation with Mr September who played "broken record" for those many hours – 'we care, we want to help you, we won't let you run,

we are here for you, this is a good place'.

As the afternoon wore on he made several breaks, but the boys all quite naturally hovered around and assisted in walking him back. Many of them talked to Ricardo, asking him to come and join them. One or two stayed in the dining room, in some mute way offering assistance. The sense of sorrow for Ricardo from all was tangible — and this from youth themselves hurt and scarred.

Various teachers came and went and offered to pray in their horrified confusion. Later Ricardo turned his invective against me with all his might calling me every name under the sun every time I talked to him. I needed the toilet at one point and had to leave the room. Ricardo must have thought that I was leaving because when I got back he had had to be physically restrained and was on the floor with Mr September doing the restraining. He continued to struggle for a good hour; I took Ricardo's shoes off as he wanted to kick Mr September from behind. He got in a hefty kick at me, catching me on the leg.

At one point he started trying to catch flies on the table – instantly two boys joined him as well as Mr September and this brief respite was amazing to watch. By half-past five I started worrying that Ricardo had eaten nothing nor had had anything to drink. He was still incredibly angry and repeatedly threatened to kill himself. I called a colleague for advice regarding sedation and we agreed to contact the district surgeon. As this however proved futile we called the resident nurse. She introduced herself to Ricardo and suggested

## Minimum Standards: Transitional Planning

### **Standard Statement:**

Young people receive services in accordance with their Individual Development Plan and Care Plan which facilitates their well-being within a transitional programme (such as transitional secure care) and/or enables them to make a successful transition to new circumstances (such as moving from a place of safety to a children's home).

In practice this means:

Outcomes for young people:

- a. Young people confirm that they receive assistance to cope successfully with changes in their circumstances and/or environment.
- b. Young people confirm that a specific plan has been prepared to assist them in coping successfully with changes in their circumstances and/or environment.

### **Programme Practices**

- a. Service providers assist young people to cope successfully with changes in circumstances and/or environment.
- b. Service providers develop a specific plan for preparing, supporting and following up young people who are about to make a transition to new circumstances and or environments.

### **Management Actions**

- a. The service provider has been given policy and procedure on transitional planning and care.
- b. The service provider is given training, support and developmental supervision to ensure effective implementation of policy and procedure on transitional planning and care.

they go for a ride in her car around the town. Whatever her presence meant to Ricardo I cannot tell, but he suddenly took the apple we had tried to get him to eat and he started eating it. We got him a glass of milk which he downed without a murmur. Mr September then suggested that the two of them go to see the swimming pool. They were gone for an hour. In that time Mr September walked all over the fields adjoining the school with him and they saw all sorts of interesting things including a harmless house snake which Mr September caught for Ricardo. They returned to where we were all waiting and he was a different boy. He showed his snake to all the boys and told them what they had seen. I stood in the background watching. After giving me a few quick glances, Ricardo came over and asked me if I wanted to feel his snake. He then agreed to go and find some supper for himself with Mr September and I left them chatting happily. The next morning I tried to find them to say goodbye as I had to return to Cape Town. They had all left for the dam where they were going fishing. We made an attempt to find them but it is a very large dam and we had to give up. When I got home I waited until it seemed they would be home and I phoned him. A happy little boy answered, telling me they'd caught three more snakes and he'd had a great time at the dam. And then, "Hierdie plek is O.K., jammer ek was so onbeskof met Tannie." "Toemaar, Ricardo," I replied, "dis verby en ek verstaan hoe jy gevoel het." "'s lief vir Tannie." "En ek vir jou." □

**Things to learn**

**from a Dog**



- *Never pass up an opportunity to go for a joy ride.*
- *When loved ones come home, always run to greet them.*
- *When it's in your best interests, always practice obedience.*
- *Let others know when they've invaded your territory.*
- *Take naps and always stretch before rising.*
- *Run, romp and play daily.*
- *Eat with gusto and enthusiasm.*
- *Be loyal.*
- *Avoid biting when a simple growl will do.*
- *Never pretend to be something you're not.*
- *Delight in the simple joy of a long walk.*
- *Thrive on attention and let people touch you.*
- *If what you want lies buried, dig until you find it.*
- *When someone is having a bad day, be silent, sit close by and nuzzle them gently.*
- *When you are happy, dance around and wag your entire body.*
- *No matter how often you are criticized, don't buy into the guilt thing and pout. Run right back and make friends.*

**M.T.R. SMIT**

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***This true story is a tribute to the children, youth, staff and volunteers at James House in Cape Town, a children's home working hard at applying the practice principles "Family Centred".***

**W**e have realised for some time the importance of trying to reunite families but up to now have relied on the outside agencies to do this work.

However when we were faced with a little boy of seven years crying for his parents day after day and with no apparent results from the reconstruction worker, we decided to try ourselves. The little boy in our care assured us that he knew where his family lived. He could get us there – somewhere in Kraaifontein! (A large suburb in our city).

So one morning our family preservation team – two community workers, the child and youth care worker, a volunteer and the little boy himself – left for Kraaifontein in the volunteer's car. The story goes that the child directed the team with "turn here" and "down there" until eventually he brought them to the house of his family – an aunt. When she realised who was there, there was much rejoicing as the family had not known where their child had gone. She promised to find his parents and to contact us with their address.

A few days later we had a telephone call at James House from his parents who were delighted to know that their son was safe. Arrangements were made for them to visit later that week.

I arrived at work on a Thursday morning, after being away for three days, to be greeted by a smiling child who informed me that his mother and father would be there later that day. (I sent up a prayer that he would not be disappointed!) I returned later to James House to be greeted by the same child

with "Come here and see my mother!" I have yet to see so much love in a child's eyes as that of our little boy as he introduced me to his family – mother, father and little brother. The family spent the night at the children's home and left for the weekend with their child the next day. Before they left he returned from school with a mother's day card which he immediately gave to his mother.

What joy was on his face! The family returned on the Sunday after a wonderful weekend. Further arrangements have now been made for future contact. Suddenly we have a child who can talk about

his family and plan to see them. We can also begin a plan of reunification.

Success breeds success. We were so encouraged by this experience that we now decided to follow through on another plan around one of our 18 year-olds. Alwieda had been in foster care for 13 years. The foster placement had broken

down and she was placed with us. She could not remember her family and had no knowledge of them or their whereabouts at all. She had built up a fantasy about them which did not take us far.

We decided then to access the files from the agency who dealt with her when she was originally removed and placed in foster care. After reading her history, we sat down with Alwieda and carefully and tactfully went through the facts of her life. She learnt about what had really happened to cause her to be placed in care. She also learned that she had been in another home before being placed in foster care. She discovered a host of information about her family which had been totally lost to her – mother's name, place of origin, the names of friends of the family and then the most wonderful fact of all – she has a half-sister.

After some queries in the small village from whence her mother came, we discovered that there were still people of this name there. We planned another trip!

Again our volunteer, the community worker, the

## IT IS AMAZING WHAT YOU FIND WHEN YOU LOOK

A story of families re-united

**Kathy Scott**  
**Principal: James House**



Family leaving for first weekend together

child and youth care worker and Alwieda left for Porterville, a rural town two hours drive from Cape Town. After talking to various people in the village they met her stepfather, her half sister's father. We discovered that her sister lives in Stellenbosch and contact was made with her there and then. She was so surprised and thrilled at the thought of now having a sister. The family agreed to try and find her mother. Since then we have had phone calls from her sister and arrangements are being made to take Alwieda to visit her.

These two stories have inspired us to make a concerted effort to find family members for all our children. They must be there somewhere – all it takes is some effort on the part of the staff, and the realization that this is not an impossible task. □



Alwieda with her half sister

## THE HAGUE APPEAL FOR PEACE

is a campaign and conference led by civil society

The conference took place in May 1999. Young people were invited to participate in the conference and this is the submission by Farliz Calle from The Children's Movement for Peace in Colombia.

Today, I would like to choose my best feelings and my best words to send to all the children of the world my message of PEACE, since my youth. Unless and my heart – which is still that of a child – belong to one who knows war but who loves peace over everything.

I come from Colombia, but I could also say that I come from Yugoslavia, Angola, Somalia, Afghanistan, Rwanda or Amsterdam 45 years ago. Unfortunately all these places are famous but not because of friendly people or their wonderful natural resources, but because of war and violence. Two days ago I visited the home of Anne Frank in Amsterdam. I remembered her words and her suffering. She was 15 years old when she lived in the war and today many children suffer as she did.

I live in Uraba, one of the most violent areas in Colombia and the world. I was fifteen years old like Anne Frank when Mrs. Gracá Machel came to our town because she was preparing a study about the Impact of Armed Conflict on Children. I listened to her again in December 1996 at the United Nations in New York when she said that "the worst thing that can happen is for a society to accept violence against children as a normality."

For the children of the Movement for Peace in Colombia her visit and her words have always been with us and inspired us. Our example of mobilisation unchained the current process of peace that is being developing in Colombia. That is the reason why I'm convinced that today, the nations of the world have in their hands a great tool – the opportunity of allowing children to participate actively in all matters that especially affect us.

Here today, in this forum, in the year in which we are celebrating the tenth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, we request all countries, and all adults in the world, to assist us with all possible means – to enable us to organize ourselves, to listen to us and to take our opinions into consideration so that it will be possible to start the new millennium with a new hope: Peace in our countries, Peace in our homes and Peace in our hearts.

In this world, life is becoming harder and harder for children. In spite of advances in technology, war and armies have become more sophisticated and children are increasingly involved in this culture of Death.

Crimes against Humanity are even more inhuman when they are inflicted on children. There is nothing more cruel than the rape of a girl or a boy or of a child who is forced to become a murderer.

Everybody present here, and everyone listening to me, must promise that we will all try to end the impunity that allows people to abuse their power in the world, to stop those who torture other people, and to stop all those who are cutting the dreams, the hopes and the happiness of children.

Promise that there will, be no more child soldiers, no more atrocities, no more war.

# GAMES!

Anyone want to play?

Mark Gamble

**T**here are a host of non-competitive games or initiatives being played by folk around the world. Some of the people playing these games are old and grey, others are young enough to be able to run a 100 metres without losing their breathe. Many of these games originate from times long past, games that were played by the children of the ancients to build and strengthen the sense of unity amongst the people. Currently these games are used extensively in the field of experiential education to build the individual and the group. I thought to share some of these games with the readers of the Journal. They have been taught to me in my time working with Educo Africa by Karl Rohnke, Tom Smith and Bill Quinn. My thanks goes to them for the sharing of their skills and style. A few thoughts on the games ...

- safety is paramount,
- look after the group as a whole,
- practice first,
- sequence – start easy and simple and build to more complex and challenging,
- talk – before during and after, what are you wanting the kids to experience, what did they experience, remember those open questions...



## BALLOON WALK

This is a fun game to do with a group of up to 15 people. Each person gets a balloon. The game starts with the blowing up of the balloons, strange noises, frustrated fingers as balloons are inflated and tied closed. This is a very simple game. The group needs to line up and balloons are placed between the stomach of the owner of the balloon and the lower back of the person in front. You end up with a line made up of person, balloon, person, balloon and so on. No hands are allowed to hold

those balloons. The group then has to walk a distance of maybe 10-20 metres until the last person is over the finishing line keeping the balloons in place without the assistance of hands! This looks easy, until you're between two balloons!! This is good activity for communication, forward planning, to look at how frustration and anger are expressed and who played what role in the team. The follow-up to this game is called "Fire in the Hold". It involves bursting the balloon by placing

the balloon between a hug. This too is not as easy as it looks. The running jump hug seems to be the most successful! Look out for the litter element with bits of burst balloon, also for those sneaky individuals, (adult or kids) who hide their balloon to turn it into a water bomb at a later stage.

**Mark Gamble is a child and youth care worker and is the co-ordinator for Educo's Wilderness Programme for Youth at Risk.**



# The Courage to Expect Greatness from our Children

Bobby Gilliam and Don Scott

***The authors discuss various paradigms and treatment strategies in work with troubled youth. They propose a shift from traditional approaches that stress deficits and pathology toward strength-based interventions based on positive development. Traditional approaches have not succeeded because they fail to mobilize the positive resources of youth. The authors describe a range of specific innovations in program development that result when research on resilience becomes the basis of interventions.***

Currently, two diametrically opposed paradigms for working with at-risk youth (Jacobs, 1995) are in use. One is deficit- or pathology-based: It centres on flaws, a control mentality, labels, and preoccupation with what youth cannot accomplish. The other is a strength-based model. Users of this model look for potential and ways to develop resilience in youth. Unfortunately, a lot of research has been devoted to anxiety, depression, aggression, and

other pathology-driven issues, but little has been written about the psychology of wellbeing, overcoming, and resilience. A few individuals have studied the pathology model and shown it to be unsuccessful in working with youth (Wasmund, 1988; Wood, 1995). This has created a shift to strength-based interventions that emphasize developmental growth and youth empowerment.

In many educational or treatment settings, a revolutionary knowledge base of resiliency is being employed. The concept at its simplest involves discovering the factors that help a large number of high-risk youth to succeed rather than fail. For example, Werner and Smith's (1992) research is changing the way youth are perceived in a positive manner. Central to their work is the discovery that the most powerful "protective" factor is the presence of a caring, supportive relationship. Even highly reactive children can acquire resilience if they have such a relationship. The literature on resiliency is fascinating and encouraging. Can resiliency be taught, learned, or enhanced? Is it possible to design a program that fosters resiliency with at risk youth? Werner and Smith followed children

over many years and identified several resiliency variables. John Seita, in his book *In Whose Best Interest* (1996), and Brown, in his book *The Other Side of Delinquency* (1983), described their personal experiences and shared critical components of resiliency. As they both demonstrated, the questions for childcare providers are:

- What can we do to identify the resiliency factors in young people and enhance and enrich them?
- What can we do to help young people develop the protective factors of resiliency?

## **Resiliency and the Circle of Courage**

The research and literature on resiliency (Brown, 1983; Seita, Mitchell, & Tobin, 1996; Werner & Smith, 1992; Wolin & Wolin, 1993) and on the Circle of Courage (Brendtro, Brokenleg, & Van Bockern, 1990) do not merely overlap; they are completely integrated. In both cases, the goal is to develop greatness in our young people. This philosophy of care does fly, however, in the face of current theory in our society regarding at-risk children. Many adults seem to be advocating for removing such youth

from the mainstream of life. The tone of a lot of interventions currently in use with young people continues to be one of punitive retribution. The clearest observation seems to be that not only are these interventions unsuccessful with our young people, but they have never been successful. It appears we are taking the tack that if we overstructure these youth, suspend them from the mainstream, and dispense punitive consequences, behaviour will change. When it becomes apparent that these interventions are not working,

we institute even more structure, suspensions, and punitive consequences. It therefore should be of little surprise to us when this cycle does not work.

#### **Concern for Inclusion**

It appears that the most prominent feature in resilient individuals is their ability to maintain hope. Resilient individuals are able to see the bigger picture and the potential for a brighter future. It is incumbent on youth-care workers to find ways to develop hopefulness in our hopeless young people and to

bring them back into society.

There are many similarities between the literature on resiliency and the Circle of Courage. Seita et al. (1996) wrote about four basic elements: connectedness to adults, continuity or continuous belonging, dignity, and opportunity.

Bernard (1997) spoke about social competence, problem solving skills, autonomy, sense of purpose, and hope for a bright future. Each of these could be placed in the Circle of Courage, which encompasses Belonging, Mastery, Independence and Generosity.

Werner and Smith (1992) identified protective factors that are present in resilient individuals. These factors include a successful school experience, developing reading skills, associations with some adults outside the family, responsibility within the family that includes purposeful work, and hobbies and interests that lead to positive involvement with adults. Other protective factors included developing spiritual or religious beliefs, having a sense of humour, and having a sense of hope about the future.



***The NACCW is often asked for a definition of Child and Youth Care Work. There are of course a number of definitions which we have published from time to time. Here is another to think about. We think it is compact and complex and wonder if it could be "translated" into more accessible English? Any offers?***

#### **DEFINITION OF CHILD AND YOUTH CARE WORKER**

The professional child and youth care worker works with the psychological, social, cultural, spiritual, and biological wants and needs of young people and their families, both normal and with special needs, within the context of the family, the community, and the life span focussing on the developmental-ecological perspective. The work takes place inside and outside residential settings and centres on the young person and utilizes skills and relationships which actualize the process of development and change together with the person and her or his immediate environment. It captures the root of "caring" as an underlying factor and force vital in emotional growth, rehabilitation, social competence, and treatment.

*International Child and Youth Care Consortium*

#### **Building a Strength-Based Model of Care**

The basic foundation for a strength-based psycho-educational model of care is the belief that all children have strengths, albeit sometimes hidden ones. We adults need to help children identify, cultivate, and celebrate those strengths. In addition, children often lack the necessary relational and social skills for success in life. A strong social skills curriculum can teach relational and social skills to children just as we might teach table manners. Thus, our model



would include identifying strengths, teaching skills, practicing skills, celebrating success, and being of service to others. The following list of recommendations will help adults working with at-risk children to identify protective factors in those children and to build on those factors.

**1.** Develop as part of your intake assessment a process by which the protective factors of resiliency can be assessed. This information should be provided by the family and the child and also taken from school records. Although problems should be included, they should not be the central issue. Families should be helped to understand that the focus will be on strengths and protective factors. Staff members will work in cooperation with the youth and his or her family to establish goals and objectives to overcome any identified problems.

**2.** Develop a strong welcoming tradition in your program. This should include a formalized method of bringing children into your community. Design the welcoming program with input provided by your current students. Include staff members who will be caring for the new student and a peer who can act as a buddy. Use the buddy to orient the new student and ease his or her adjustment into the program.

**3.** Develop a language of health and strength with your staff. Consistently move away from pathology language and its model. Positive language used with youth and about youth can increase the effectiveness of strengthbased programs. Models of care that are pathology based use negative labels. They drown in "D" words such as disturbed,

disordered, deprived, deviant, disadvantaged, disruptive, disobedient and dysfunctional. Instead, use words such as resourceful, resilient, creative, clever, tenacious, energetic, determined, independent and imaginative.

**4.** Develop a strong social skills curriculum that is totally integrated into your other program components. The curriculum should be reinforced and should permeate the school, unit, recreation, activities and religious education. Such a curriculum involves teaching a defined set of pro-social skills and allowing students opportunities to practice these skills in real-life situations. The central goal is to impart a core set of values. Further, Wilner et al. (1977) validated the idea that Preferred social behaviours can be taught and their use will have a positive impact on youth behaviour and attitudes. Skills can be taught formally and informally. One effective method is the EQUIP Program (Gibbs, Potter, & Goldstein, 1995). In this program, skills are taught in a group setting but must be practised and reinforced in the youth's total environment.

**5.** Develop a strong volunteer program. Research has indicated that many of the mentors identified by resilient children were volunteers. A strong volunteer program provides a variety of activities from which children may choose to further develop strengths and interests, allowing the children to gravitate toward activities in which they have an interest. More importantly, it allows children to be involved with adults who share an interest, which helps to increase feelings of self-worth.

**6.** The focus of your recreation

program should be ensuring that each child has at least one hobby or interest that is developed during his or her stay. Use your children's input in designing the program. Develop clubs or groups that encourage participation and celebrate effort, not just successes. Develop celebration rituals.

**7.** Create a strong reading program where tutorial practice is used and reading accomplishment is recognized. The focus should be on developing the desire to read and reading for fun, allowing the children to choose books and topics that interest them.

**8.** Make sure that the spiritual component permeates every aspect of the program and does not end up being a stand-alone component. This should give a continual message of hope, grace, and forgiveness.

**9.** Develop a positive school environment that empowers and includes young people (Curwin & Mendler, 1988). The school program should focus on teaching skills for success in schools and in life. At-risk youth need to see the school as forming an alliance with them. Conflict resolution, peer mediation, and violence prevention should all be used. Teachers and students should develop a code of conduct, a sense of community, and school pride.

**10.** Open your program completely to your families. Even in times where the reuniting of a family may not be appropriate, it is significant and important that the nuclear and extended families be involved with their children while in your care and be comfortable on your campus. Encourage nontraditional forms of family work. Focus on part-



nership. Involve parents in meals, student recognition, recreation, discipline, counselling, and therapy.

**11.** Be sure to develop inventive and creative ways to empower your children. Examples are development of a student council, involvement in staffing and team meetings, peer mentoring, and peer mediation. Use positive incident reports to reinforce behaviours and values such as leadership and empathy.

**12.** Give your children plenty of opportunity to serve others, both within your agency and in the community. Doing volunteer work and providing guidance for younger residents are good examples. Involve youth in service work with the elderly, younger children, animals, and the environment. Young people have a natural gift of generosity.

**13.** Discipline should include natural and logical consequences that have a teaching component so that children learn the skills that will help them handle the situation better when it occurs again. Discipline should always be done with dignity and respect (Curwin & Mendler, 1988).

**14.** Develop sagas, traditions, and ceremonies to celebrate success in your program. A sense of tradition that focuses on values should be celebrated. Use holidays, cultural events, and special occasions to enhance the community.

**15.** Develop a strong commitment to celebrating cultural differences. Find ways to recognize heroes from all cultures. Allow children to express their cultural differences. Teach youth that differences are to be celebrated rather than feared.

### Conclusion

The movement away from negative, pathology-based programs is exciting but often difficult. Until recently, most literature addressed only deficits and weaknesses. Goldstein (1991) noted that much of the psychological literature addresses only the negative (e.g., disease, crime, psychopathology, aggression), and how it may be corrected. Gradually, the focus is being turned away from a futile obsession with problem behaviours to an alternative approach, one proven by research to be far more effective (Gold & Osgood, 1992; Wasmund, 1988).

Simply put, if traditional forms of childcare worked, these children would not be in our care. Most programs have level systems, consequences, group therapy, individual therapy, family therapy, time-outs, loss of privileges, and so forth. Programs should be full of redemption, grace, and opportunities for new life. They should be based on the goodness inherent in each child and the skills and abilities of each child. There is nothing "magical" about such a program: It must be understood, taught to staff, and evaluated by each and every staff member. We staff members must hold ourselves to a higher standard, challenge ourselves to find new and creative ways to engage young people who are disengaged, and provide opportunities for young people to be successful.

If we are to expect greatness from our children, we must provide them with the necessary tools and support to be great. The authors of this article have offered some specific steps for developing resiliency in childcare programs. More importantly, we

hoped that we challenged readers to consider the ways that we view, think about, and talk about children. □

**Bobby Gilliam is the vice president for childcare at the Methodist Children's Home in Waco, Texas. He is a diplomat in clinical social work, a licensed master social worker, and an advanced clinical practitioner in the state of Texas. He has spent 24 years working with at-risk children. Don Scott is the administrator of the Methodist Children's Home Boys Ranch. He has been employed with the Methodist Children's Home for the last 15 years and has spent 20 years working with at-risk children. The first author may be contacted at: Methodist Children's Home, 1111 Herring Avenue, Waco, TX 76708.**

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### Situation Wanted

I am seeking a position in the Child and Youth Care field. I am currently busy with the BQCC and have completed Modules 1 and 3. At present I am doing volunteer work at St Vincent Children's Home in Kwazulu Natal.

Please contact Mary Zungu on tel (031) 704-1150

**Introduction**

The Interim Policy on Young People at Risk proposes that “the approach to young people in trouble with the law should include resolution of conflict, family and community involvement in decision making, diversion and community-based interventions.” Family Group Conferences (FGCs) provide the framework for all the above to occur. FGCs have been successfully used in New Zealand since 1989. However, they had not been tested in South Africa, so the IMC decided to run a pilot project to see if they could be used as an additional diversion option for children in trouble with the law.

# Family Group Conferencing

**The Pilot Programme on Family Group Conferencing of the Interministerial Committee on Young People at Risk. Compiled by Nigel Branken — Project Manager**



**Advantages of Family Group Conferences**

- FGCs aim at making the young offender accountable for the wrong they have done to the victim and the community. With the victim present at the FGC, the offender has the opportunity

to realise the impact of the crime on the victim. It also gives his/her family a chance to make decisions about the future by helping to formulate the plan. By apologising and fulfilling the agreed plan, the offender can experience a sense of making the wrong

right.

- If the offender adheres to all the details of the plan all charges will be dropped. And by not getting a criminal record, he or she is able to be re-integrated into the community without being stigmatised as a criminal for life.
- FGCs can also be seen as a forum where family members can together learn and practice new problem-solving skills.
- FGCs give the victim a chance to say how the crime has affected them, emotionally and physically. They also have the opportunity to receive some form of compensation, either in cash, return of stolen goods or some form of labour.
- Victims also receive new insight into why crimes are committed and usually this increases their understanding of where the offender is



coming from.

- It is also hoped that FGCs would reduce the incidence of re-offending by instilling in the young offender an understanding of the consequences of his crime on the victim and the community, and by accepting moral responsibility for them. The FGC process really supports this – something that is often lacking in the normal court process.

Reporting on the pilot project it was noted that most victims made valuable inputs and contributions to the plans and not one victim disagreed with a plan. All the victims felt that it was a more appropriate way of dealing with young offenders. The police were also present at all the FGCs and in many instances spoke to the offender about the implications of the crime. They also made valuable contributions to the plans in terms of community service. Negotiating around the plans, it was felt, was the most difficult part of the facilitation. Plans must meet the following criteria:

- putting the wrong right to the victim
- putting the wrong right to the community
- putting the wrong right to the offender's family
- preventing re-offending

This typically means:

- an apology, verbal or written
- some kind of compensation for the victim (eg. Payment of medical costs if victim was assaulted)
- some kind of community service (e.g. Working at the local SPCA, old age home or clinic).

## Comparing Retributive and Restorative Justice

### Retributive Justice

Crime violates the state and its laws.

Justice focuses on establishing guilt... so that doses of pain can be measured out.

Justice is sought through conflict between adversaries... in which the offended is pitted against the state.

Rules and intentions outweigh outcomes; one side wins and the other loses.

### The problem

... is defined narrowly, abstractly and in a legal framework.

Only legal variables relevant.

The state as victim.

### Actors

State (active) and offender (passive).

Adversarial, authoritarian, technical, impersonal.

Focus: guilt, blame.

"Neutralising strategies" encouraged: offender responsible for self.

### Solution

Pain, suffering.

Harm by offender balanced by hard to victim.

Oriented to past.

### Restorative Justice

Crime violates people and relationships.

Justice aims to identify needs and obligations... so that things can be made right insofar as possible.

Justice encourages dialogue, mutual agreement and an exchange of information ... which gives victims and offenders central roles.

Judged by the extent to which responsibilities are assumed, needs are met and healing of individuals and relationships is encouraged.

### The problem

... is defined rationally as a violation of people.

The overall context is relevant.

People as victims.

### Actors

Victim and offender primary, along with state and community.

Participatory, maximising information, dialogue and mutual agreement.

Focus: needs and obligations.

Empathy and responsibility encouraged.

### Solution

Making things right by identifying needs and obligations; healing, problem-solving.

Harm by offender balanced by making things right.

Oriented to future.

Other aspects are usually included by the family such as a curfew and non-association with certain friends. It is interesting to note that all families were able to agree and draw up a plan – even in seemingly dysfunctional families – although there have been some problems in carrying out these plans. Some of the plans they came up with proved to be extremely creative eg. making a sculpture for the victim, taking a

younger brother to creche every morning, making anti-crime posters or writing anti-crime articles for publication, washing the victim's car, making a "safety passport" for an assault victim, handing out church leaflets, etc. Most lasted a maximum of three months. The question of FGCs being a "soft option" comes up often and this needs to be looked at more closely. Looking at each plan one can see the of-



## CASE STUDY 1

### Stealing clothes

Lesego, a 16-year-old girl from Stanza Bopape, east of Pretoria, went to Sales House with a friend. She saw some clothes which she really liked but because her family was very poor, she couldn't afford them. So she decided to take a chance and steal them. Unfortunately she got stopped at the door and her bag was searched.

Lesego was taken to security and charged with shoplifting. A prosecutor from the Pretoria magistrate's court referred the case for Family Group Conferencing. The meeting was held at Sales House head office in Pretoria. Representing the victim was the PRO of Sales House, while Lesego was supported by her uncle, a niece, her brother and his wife.

The victim was asked what he wanted to say to the offender and explained how shoplifting affects Sales House.

The offender, Lesego, then explained that she had taken the clothes as she felt she needed them but didn't have the money. However, she had not thought of the consequences of taking them. Everyone cried when she said sorry to her family for bringing shame on them as she didn't realise how her crime had affected them. The family then discussed a plan for Lesego to stick to and it was agreed that she would give a written apology to Sales House, as well as make a sculpture of herself which she would present to them. Her brother, who is a sculptor by trade, came up with this idea as he thought it would keep her busy and possibly provide a source of income for the future. It was also agreed that she would do community service at a local clinic and sell sweets at school to earn pocket money for all her extra needs. Lesego's

family circumstances were addressed by referring the matter to Child Welfare.

It was also agreed that she'd move from her uncle's house to her brother where his wife could keep more of an eye on Lesego. It was felt that this FGC was extremely effective for several reasons: firstly, the family was very involved in coming up with a creative plan for Lesego; secondly, the victim also participated actively in the FGC, even coming up with suggestions for the plan; thirdly, it gave Lesego a greater understanding of the consequences of her crime on both her family and the victim – hopefully preventing her from re-offending; and fourthly, the victim was able to gain a greater understanding of why the crime was committed. The victim told the FGC facilitator he was glad he could be part of the FGC process as he had never seen shoplifters in that way before. "It gave me more insight and understanding into the background of the young person and what drove her to steal."

□

## CASE STUDY 2

### Stab wound

Christopher and Vincent were 14-year olds who both came from Lotus Gardens, attended the same school and lived near to each other. One day they had an argument at school and later Christopher attacked Vincent in the street. Christopher claimed Vincent provoked him by picking up a brick and he then stabbed him in self defence. Vincent was rushed to the nearby hospital's ICU with a punctured lung and a stab wound. The knife had missed his heart by millimetres.

A FGC was held with the mothers

of both boys present. Vincent's mother was still traumatised by the incident and initially demanded R 8 000 from Christopher to cover medical expenses.

However, a real breakthrough took place when Christopher's mother showed sympathy for what Vincent's mother had gone through, accepting that her son was at fault.

The second meaningful moment was when Vincent asked Christopher to say sorry. Christopher then got up, shook Vincent's hand and apologised.

During the working out of the plan, Christopher and his mother sat for some time working on a letter of apology which was later presented to Vincent. It was also agreed that Christopher would only pay back R1 000 of Vincent's medical costs, which he would earn by helping his mother sell vegetables.

The policeman present got involved in formulating the plan by suggesting that he take Christopher to court and to prison to see what they were like. Vincent said he would also like to come with them. The policeman also told Christopher what sort of punishment he would normally have got in court for assault with intent to cause grievous bodily harm and told him what prison was like.

Another creative part of the plan was that both boys were to spend time together at the library every Wednesday and make anti-crime posters – one of which would go to the police station and the other to the school principal.

In the end, the FGC was successful as there was real reconciliation between the offender and the victim, as well as between their two families.

fender is actively trying to make the wrong right. Whether these plans can be seen as "soft options" is a matter of judgment. Sometimes getting up at 5 am to take a young brother to creche involves more effort and sacrifice than being given a suspended sentence or a fine. One needs also to ask how much is achieved when the young person is incarcerated or institutionalised.

The restorative justice paradigm focuses on "consequences" rather than "punishment". "No punishment" does not mean "no consequences". Consequences are usually closely related to the offender's particular circumstances and may sometimes even be more severe than the punishment that would be meted out.

An important finding at the conclusion of the project was the limited costs of a family group conference (a one-off cost of



about R1 500) as against R2 000 to R3 000 per month if the youth passes into the traditional youth justice system.

Many readers will have had similar experiences in working with a "restorative justice" perspective in everyday child and youth care practice. Perhaps you have not thought of what you do in these terms to "restore the balance" after a young person has behaved challengingly. Perhaps you have

done what comes naturally by bringing victim and offender together and processing the feelings between the two, coming up with a final solution where the offender does something to make up for the offence. Share the story with other readers and help to develop a shared sense of how we apply this principle to practice situations as we go about transforming our child and youth care system. □

# NACCW Forum



Alfred Harris, Erna Bowers, Mark Taylor and Nomsa Mondoyi in a working group at the NACCW Executive Forum



The National Executive Committee: Merle Allsopp, Marie Waspe, Ashley Theron, Kathy Scott, Roger Pitt, Himla Makhan, Elwin Galant and Nomsa Mondoyi



“ When I was young and free and my imagination had  
no limits, I dreamed of changing the world.

As I grew older and wiser,  
I discovered the world would not change,  
so I shortened my sights somewhat  
and decided to change only my country.

But it too seemed immovable.

As I grew into my twilight years,  
in one last desperate attempt,  
I settled for changing only my family,  
those closest to me, but alas,  
they would have none of it

And now as I lie on my deathbed  
I suddenly realise:

if I had only changed my self first,

then by example I might have changed my family.

From their inspiration and encouragement,

I would then have been able to better my country and, who knows,  
I may have even changed the world.”

