

Quarter 1 2015
Volume 33 No 1 ISSN 0258-8927

Child & Youth Care Work

A Journal for Those Who Work with Orphaned, Vulnerable and At-risk
Children and Youth and their Families

Child and Youth Care is Not Rocket Science:
It's FAR More Complex Than That
Prof James Anglin

Report on the First NACCW Biennial
Conference - Cape Town 1977
Brian Gannon

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CHILD CARE WORKERS



The NACCW Turns 40! Celebrate: Development, Advocacy, Professionalism!

By Merle Allsopp

This year the NACCW turns 40 years old! What a 'moment' in the history of the South African child and youth care world it is! The statutory regulation of child and youth care workers begins in earnest this year; we host the NACCW 20th Biennial Conference in Cape Town; and the Isibindi scale-up is set to reach a target of adding over 6 000 new child and youth care workers to our national count. As we celebrate the 40th year of the existence of the Association, we see some of our key collective advocacy points bearing fruit. These include child and youth care workers being recognized as professionals – and child and youth care workers being deployed in almost every district in the country in service of children living in poverty and affected by HIV/AIDS.

'Moments' like this offer themselves as milestones – places to stop, see where we are, reflect on where we have come from, and prepare ourselves for the journey ahead.

Stopping helps us to see what we have achieved. At this moment more child and youth care workers are becoming formally trained at both auxiliary and professional levels than ever before; more child and youth care workers are taking on masters and doctoral study programs;

more child and youth care workers are taking their places in efficient service delivery systems; individual child and youth care workers are committing to the national code of ethics for the profession; and it is becoming the norm to be held professionally accountable for our practice as professionals.

As we look back, we see many of the milestones we have passed – and the faces of all those who have held the baton for a stint of the journey over the past 40 years. There are so many people who come to mind – so many individuals whose contributions have added to getting us to this point. For many of us it feels wonderful to have been a part of this collective action. This is a moment to give thanks for the individual efforts of the many, many people – child and youth care workers, social workers, educators, government officials, and NGO representatives – who have dedicated themselves to this long journey towards ensuring that South African children are services by capacitated, ethical child and youth care workers.

In this issue of Child and Youth Care Work we recognize the contributions of past decades by reprinting writing published by NACCW from ten, twenty, thirty

and, yes, forty years ago! We include the editorial comment by NACCW founder Brian Gannon from the report of the first Biennial Conference – crucially setting the agenda for action and the principle of inclusion and non-discrimination at the birth of the organization in a cruelly divided society. The 1985 article shows the early commitment of the Association to the matter of poverty and children; the 1995 article by then child and youth care worker Mark Tomlinson demonstrates the focus on professionalizing the field held dear over twenty years ago. Longtime supporter of South African child and youth care, Thom Garfat's reflections of the NACCW Biennial Conference of a decade ago shows the importance of connection – and the importance of us being together.

These themes of maintaining a serious agenda for action; of commitment to children's rights and addressing poverty; and of a belief in the importance of all contributors and the power of collective action have been hallmarks of the Association through the decades – and commitment to these principles has brought us to this moment. ■

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ISSN 0258-8927 is a non-commercial and private subscription journal, formerly published in Volumes 1 – 13 (1983 to 1995) as *The Child Care Worker*. Copyright © The National Association of Child Care Workers. EDITORIAL: PO Box 36407, Glosderry 7702 South Africa. e-mail: headoffice@naccw.org.za Telephone: (021) 762-6076 Fax: (021) 762-5352. CHILD & YOUTH CARE WORK is published bi-monthly. Copy deadline for all material is the 10th of each month. Subscriptions: Individual Membership of NACCW is R50.00 p.a. which includes a free copy of the journal. Non-members, agency or library journal subscriptions: R50.00 p.a. post free. Commercial advertising, R312 per page pro rata. Situations Vacant/Wanted advertisements for child and youth care posts are free to Corporate and Individual Members. All enquiries, articles, letters and new subscriptions may be sent to the above address. EDITORIAL BOARD: Merle Allsopp BA, HDE, NHCRC; Annette Cockburn LTCL, Dip. Ad. Ed. (UCT), Pumla Mncayi BA (SW), Alfred Harris (N.Dip: Child and Youth Development), Jacqui Gallinetti BA, LL.M (UCT), Adv. Ann Skelton, Sandra Oosthuizen (N.Dip Child and Youth Development),

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