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# Child and Youth Care

A Journal for Those Who Work With Children and Youth at Risk and Their Families

Three Quotes  
Urie Brofenbrenner

When Death Becomes  
Part of Life...  
Mandy Goble

Child Participation:  
In Whose Interest?  
André Viviers



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# Celebrating

By Sandra Oosthuizen

October is the Holy month of Ramadaan when many colleagues, children, youth and families in South Africa and around the world fast and pray. Next month Eid and Diwali will be celebrated. It also is South Africa's National Welfare Month. Last month there was Heritage Day to celebrate. December is around the corner with more days to celebrate - on the 16th, then Christmas, and the big celebration of the New Year. Of course, on a personal level, birthdays are for most, especially the young people we work with, very significant events to celebrate! And the life of a loved one who has died can also be celebrated amidst the sadness of their passing.

What do all these celebrations mean to the children, youth and families we work with? How do child and youth care workers make these days significant for troubled children, youth and families? In this issue two child and youth care workers tell us what they did to add significance to Heritage Day and Welfare Month for the children and youth in their care.

In this issue we also celebrate the life and contribution of the late Urie Bronfenbrenner, from whom the child and youth care field has learned so much, as one of the "founding fathers" of child and youth care work. We reflect on his life of 88 years after his death on 25 September this year.

Another article by Mandy Goble reflects on the experience of death as a constant presence within the

daily functioning of a residential care program. What is there to celebrate in this? Perhaps the challenge lies in how we as child and youth care workers assist colleagues, vulnerable children, youth and families to find and focus on the contributions (however seemingly small) made by the loved ones who have died? It is essential to take the time to think about the life of the person whose death is mourned - to find those significant moments of their life - to celebrate them, to share them and allow them to linger with us long after the funeral.

The involvement of children, youth and families in planning and participating in these celebrations is critical, but not always easy. Andre Viviers examines the matter of child participation in this issue, bringing new points to consider even to those of us who really believe in the concept! When children, youth and families participate in anything which affects their lives, and are set up to succeed, they have the success to celebrate and are likely to own processes and take responsibility for that which did not quite work out.

Celebrating "big" events is good. But celebrating the small, seemingly insignificant moments in the lives of the child, youth or family we work with is essential! These people often have so little to celebrate - and so little to celebrate with. Celebrating helps, as Dr. Nicholas Hobbs says, "to know some joy" in everyday moments, when joy is not abundant. ●



NACCW

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CHILD CARE WORKERS

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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Mr. Francisco Cornelius, NHCRC, 21 Fortuin Street, Retreat, 7945 Tel: 021 715 2631; Cell: 083 548 7543

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#### Head Office:

P.O. Box 36407, Glosderry, 7702,  
Office No. 9, 220 Ottery Road, Ottery, 7800  
Tel: 021 762 6076, Fax: 021 762 5352  
headoffice@naccw.org.za

#### KwaZulu Natal:

P.O. Box 47368, Greyville, 4023  
92 Windermere Road, Durban, 4001  
Tel: 031 312 9484, Fax: 031 312 9489  
durban@naccw.org.za

#### Gauteng:

P.O. Box 28270, Kensington, 2100  
Office 301 Darras Centre, Cnr Kitchener & Juno Roads,  
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Tel: 011 624 1424, Fax: 011 624 1425  
naccwjb@iafrica.com

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Tel: 041 585 8577 Fax: 041 586 4829  
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Southern Cape  
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Northern Cape  
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North Eastern Cape  
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Tel: 047 568 0049 Cell: 082 749 2928

Limpopo  
Bridget Ramaite  
Tel: 083 5622300

NPO No: 022-979  
Web site: [www.naccw.org.za](http://www.naccw.org.za)  
e-mail: [headoffice@naccw.org.za](mailto:headoffice@naccw.org.za)

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**EDITORIAL:** PO Box 36407, Glosderry 7702 South Africa. e-mail: [headoffice@naccw.org.za](mailto:headoffice@naccw.org.za) Telephone: (021)762-6076 Fax:(021) 762-5352. CHILD & YOUTH CARE is published on the 25th of each month except December. 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: R50.00p.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.

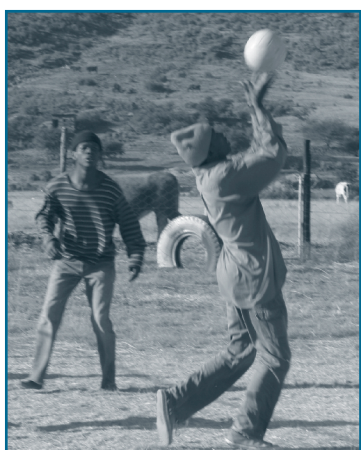
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