



**YOUTH ASSETS:
BUILDING BLOCKS
FOR SUCCESS**

**READING MY
OWN FILE**

**HENRY MAIER
OBSERVES GOOD
PRACTICE**

**Child
&
Youth Care**

**A JOURNAL FOR ALL WHO WORK WITH
TROUBLED CHILDREN AND YOUTH AT RISK**

ISSN 0258-8927 VOL 14 NO 6 JUNE 1996

NACCW

National Executive Committee

Chairman: Ashley Theron
BA (SW), BA (Hons), NHCRC, MICC. Private Bag X2068 Mmbatho 8681. Phone (0140) 89-9277. Fax 84-2727

Treasurer: Ernie Nightingale NHCRC, Dip. IAC (Bus. Admin), Dip. Pers. Man., AICB, AICC. P.O. Box 28119, Malvern 4055. Phone: 031-44-6555. Fax: 44-6564

Members: Michael Gaffley (W. Cape), Corrie Theron (Border), Garth Ownhouse (Eastern Province), Irene Cowley (Natal), Marie Waspe (Transvaal)

Professional Staff

Director: Lesley du Toit BA (Soc. Sc), Hons BA (SW), Hons BA, MS(CCA), MICC. P.O. Box 28323, Malvern 4055. Telephone: 031-463-1033. Fax: (031) 44-1106. naccwdb@iafrica.com

Finance and Accounts: Roger Pitt Dip. Theol., MICC. P.O. Box 482, King Williams Town 5600. Tel (0433) 25595. Fax 22252. naccwkw@iafrica.com

Publications: Brian Gannon BA (Hons), MA, AICC. P.O. Box 23199 Claremont 7735. Tel/Fax: 021-788-3610. e-mail: pretext@iafrica.com

Liaison: Sibongile Manyathi B.Soc.Sc. (Hons), P.O. Box 28323, Malvern 4055. Tel. 031-463-1033. naccwdb@iafrica.com

Training. Research: Merle Allsopp BA, HDE, NHCRC. 47 Kromboom Rd, Rondebosch East 7764. Tel: (021) 696-4247. Fax: 697-4123. e-mail: naccwct@iafrica.com

Youth Project: Jacqui Winfield B.Soc.Sc., NHCRC., P.O. Box 28323, Malvern 4055. Tel. 463-1033.

Regional Secretaries

Transvaal: Gail Schultz, 26 Grant Ave, Norwood 2192. Tel. 011-728-4277.

KwaZulu/Natal: Elizabeth King, St Philomena's Home. Telephone 031-28-4187

Border: Contact Linda de Villiers, P.O. Box 482, King Williams Town 5600.

Telephone: 0433-21932

Western Cape: Dave Mac-

Namara, 3 Waterloo Rd, Wynberg 7800. Tel 633-1892

Eastern Cape: Cecil Wood,

21 Kingfisher St, Cotswold 6045. Tel (041) 31-1760

Contacts in other areas

Suid-Kaap: Elwin Gallant, Box 3591, George Industria 6536

Namaqualand: Father Anthony Cloete, RC Sending Kinderhuis, Kamieskroon 8241. (0257) 608

Kimberley: Derek Swartz, Private Bag X5005, Kimberley 8300. Tel. (0531) 73-2321

Fund Raising Organisation

08 800448 000 2

Guest Editorial

Caring for caregivers: Being part of the transformation of child and youth care

There is a profound spirituality in work with children and youth who are at risk in society.

We are all on a journey of becoming, yet nowhere is this as obvious as when the necessary skills of adulthood are being learnt. Enormous numbers of children and youth are in care in state institutions and they should be able to expect all the help they need to become the best adults they can possibly be. Sadly this is not the case.

The serious disarray in the services rendered to children in South Africa was brought into sharp focus last May when, without appropriate consultation, awaiting-trial children and youth were summarily released from prisons. They were transferred to Places of Safety from where, because of the overcrowding and poor staffing, many of them absconded.

Need for training

What is now perceived as a national crisis is being addressed at top level by an Inter-Ministerial Committee comprising nine Ministries. One of the urgent problems which emerged is the lack of training for staff in state institutions. A project to address this was started by the National Association of Child Care Workers (NACCW) and funded by the RDP. The intention was to provide basic training to care workers in as many state institutions as possible where youth could be considered to be at risk. I was approached to join the team of national trainers for a year. A move back into professional child care training has been an obvious extension of my role as a priest in the secular world. It has meant I have had to travel a lot. Sometimes I have visited communities I would probably never otherwise have seen. The first time I went to a children's welfare centre in Soshanguwe, north of Pretoria, two teenage girls were assigned to "look after me". To my dismay I discovered this meant literally waiting on me hand and foot, drawing my bath water, taking my empty cup

from my hand to wash it and even sleeping on the floor next to my bed to make sure no harm came to me. This was an encounter at a cultural interface that I have not experienced before. I have had to learn about hospitality in cultures other than my own and I think I have emerged with a better understanding of my own culture. I find myself valuing my own childhood experience of the extended family in which I grew up, and being able to use that experience to connect with people in communities where the flood to the urban areas has eroded the values and the life-style which undergird African society.

Shared experiences

The training has concentrated on self-development as well as skills training such as life-skills, behaviour management, managing sexual abuse or working with HIV-positive people. The classes are interactive and when the care workers share their experiences I am humbled. Usually the institutions are either very overcrowded or there are simply not enough adults for the number of children or youth. Yet the care workers talk about their charges with such compassion — of children displaced by violence, children raped and abused by family members, infants abandoned by desperate HIV-positive mothers. I have seen men weep in humiliation as they tell of the ambushed and badly assaulted youth in Detention Centres. In all of this, there is the common cry — no-one has any idea about the work we do, we are unappreciated, kept ignorant and shut out of professional teams. Yet we bear the brunt of the residential work.

Peeling off the labels

When I hear them speak, I fear for the great heart of Africa, for *ubuntu*. The heart is at risk because the temptation to objectify the children and youth is great. Convenient labels like "in need", "delinquent", "sexually abused" or even "criminalised youth" must be

peeled off and replaced by personal commitment in programmes based on knowledge about the work and with skills to deal with these youngsters in a constructive way. When children and youth remain objects, then *ubuntu* is vulnerable. We are reminded week by week at the Mass that Jesus said "you shall love your neighbour as yourself". If these children and youth are negatively labelled by the very institutions which should be offering them a better deal in life, and if the institutions fail to give them what they need in order to cope with their lives in society, what can we expect as their neighbours? Certainly their plight prevents them from feeling good about themselves. Punishment is not going to fix the problem, skilled treatment will.

Please pray for the work — for the programme to train staff, for the care workers as they put new skills into practice, and also for all children and youth who are wards of the state. ■



Revd Vivien Harber is a non-stipendiary priest at the St George's Anglican Cathedral in Cape Town. This piece was published in the June 1996 issue of *Gateway*, the cathedral's magazine. Her work as priest and experience as professional child and youth care worker is being exercised in a new role as a national trainer to Project Up-Grade, a programme to provide basic training to state personnel in the field of child care. She is one of about twenty experienced child and youth care workers who have spent thousands of hours over the past year training on-line care workers and consulting with the leadership in places of safety and detention, schools of industries and reform schools around South Africa.

Child & Youth Care

A JOURNAL FOR THOSE WHO WORK WITH TROUBLED CHILDREN AND YOUTH AT RISK

VOLUME 14 NUMBER 6 JUNE 1996

GUEST EDITORIAL: VIVIEN HARBER ON CARE FOR CAREGIVERS	2
PEOPLE: ELWIN GALLANT OF THE SOUTHERN CAPE REGION	3
40 ASSETS TO STRENGTHEN OUR YOUTH AND COMMUNITIES	4
SEVENTEEN HIDDEN YEARS: READING MY OWN FILE	7
AN IMPRESSIVE PROGRESS REPORT FROM THE IMC	8
CULTURE AND CHILD CARE PRACTICE: LOCAL IS LEKKER?	10
HENRY MAIER COMES TO VISIT: GENUINE CHILD CARE PRACTICE	11
TEACHING CHILDREN LOVE IN THE MIDDLE OF A WAR	14
WORK WITH FAMILIES: REPORT OF A LOCAL RESEARCH	15
STREET CHILDREN: WORK AND LIVELIHOOD	17
A RUNAWAY SUCCESS IN CAPE TOWN	19
QUESTIONS: LET THE PUNISHMENT FIT THE CRIME?	20

Cover Picture: P. Vercammen



Fédération Internationale des Communautés Éducatives
International Federation of Educative Communities (UNESCO)



Association Internationale des Educateurs de Jeunes Inadaptés
International Association of Workers with Troubled Children



National Association of Child Care Workers
<http://ios2.iafrica.com/naccw>

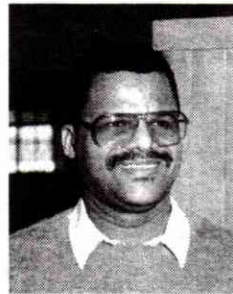
Child & Youth Care ISSN 0258-8927 is a non-commercial and private subscription journal, formerly published in Volumes 1 through 13 (1983 to 1995) as *The Child Care Worker*.
Copyright © 1996 The National Association of Child Care Workers

Editorial: P.O. Box 23199, Claremont 7735, South Africa. e-Mail: pretext@iafrica.com. Telephone/Fax: (021) 788-3610. *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: NACCW Members: Journal and Individual Membership of the Association is R70.00 p.a. Non-members, Agency or Library Subscriptions: R70.00 p.a. post free. Commercial advertisements: R312 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 Editor at the above address.

Editorial Advisory Board: Merle Allsopp BA, HDE, NHCRC; Annette Cockburn LTCL, Dip.Ad.Ed.(UCT); Kathy Mitchell BA; Pumla Mncayi BA (SW); Adv. Anne Skelton. United Kingdom: Peter Harper MSc (Clinical Psychology); United States: Dina Hatchuel BSocSc (SW) (Hons) PSW MSocSc. **Editor:** Brian Gannon

People



Elwin Gallant

Was initially interested in working with youth when he was still in High School where he was involved with Youth groups and Sunday School groups. During his time as a Social Work student he was involved in training youth groups in primary schools. When he first qualified he worked in the Port Elizabeth area of Kirkwood with foster parents and children.

School social work

He remained in Kirkwood for four years and then went on to become a school Social Worker which involved dealing with three schools in the Arcadia area and here, too, he worked with youth groups in primary school leadership training programmes.

He was in this position for three years before taking up the post of Secretary of the Regional Welfare Council. In 1991 he went to Erica Place of Safety as resident Social Worker. His involvement with the NACCW began here when, under the guidance of Kathy Beukes he began training the BQCC.

He was at Erica for two years, and then at the end of 1992 he took up the position of Superintendent of Huis Outenikwa in George.

Southern Region

In 1993 the Southern Cape Region was re-established as a separate NACCW region with Elwin as Chairperson. Training in Supervision was undertaken in that year, and seven trainers underwent the Training for Trainers course. In 1994 the BQCC was started, and the first batch of students graduated last year. Elwin co-ordinated and trained this course. Project Upgrade training is also currently being run in the Region with six institutions involved. The feedback he has had from students is that they found these short courses relevant and encouraging.

Encouraged

Child care workers in the region are very encouraged with the changes taking place in the profession. This year a Child Care Workers' Forum has been started, and all are eager to acquire more skills to do their work properly. Registration of child care workers is picking up now that a number of students have completed the BQCC. Elwin notes that since he started in the field, there have been a number of changes, not least of which is the beginnings of community understanding of the tasks and problems faced by care workers. But he still feels the public has little idea of the child to child care worker ratio. There is definitely more focus on services for children than there was a few years ago and Elwin is most encouraged by the IMC report. Elwin is married and has two children. His wife is also in the Social Work field.



On every continent, whichever the city, communities today are looking for positive ways in which to support and engage with their young people in an increasingly worrying world. Search Institute at the University of Minnesota has been studying developmental assets among Minneapolis youth ...

A Call to Action to Strengthen our Community for Youth

Like most cities, like our cities, Minneapolis is facing difficult times. While economics, health care, and crime grab the headlines, the most profound crisis facing the city involves the welfare and future of our children and adolescents. Simply put, we are failing to ensure that all young people grow safely and successfully into adulthood. No one denies that young people in our cities face major challenges in growing up. But what do we do about it?

Identifying assets

This study of more than 5,000 students in Minneapolis suggests a new, hopeful direction. It calls for everyone — parents, teachers, city leaders, youth workers, businesses, neighbours, religious leaders, and others — to begin working together to provide young people with the “developmental assets” they need to thrive and be successful in life. Developmental assets are building blocks that all children and adolescents need to grow up competent, caring, and healthy. When present, these assets protect young people from risk-taking behaviours and nurture positive behaviours that are valued by society. Search Institute has identified and measured 40 of these assets

in a survey of 7th, 8th, 10th and 11th grade students in the city's public schools. The study expands and builds on previous Search Institute surveys of more than 250,000 youth in 450 communities across the country. This report highlights key findings from this study, and gives practical ways in which everyone — individually and corporately can take positive action on behalf of young people.

Framework

What do young people need to navigate successfully through childhood and adolescence? Search Institute's framework of developmental assets identifies a set of 40 of these building blocks that are keys to young people's healthy development and well-being. The asset framework puts together the factors that either protect youth against choices which compromise health or promote their healthy development. The assets are grouped into two major types:

External assets are positive developmental experiences that surround youth with support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, and opportunities for structured time use. These assets should be provided by each of many socialising systems in a community.

Internal assets involve the strengths, commitments, and values within young people that guide their choices, priorities, and decisions. They are grouped into categories of educational commitment, values, social competencies, and positive identity. The 40 assets are factors that most people recognise as important for healthy development. However, while each individual asset must be understood and is important, the most powerful message of developmental assets comes in *seeing them all together as a framework* for healthy development.

These assets are cumulative or additive; the more, the better. As the number of assets increases, so does a child's well-being and vitality.

And it is likely that the assets are powerful in shaping the kinds of adults that young people become. Yet our society seems to have forgotten how to provide these things — or how to nurture them in young people.

The challenge of one city

On average, Minneapolis youth experience only 18.3 of the 40 assets. Twenty-six of the 40 assets are experienced by fewer than half of the Minneapolis students studied.