



VOLUNTOURS

Sizanane Newsletter

Xhosa/Zulu phrase meaning "helping each other (pl)"

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Saved by Shelagh's Reflex(ology)

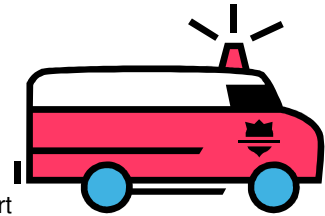
Ever wondered if your complementary health care skills could benefit a rural community? Shelagh from the UK showed us that Reflexology is not only beneficial to community members but also that complementary therapies are welcomed with enthusiasm. Shelagh treated a few key people with reflexology and also held workshops to teach interested people how to use basic reflexology techniques on one another. The enthusiasm with which reflexology was accepted was evident by full workshops held for everyone from the youth to the Gogos (Grandmothers).



Shelagh's energy and enthusiasm wasn't dampened by her fractured toe nor was her ability to hold workshops and walk around hindered by her "moon-boot". It really is heart warming to see how dedicated volunteers are and how much they give of themselves.

I'm glad I had travel insurance

The importance of having adequate travel insurance was highlighted by Shelagh's injury. I'm sure many travelers think "it won't happen to me". Shelagh had injured her foot while crossing a road before she started her volunteer trip with us! We didn't like the look of it so we went to the hospital emergency to have it checked out. Having travel insurance enabled her to consult an orthopedic surgeon at a private hospital and have an operation to stabilize her foot. Without insurance Shelagh probably would have had to cut her trip short and return to the UK for medical treatment. Instead Shelagh was able to get on the overland bus from Cape to Cairo at the end of her volunteering trip!



Becoming part of a community

Volunteering for a few weeks in a community project can have a profound impact on volunteers and the community. Even more so when you are living in a community and getting to know a foreign culture and the way of life at a grassroots level for 12 weeks. Part of John's (Sweden) volunteering coincided with the FIFA World Cup and being able to watch soccer with the "locals" in a rural community was an experience that not many World Cup fans could match.



Volunteering in Soweto

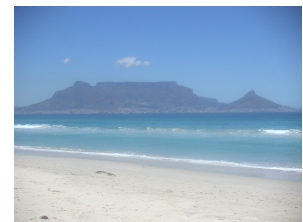
A township tour to Soweto and Nelson Mandela's house is on most people's Johannesburg and South Africa itinerary. But volunteering in Soweto, our most populous black township, adds another dimension. Education and skill transfer is one of our government's key goals and being able to add to the skill pot is what Ann (UK) was able to do at the coalface. Ann worked with management and staff at our community NGO that works with people infected and affected by HIV / AIDS. We need social workers and other health care workers at this project but ongoing staff development is also required.



Not only did Ann have the opportunity to work with and meet people from Soweto but she even participated in a march to the local police station promoting children's rights!

Volunteer in Cape Town

Check out our new website, not only does it have a new look and feel, but it also lists volunteer projects we are now able to offer in Cape Town. For those who want to fly directly into Cape Town International Airport there are a couple of projects to choose from. We offer child literacy projects; orphan and school projects; children's recovery hospital projects; and animal welfare opportunities too.



Volunteer in other interesting countries

This year 2010 saw VOLUNTOURS also expanding its range of volunteer projects beyond the borders of South Africa. These projects are open to our global market and are also aimed at South African's wanting to volunteer abroad!

Volunteer with Orangutans in Malaysia and Borneo or contribute to conservation and local communities in the Amazon rainforests of Peru! Add to ongoing research on endangered Lemurs in Madagascar. Or build schools, teach English or tackle poverty and environmental degradation in remote villages of Madagascar. You don't have to be a teacher to teach in a remote school high up in the Himalayan mid-hills near Kathmandu in Nepal. For those with a love for dolphins you can contribute to research and educational programmes in the idyllic isle of Mauritius.



Volunteering with a friend helps

Volunteering with a friend, especially if it is your first time, can be a rewarding and less daunting way of making a difference. Friends Rachael and Bridget from the UK worked together at our community pre-school. As teachers they had a lot of input to give to the principle Sibongile and her sister Thuli. Having two skilled teachers meant that Thuli, usually responsible for the cooking, was able to learn new skills in the classroom. Thuli is now able to take time out from cooking and add to the children's development while a replacement cooker helps out on a more regular basis now.



Conservation project popular

Our Wildlife, Shark and Dolphin projects are proving to be an attractive option to international as well as local based volunteers. It is interesting to see the growth in interest shown by local South African's wanting to work in conservation projects. Our abundant marine and wildlife make this an exciting alternative. We see an interesting trend where health care professionals, who have given so much of themselves to others, want to take time out from their helping professions and work with animals or something different.



Orphanage gets a new home

Positive moves are happening for the children at our Orphanage Tutoring project. The Home now has a new home in Midrand closer to the local schools and amenities. Not only that but the new house has improved facilities for the children and caregivers. The house was recently renovated giving the boys and girls their own space to relax and watch TV but also the bathrooms are bigger and better avoiding the queuing and giving them more privacy. The home has a lovely modern feel to it and the children have settled down well enjoying the swimming pool in their free time! Education and tutoring needs still remain a priority even though the house boasts a separate computer and homework room.



Yours in responsible volunteering



Marnie & Jeremy Stafford

www.voluntours.co.za