



## A Dream Come True by Lwando Nteya

Most mornings I wake up in my dormitory and have to remind myself exactly where I am. Am I still dreaming or did I just wake up in a dormitory at Grey High School for Boys? Is it possible that an orphan from Zwide Township now attends one of the top five private boarding schools in South Africa?

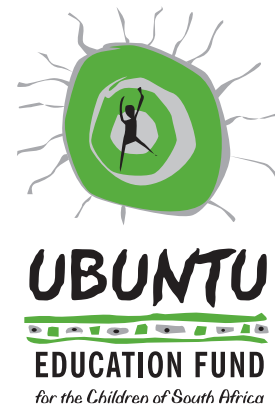
*Lwando proudly wears his prestigious Grey High School uniform.*

In 2001 I was selected by Ubuntu to be part of a group of learners who would travel to New York City. I lived in a house in Zwide Township caring for my two younger siblings without the help of any adults. I was 11 years old at the time. I had never been to a shopping mall - let alone America. During my American adventure, I became very close to Ubuntu's Deputy President, Gcobani Zonke. Gcobani became more than just a mentor to me; he was the father I never had. When I returned

to South Africa, it was in Gcobani's poetry club that I found my voice. I found a way to express what I never could before, through poetry and writing.

When I found out at the end of my tenth year of school that through Ubuntu I had been accepted with a full bursary for Grey High School, I was beyond excited. I was also overwhelmed and afraid that I would not be able to function at the academic level of other learners at Grey or that my background would make me an outcast. When I arrived though, I discovered that although I was born and raised in a shantytown, my mind is just as sharp as those children's from the suburbs. The time I spent learning computers and reading books, through Ubuntu's school facilities played a huge role in preparing me for Grey, and for whatever else lies ahead. The counselling and guidance I received from Gcobani and the rest of Ubuntu's staff, gave me the self-confidence I need to freely interact with children from all races and backgrounds.

Sometimes a person's dreams and reality can meet at a crossroads. Some people never make it to that place. But my Ubuntu family has taken me to there and given me the strength to travel far beyond it.



# UBUNTU

## UPDATE

Spring 2007, Issue #17



## Breaking Ground

The tipping point came this past August. A young girl wandered into our office looking for help. She had just been abused, and we watched as one of our counsellors took her by the hand. Together they looked for somewhere to sit privately; a place where our Ubuntu counsellor could console this child. But behind each closed door there were more Ubuntu staff, more children, more people in need. Luckily, it was a sunny day and the two found a small patch in our garden where they could talk. But the garden does not provide a permanent answer. We cannot continue our counselling programme in whispers in the corners of our office, or in our garden, hidden from passers-by.

In the past nine years, our programmes have grown to reach 40,000 vulnerable children and their families with health and education services. Our staff has grown from 2 people to 55 full-time staff and 20 volunteers. Our current office no longer has enough space to provide the support this little girl



*Model of the new Ubuntu Centre to be built in the heart of Zwide Township.*

and so many others like her deserve.

Today we are proud to announce The Ubuntu Centre, a 19,000 square foot environmentally friendly, multipurpose community centre set to open in March 2009. The Ubuntu Centre will allow us to expand and better integrate our existing programmes by providing centrally-located, free and accessible social services under one roof. The building itself is a statement: a sustainable foundation for true community development. A world class, environmentally-friendly education and health facility in the middle of Zwide Township will change our communities forever.

Thank you for growing with us.

Jacob Lief & Banks Gwaxula, Presidents & Founders

Check our website [www.ubuntufund.org](http://www.ubuntufund.org)

## Ubuntu Celebrates World AIDS Day 2006



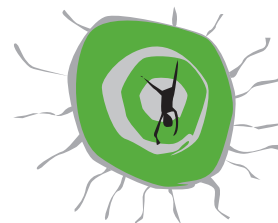
*Ubuntu supporters attending World AIDS Day events in Zwide Stadium.*

It is raining as 300 people walk proudly towards Zwide Stadium singing songs of hope and marching to the beat of high-school bands and traditional African drummers. Leading the pack is Ubuntu's HIV outreach team. T-Shirts, banners and songs proclaim the global message for World AIDS Day 2006: "Keep the Promise, Stop HIV/AIDS!" As we march through the streets, we pass out condoms and information on where to get tested and treated for HIV. As we reach the stadium, the clouds disperse and over one thousand people are in the stands. When the speakers and performances begin, hundreds line up to get new ID books and birth certificates from different booths set up around the stadium — essential to applying for social grants that will support families and help keep them together. The longest line, though, is at Ubuntu's mobile HIV testing van. People are getting the message articulated by Ubuntu Health Educator, Vuyo Tshafa, "If you know your status you can take control of your life. The first step is getting tested."

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## Backyard Gardens



*Ntombekaya hard at work in her backyard garden. Ubuntu will establish 25 more backyard gardens in 2007.*

It's spring and resident gardener Ntombekaya is happy to see that the herbs are plentiful, the spinach is a dark, rich green and the carrots are ready to be harvested. Although she only began gardening this year, Ntombekaya's successful backyard garden feeds her three children and ten relatives living in her house. Ntombekaya reflects, "As I make my way to the water tap each morning, I am inspired by the flowers, vegetables and herbs growing around it. Then I pick a handful of herbs for my morning tea. I am proud that I can grow food for my family and help my neighbours to do the same."

In 2006, we expanded Phaphama, our nutrition and food gardening project, beyond schools (our gardens feed over 1750 children a week) to local clinics and backyard gardens. Phaphama's latest project, Backyard Gardens, extends directly into vulnerable households like Ntombekaya's. Three families in Zwide Township received practical training and resources to develop sustainable food gardens in their backyards. Part of a pilot project, the families were referred by Ubuntu Case Managers. With the assistance of Ubuntu staff and volunteers, these backyard gardens have transformed from barren land into lush, productive food gardens. Plots consist of vegetables, herbs and flowers, and participants receive guidance on how to tend their gardens and prepare nutritious meals. More importantly, however, participants also gain a sense of self-worth and pride when they are able to provide for themselves and their loved ones. Building on Ntombekaya's success, Ubuntu will establish 25 more backyard gardens in 2007.

## Mfezi Mcingana: A Man who wants to Change a City

The best part of Mfezi Mcingana's job is watching eleven-year old Unathi play netball with other children. When Mfezi first met Unathi, she was dying. She had full-blown AIDS, and opportunistic infections had taken a toll on her gaunt frame. Within days, Mfezi and his team of Case Managers got Unathi on ARV therapy and her health rapidly stabilized. Mfezi also worked with Unathi's family to help her grandmother access a monthly social grant — the family's only source of income.

Lucky enough to have two working and supportive parents, Mfezi was always encouraged to lend a positive contribution to his community. He studied Social Work at the University of Transkei and got his first job as a case worker for Port Elizabeth Mental Health. In this position, Mfezi learned to counsel individuals, conduct home visits and assist individuals in obtaining disability grants. Mfezi also worked for the South African Police Force where he counselled officers who had dealt with child and teenage survivors of rape and sexual abuse.

Ubuntu was honoured when Mfezi chose to join our team last year. As his success with Unathi indicates, Mfezi is a passionate, dedicated and skilled case manager. He recalls, "I saw Unathi last week at school and I honestly did not recognize her at first. She was playing netball with other children and laughing and carrying on. Her skin had cleared up and she had put on weight. This experience embodies what I have always endeavoured to achieve in life, bridging the gap between vulnerable people and the essential services they require." Mfezi looks forward to watching Unathi — and others like her play many more netball games in the future. In his words, he wants "to help all of the children in Port Elizabeth have a better childhood — I want to change this city."



*Mfezi Mcingana, Ubuntu Case Manager.*

## The Meaning of Success: A Support Group for Teenage Mothers



*The support group gives the young women a chance to finish high school and empower themselves.*

This past January twenty teenage girls started making preparations for the upcoming school year. Many of these girls could not attend school last year as they had to worry about whether their young babies would have enough to eat. Today, they can concentrate on finishing high school and finding multiple ways to empower themselves and their children. Each week, these teenage girls attend one of Ubuntu's eight support groups with facilitated discussions and workshops, focusing on reproductive health, HIV risk reduction and positive living skills. All group members receive comprehensive care ranging from academic guidance and tutoring to food parcels and intense psychosocial support.

In August 2006, Ubuntu began this support group for twenty single teenage mothers. Meeting on a weekly basis, these young women contend not only with the pressures of being single parents, but of losing parents to AIDS-related illness and living with HIV themselves and being survivors of sexual abuse or rape. Yet, through the support group they have been given the opportunity to come together with other young women in similar situations, share their experiences and provide each other confidence and motivation. One member, who wished to remain anonymous, explained "there is no stigma in our support group. We are here for each other and, with Ubuntu, we have created a system to provide us with the skills and emotional support we need to implement positive changes in our lives."

## A New Partnership

"To truly address HIV in our communities where we have close to a 40% HIV rate, we must get people tested and on to treatment. If people do not know their status how can they take control of and improve their lives?" explained Ubuntu President Jacob Lief. Over the past 18 months Ubuntu has refined its HIV testing and treatment access project and proven that the model is highly effective. In recognition, Ubuntu has been awarded a two-year \$1.2 million grant by the US Government's President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).

Commencing in September 2007, the grant will provide structural support to our entire health initiative and allow us to greatly scale-up our interventions with vulnerable children. Ubuntu Director Anne Magege explained that "this award serves as further validation of Ubuntu Education Fund's strategic position and innovative model for providing comprehensive HIV services to communities in the Eastern Cape. The partnership with PEPFAR is a great stride in ensuring the sustainability of Ubuntu and will allow us to penetrate our communities at a deeper level with the highest quality care and services."



Join hundreds of Team Ubuntu members as we walking through Central Park raising awareness and joining the fight against HIV/AIDS! Last year we raised \$100,000 and this year we need your help to double it!

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**For More Info E-mail:**  
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