

STEPPING STONES INTERNATIONAL UPDATES April- June 2007

Stepping Stones International Official Launch May 31, 2007

Stepping Stones International officially launched May 31st 2007 with special guests: U.S Ambassador Canavan, Mrs. Morapedi, District AIDS Coordinator and Former First Lady Masire, giving the keynote speech. The day was a success for the 30 youth at Stepping Stones International who did all the preparations themselves. The festivities were led by our very own Pertunia Letsholo and Odirile Ramotswetla, the Masters of Ceremony. The celebration included skits on the wellness program and horseback riding (with a human horse!), a dance about our values, poems written and read by Tshepiso Kgatwane and Ofentse Thomas and a big thank you with balloons to all our sponsors. The pictures highlight some of the fun!



Masters of Ceremony



Karate Demonstration from the Wellness Program



Dance Demonstrating Our Values



Mrs. Morapedi (left), U.S. Ambassador Canavan (middle) and Former First Lady Masire (right) officially opening the center

Establishment of the Organisation

- The contractor to build the new center was chosen through a tendering process.
- Conducted interviews and hired a counselor and social worker. Three youth participants from the program assisted in the second round of interviews.
- Japs Security company was hired (a guard with a dog) for the center, as Mochudi has had several break-ins, especially at non-governmental organizations.
- Submitted forms to Standard Chartered Bank to open the bank account.
- Purchased all equipment for the center with the Self-Help Funding through the US Embassy.
- Botswana Board of Directors committed to identifying benefactors to assist with fundraising efforts.
- Secured housing from the Government of Botswana for the new Peace Corps Volunteer who was assigned to work with SSI for the next two years.
- Staff developed annual work plan for the year to be reviewed by the BoD.

Activities at the Centre

- Initial Life Skills activities began with a focus on "Who Am I?"
- The participants prepared dramas, dances, poems and presentations for the launch and painted their personal SSI t-shirts portraying a symbol that speaks to their personalities.
- The participants continued with horseback riding and the CAPACITAR wellness program.
- Peace Corps Volunteer, Leslie Duling started working with SSI the end of June 2007.

Fundraising

- SSI received funding from PACT, through the Peace Corps Volunteer Grant, for training in games for life, caregiver/child communication workshops.
- Orfund Foundation confirmed its funding for staff salaries).
- Submitted proposal to Associated Fund Administrator Botswana PTY Ltd. for health insurance for employees.
Sally Dairy, Pie City, Choppies, Seafood Wholesalers, Rocket Fashions, Grand Palm, Dialogue Group, Mochudi Police, caregivers and the community donated food, supplies, and time to make the official launch a success.
- Heinemann donated school books to the center.

Government and Community Activities

- SSI social worker, the Department of Social Services invited SSI Social Worker, Catherine Rautenbach, to Foster Care Trainer of Training Workshop to understand development of foster care system in Botswana, then educate community members in Mochudi on the new initiative and recruit potential foster care parents.
- SSI counselor attended the National NGO Forum sponsored by UNICEF and DSS to provide an opportunity for networking of NGOs nationally and provide technical training for capacity building.
- SSI Community Development Coordinator, Tinny Seitei, conducted informational meetings introducing SSI to community members at the Kgatleng District Farmers' Association, Kgatleng District Women's Finance House, Bakgatle

Borakanelo Matshelo Home Based Care Society, Kgatleng District Guidance and Counseling Meeting.

Needs Assessment in Kgatleng District with orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) and non-OVC

- Training of six data collectors was conducted.
- Five focus group discussions were held with social workers, teachers and guidance counselors
- Data collection began however, there were limitations as to when the interviews could be conducted at the schools, returning consent forms from guardians, absences, and locating caregivers. Given these obstacles the data collection took twice the amount of time and effort to finish.

Next Quarter's Activities

- **FUNDRAISE:** Send out more proposals and network to source funding for salaries. Board members to identify more benefactors.
- Data entry and analysis for needs assessment
- Increase centre's activities to 5 times a week
- Induction meetings for staff members
- Confirm health insurance scheme
- First AID training for staff
- Lifeline Training for Staff
- Set up Guardian/Child Workshops
- Establish and start job skills program
- Camp for participants