

# RHODES UNIVERSITY

## STUDENT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT HANDBOOK

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# RHODES UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

## FOREWORD FROM THE VICE CHANCELLOR

*From modest beginnings, the continuing development of our Community Engagement (CE) programme, including service learning, community social development and the student volunteer programme, is a source of great pride for Rhodes University. Rhodes' mission proclaims that we shall strive 'through community service to contribute to the development of the Eastern Cape', and that we shall 'foster the all-round development of our students'. Our CE policy commits us to draw on our knowledge and expertise to work 'actively to improve the quality of life of individuals in Grahamstown and Eastern Cape communities'. It also charges us to foster 'an ethos of voluntary community service' among our staff and students, 'leading to well-rounded graduate citizens who will be active agents for positive social change'. The Rhodes motto is Truth, Virtue, Strength, and our slogan proclaims that we aspire to be a place Where Leaders Learn. Our CE programme participants give expression to the idea of engaged and selfless leadership and service to community. They pursue the Truth that derives from knowledge, understanding and reason; practice the Virtue of social commitment, compassion and giving, and possess the Strength of courage and boldness to strive to remake our society so that all may possess the social, economic and human rights and opportunities that are fundamental to living full, decent, productive, rich and rewarding lives.*

Dr Badat

## FROM DR MABIZELA: DVC ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS

*Our starting point is that one of the primary roles of a higher education institution in a society is that of knowledge generation and knowledge dissemination. Knowledge is therefore the main asset that we, as a public higher education institution, bring to bear into any kind of partnership in which we engage. Through Community Engagement, this knowledge is put at the service of local community. In the process, the community benefits and the quality of University's research and teaching and learning is enhanced and enriched. This symbiotic relationship is, in my view, at the heart of effective and strategic Community Engagement. Also, in this sense, Community Engagement becomes a nexus between research, knowledge application and learning. Through Community Engagement, we endeavour to expose our students and staff to the social realities of our local community. It is hoped that, in the process, our staff and students will be able to interrogate, deconstruct and reconstruct "textbook" theoretical knowledge and assumptions on which it rests in light of the objective realities and lived experiences in our local community. In line with our mission statement, Community Engagement has a vital role to play in ensuring that we educate a student as a whole person; that we graduate students with a heightened sense of social consciousness and are able to serve as agents of and for social change and societal transformation; that our graduates are imbued with the attitude, spirit and values of ubuntu and human solidarity.*

Dr Mabizela

## CONCEPTUALIZING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (CE) AND ISSUES FOR DEBATE

*According to the Council for Higher Education (CHE) Community Engagement can be defined as initiatives and processes through which the expertise of the institution in the areas of teaching and research are applied to address issues relevant to its community.*

To this definition we can add that community engagement is a two way process of learning because staff and students of the institution are continuously learning as they interact with the external community. Dissemination, generation and reconstruction of knowledge are practical outcomes of community engagement.

The definition of CE can be categorised into 2 sections, which are social and academic CE:

- Social CE refers to the work that students initiate in societies and residences as student volunteers and also the involvement of students as volunteers placed with community partner organisations
- Academic CE refers to the community projects which are distinctive to the scholarly work of universities. This involves the application of academic teaching and research to the benefit of communities in a mutual interchange for the good of all involved. An example of this would be service learning that Pharmacy students do as well as penultimate law students in the Legal Aid clinic.

**A critical question that encompasses the debate on CE is: "who is the community?"**

### Who is our Community?

More often than not, the concept of 'community' denotes everyone that is not the 'university' and serves to perpetuate the divisive notion of 'us' and 'them'. But we need to be aware that there are divisions within the university as well and that the concept of 'us' and 'them' is flawed on a number of levels. That being said, South Africa is one of the most unequal countries in the world and there is unfortunately a very clear division between 'us' and 'them'. Issues of inequality and power dynamics tend to form part of projects outside or within the boundaries of the University.

In many instances, the concept of 'community' is used as a euphemism for 'poor, black and living either in the township or rural areas'. It does not help to ignore these massive inequalities but the question is how to identify them without perpetuating them? In subjects where people-based research is a core part of the subject, for example, Anthropology, much attention is given to the power and ethics issues around research. First and foremost, Community Engagement is not about providing a pool of people for students to 'test' their skills.

Much is said about the importance of seeing Community Engagement projects/activities as 'partnerships' and despite the fact that this politically-correct word is bandied about liberally, it is precisely this goal that we should continuously strive toward: a partnership between University and Community.<sup>1</sup> Students going into a situation 'blind' can, and have, done great damage. We need to be aware of our own biases, many of which remain unconscious until challenged as evidenced by student feedback in the Student Volunteer Programme.

A researcher, lecturer or student from Rhodes University and the person "in the community" very often carry with them a certain amount of preconceptions about each other. The value that is placed on certain information determines what we see as powerful, desirable or useful. Rhodes University has an abundance of power such as knowledge and resources. Individuals who are not familiar with developmental ideas, values and principles will wonder what exactly the 'community' has to offer them, for isn't the whole purpose of their CE project/activity to *give* the community something that they don't have?

Being identified with RU does not only carry with it a number of preconceptions, but a great deal of history. With its 106 year history in Grahamstown, RU has played a defining role in shaping Grahamstown, both for better and worse. The idea of the broader Grahamstown simply being a 'laboratory' for Rhodes students is one with a long history covering most faculties and schools. It is not merely lip-service to suggest that Community Engagement is a two-way process. Without the process being 'two-way' it merely perpetuates divisions and inequalities that are already entrenched.

The question of community does, however, extend further than simply one's locality. What about a regional, national and international community? What about the communities that exist within Rhodes University? From a systems perspective of community, Rhodes University could be viewed as a system which is part of the broader Grahamstown community or as a

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<sup>1</sup> Note how easy (and necessary?) it is to slip into the kind of thinking that both identifies and perpetuates divisions.

community on its own with a number of systems within it interacting with the broader Grahamstown community. Context and history have a significant influence on how community is defined. While we try to come to terms with the meaning of community, we should also have an understanding of what characterizes a community. We could presume that it appears less challenging and more prudent to decipher a community if it meets such characteristics as inclusion, commitment, consensus decision making and a common spirit. Do we take cognisance of these characteristics when initiating Community Engagement projects/activities in Grahamstown?

### ***SUMMARY OF THE PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES TO EXCELLENCE IN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AT RHODES UNIVERSITY***

Community Engagement must be conducted along particular principles to ensure that all parties benefit from the process and that no harm is done to any parties involved. These principles and guidelines include:

- It is important for students to note that the people we work with are from different socio-economic backgrounds and they are individuals with thoughts, ideas, feelings, and experiences and that they are not just “subjects” or “objects” of a community engagement project. Different world views need to be taken into consideration. Therefore it is important to try to put our own beliefs to one side temporarily and put ourselves “in the place of the other”, i.e. try to imagine what it must be like to view the world from the perspective of the people we work with.
- When participating in community development one needs to be aware of the power dynamics that can take place. Power is established by who controls what form and direction the community engagement should take, why it is implemented, how it is implemented, and the outcome of the engagement. Every person involved in a community engagement project is the locus of different types of power. Exploitation or exclusion should be guarded against.
- When initiating a community engagement project, we should remember the principle of working “with” community partners and not “for” them.
- The development process to be followed in the initiation of CE projects/ activities should clearly state the goals of the project/activity and how it would be monitored and evaluated.
- Promote sustainability of engagement and not dependency, therefore community ownership of the development process and activity needs to be considered from the beginning.
- CE activities should be underpinned by humanist philosophy, especially the view that we are one humanity.
- Learning is a mutually beneficial and reciprocal process
- Community Engagement should not be seen as a one-way process. Rather it is a reciprocal two way learning process. For example, staff and students bring to the process their academic knowledge (to be tested in reality) and resources, while the community members bring “access to and understanding of people, traditions, and culture of the community”. The Learning Action Reflection (LAR) framework for community engagement is intended to benefit students learning process and self development.
- We need to look for common goals and interests. This means listening carefully and actively to the ideas and voice of others.
- There should be no coercion from project initiators on community members or staff and students to participate. In general, if someone does not wish to participate in a project this must be respected.
- Co-ordination of CE activities/projects is essential if we want to make a real difference to the communities we engage with as an institution. Therefore, the co-ordination of all CE

activities/projects by the Community Engagement Unit is necessary to avoid duplication of projects, address gaps, make a positive impact and be able to assess the impact of CE activities by Rhodes University staff and students.

- Annual reporting on all community engagement activities will be required by means of an internal and external monitoring and evaluation system.
- The Criteria for CE projects/activities at Rhodes University currently incorporate some of the above principles. The final guidelines for CE at Rhodes University will be completed together with the concept document.

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Grahamstown, home to Rhodes University, is situated in the Eastern Cape which is one of the poorest provinces in South Africa. Facing Rhodes across the valley live an estimate of 100 000 people, more than half of whom are unemployed. Rhodes University fulfils an active role in the community development of Grahamstown and the Eastern Cape through focused and targeted interventions within its area of expertise. The University is involved in a wide and diverse range of community initiatives in the Eastern Cape, through both staff and students. These take place on many different levels, from involvement at government policy level and ground-breaking research to practical, effective intervention at a community level.

Rhodes University's community engagement initiatives are centrally co-ordinated through the Community Engagement Unit and networked with its community development partners, which include NGOs, CBOs, institutions, government and the private sector, ensuring effective intervention to the mutual benefit of students and the community.

Some projects have been commended by local and provincial government and have enjoyed international acclaim, particularly the work of the Environmental Education and Sustainability Unit. An ethos of community service within the University staff and student body is expressed through sharing knowledge, resources and skills transfer.

Outstanding Community Engagement programmes include the Legal Aid Clinics in Grahamstown and Queenstown as well as the work that the Rhodes Mobile Biology Laboratory and the Rhodes University Mathematics Education Project are doing in raising marks in under-resourced Eastern Cape schools. Another high profile project providing invaluable service to the community is the Public Service Accountability Monitor (PSAM). PSAM is an independent monitoring and research institute based at Rhodes. It monitors issues around government transparency and accountability; and gathers and publishes information on the management of public resources and the handling of misconduct and corruption cases by government departments.

*To find out more please go to [www.ru.ac.za/community](http://www.ru.ac.za/community)*

**Rhodes University Community Engagement**

### **VISION**

Community Engagement at Rhodes University is recognised and respected nationally and internationally as a leader in community engagement; and for its commitment to social and individual transformation, sustainable community development, student civic responsibility and scholarship of engagement.

## **MISSION**

In pursuit of its vision and that of Rhodes University, Community Engagement directorate will endeavour to promote a reciprocal process of knowledge construction and dissemination, develop and channel the civic and social responsibility of all students, student organisations and staff of Rhodes University through various community engagement activities, thereby contributing to individual transformation and sustainable human and community development in Grahamstown and the Eastern Cape as a whole.

## **RHODES UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (RUCE) UNIT**

The Community Engagement Unit is a recent initiative and currently being established at Rhodes University. In the past, Rhodes University CE activities were managed by the Centre for Social Development. Following national policy on higher education community engagement, CE is located as a core function of Rhodes University and integral to teaching, learning and research.

The Community Engagement Unit aims to:

- contribute to the vision and mission of Rhodes University through focused and collaborative CE activities
- coordinate all university community engagement activities and give strategic directions where needed
- promote leadership development of students in order to foster and enhance civic and social responsibilities
- facilitate outreach programmes, volunteerism and service learning which are developmental in their approach
- promote service learning in collaboration with academic departments and community partners
- utilise expertise, skills and resources for capacitating and educating community and university partners on community engagement
- contribute to knowledge production and dissemination of knowledge through the functions of teaching and learning and research
- contribute to the sustainable development of Grahamstown communities
- contribute to the development of the Eastern Cape Province through partnership with provincial government departments, NGOs and other institutions of higher learning in the Province

## **Rhodes University Student Community Engagement Activities**

Community Engagement at Rhodes University takes a variety of forms and the current programmes include the Student Volunteer Programme (SVP), Student organisations involvement in community engagement, service learning programmes and community based research.

In the current South African context, volunteerism is seen as becoming a “permanent feature of our society”. Rhodes University actively encourages volunteerism in communities through a variety of student community engagement activities.

### **STUDENT VOLUNTEER PROGRAMME (SVP)**

Volunteerism and volunteer activities form an important part of the student experience and what a student can learn at university. Volunteerism provides students with skills that are necessary for the production of well-rounded graduates and good citizens and the soft skills that they need in order to be prepared for their work and social environments. The screening and placing of students has to be done with care as it should attempt to match the student to the needs of the placement. Suitable training and orientation is necessary so that volunteers are able to contribute productively to their placements.

The fast-expanding Student Volunteer Programme (SVP) is one of the programmes within the Community Engagement Unit. Over the past seven years, Rhodes University through the Centre for Social Development which facilitated the SVP, gave Rhodes University students an opportunity to go beyond their academic environment and take their particular skills to NGOs and schools in the Grahamstown community. There are also a variety of opportunities available through Halls of Residences, Sport-clubs and Societies to initiate CE activities and participate as a volunteer.



### **How can I get involved in volunteering and community activities at Rhodes?**

Whether through existing departmental projects, a residence initiative, clubs and societies, the High Schools Tutoring Initiative, the CE/SRC Fundraising Initiative, or the CE's Student Volunteer Programme, there are a variety of avenues for students to get involved during their time at Rhodes University.

### **Community Engagement Special Events Team**

Students who cannot commit to weekly volunteering are encouraged to register on the database of ad hoc volunteers who are contacted when we assist affiliate organisations such as Grahamstown Hospice,

Gadra, Red Cross, Child Welfare, Settler's Hospital, and the Society for Disabled with special one-off functions such as community fun days, children's parties and street collections. Notices will also be placed in the SVP co-ordinator's office. Interested volunteers may then register to assist in the project.

### How can First years get involved?

We have found in the past that due to their multiple course loads 1<sup>st</sup> years often find it difficult to find a placement within the Student Volunteer Programme that fits in with their timetable.

They also have residence, sports and society commitments and need time to adapt to university routine. As such application from students in their 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> years are given preference over those of 1<sup>st</sup> years when allocating the available placements.

For this reason, first years are only allowed to register for the Volunteer Programme in July for placement in the second semester. This does not mean that eager 1<sup>st</sup> years cannot get involved before then. All 1<sup>st</sup> years who are interested in volunteering are encouraged to visit the SVP Coordinator to discuss possible placements and CE activities.

### Sports Clubs, Societies, Halls of Residence and Oppidans

Sports Clubs, Societies, Halls of Residence and Oppidans are encouraged to engage in community initiatives. In particular Rotaract, *Masincedane*, ROAR, GRASS and Sharc are community service orientated societies that welcome new members interested in participating in community projects. Students are encouraged to attend the Societies Evening during Orientation Week so they can meet with committee members to obtain more information.

### Residence and Oppidan Activities

In the same way the individual residences as well as halls of residence are encouraged to pursue community outreach projects and **strategic** fundraising activities. There is a vast array of student driven community outreach projects and fundraising efforts conducted by Oppidans and students living in residence. These are closely monitored by the Community Engagement (CE) Staff and CE Unit to ensure students' efforts are being effectively channelled. Students are encouraged to come to the CE office to be advised on to how best to pursue fundraising and outreach activities.

## STUDENT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT HANDBOOK

*Please note that it is essential for all students wishing to volunteer to read this entire handbook. General information on volunteering, a step by step guide of how to apply; project placement descriptions as well as FAQ (frequently asked question section) follows. This handbook has been written to answer any questions or queries that you may have. If your question cannot be answered by this book, please contact us at the following email address [svp@ru.ac.za](mailto:svp@ru.ac.za).*

## How does the Student Volunteer Programme work?

The Student Volunteer Programme has run very successfully for a number of years. You have the option of choosing which project you would like to participate in and can register (on the registration dates given below) for your placement of choice. Only when you have filled in and signed all three forms (i.e. your Application form, an Indemnity form as well as a Confidentiality and M.O.A. form) will you be able to register for a volunteer placement. The placement registration sheets and forms will be on the notice-board in the SVP Co-ordinator's office.

**IMPORTANT NOTICE: YOU MAY NOT REGISTER IF WE HAVE NOT RECEIVED THE ABOVE-MENTIONED FORMS.**

Please choose your project with care. Read the project descriptions carefully, and see where you fit best. Also be sure to consult your timetable to ensure you are available fifteen minutes before and after the stipulated time to allow for transport to and from campus. In July we can try to re-accommodate you if a timetable change renders you unable to participate in your volunteering commitments.

**From when can I apply?      Important dates below – please read:**

Application forms can be submitted any time from the 10 November 2010 but registration for placement takes place on 16 February for returning volunteers and 17 February for new volunteers. Returning student volunteers i.e. those who took part in the 2010 Programme have first option for registration. Organisations welcome back their old volunteers and we want to ensure that where possible students can continue with their placements if they so desire. The closing date for all applications to volunteer in the first term is 17 February 2011. Register on a first-come, first-served basis for a placement in accordance with the schedule on the board at the office of SVP Co-ordinator. Ensure that you bring your timetable and all your completed forms when you come to the office to register.

Please note that you commit to a minimum of an hour a week at an organisation of your choice once you register. (You will in most instances need to allow two lecture periods i.e. plus/minus an hour and a half because you need fifteen minutes on either side to get to and from campus.) There are options such as the Child Community Project, Rhodes Sports Outreach, VAST Outreach Network and Khanya Maths and Science Club, although not fully administered by the CE office that you could consider. See details in the placement description section.

## Volunteering contributes to your own development

Part of being a volunteer is to love what you're doing. Find something that you're passionate about or something that inspires you and try and match that with a need in the community. Whatever the reason, volunteering can and should be a good experience for everyone involved. You might discover hidden talents when you volunteer. You will challenge yourself in new and exciting ways. Volunteering has always played a vital role within the non-profit sector and volunteers are invaluable in helping organisations to strengthen their services - they bring new and creative ideas, special skills and a genuine concern for the participants in the programs.

"You will learn new things, have interesting experiences and you can build your marketable skills. Most important you will learn about [yourself and] your community. Volunteering can also reduce your level of stress and make you feel good about yourself and your accomplishments. People volunteer for a wide variety of reasons. Some motives are altruistic in that they involve a desire to help others, or philanthropic, in that they are for the public good. There are even indications that involving oneself in the greater community is a natural human need, and that those who volunteer are actually healthier than those who don't" (S. Ellis in *The Volunteer Recruitment Book*).

The SVP is committed to giving you worthwhile and meaningful positions that match your particular skills and areas of interest.

### Why volunteer?

- Use a skill or talent
- Make a difference through positive contribution
- Gain professional experience
- Feel better about yourself
- Act upon your spiritual beliefs
- Meet friendly action-minded people
- Attain personal growth
- Have a more balanced life
- Give back to the community
- Increase your awareness of issues
- Act on your altruistic values
- Seek social justice
- Make important networking contacts
- Learn or develop skills
- Gain work experience
- Build self-esteem & self-confidence
- Improve health
- Meet people from other backgrounds
- To share expertise
- Broaden your individual network
- Discover your own potential
- Build on your abilities
- Build your resume
- Enjoy giving of yourself
- Help others
- Make a difference
- Find a purpose
- Enjoy meaningful conversation
- Feel involved by contributing to a cause that you care about
- Use your skills in a productive way
- Explore new areas of interest
- Expand your horizons
- Feel needed and valued
- Make a difference in someone's life
- A new activity to keep busy
- Get to know your community
- Gain leadership and interpersonal skills
- A change of pace
- Enhance your current skills

## Benefits of Volunteering

"Student Volunteers bring boundless energy, fresh perspective and vitality to the organization. Non-profit and voluntary organizations, individuals, and society as a whole benefit from the activities of volunteers. Volunteers themselves also benefit from their volunteer activities. Volunteering brings a new sense of confidence, self-gratification. It also enables you to develop social skills that will be useful in other facets of your life. An important priority for volunteering while recruiting passionate and competent volunteers is to ensure that the experience helps with each volunteer's personal development. Volunteers say that their volunteer activities help them with their interpersonal skills, such as understanding people better, motivating others, and dealing with difficult situations. Volunteering can also help you to develop better communication skills and increase your knowledge of local and community issues. The best volunteering should involve a genuine desire to help others. This does not, however, mean that the experience can't provide some very tangible benefits for you as well. It allows you to explore career options. If you aren't completely sure that an occupation that would involve working with people is the one for you, volunteering gives you a chance to learn more about it before you make a commitment. Volunteering provides a chance to research the career alternatives open to you and is a great way to develop yourself. You can meet new people and establish some important networking contacts you might use to find a paying job or as references. Volunteer positions can often involve a large degree of responsibility, if that is what you are looking for. This will allow you to exercise leadership, develop problem-solving skills, be creative and provides the opportunity to pursue new interests. Whether you are learning new skills or developing skills you already have, volunteering provides the opportunity for you to gain confidence and self-esteem. Volunteering will give you the chance to learn more about the community, society and the environment in which you live, to get involved in and to make an impact on the lives of those in need."

S. Ellis. *The Volunteer Recruitment Book*

## How to apply for the Student Volunteer Programme

Please note there are 2 different procedures for registration: Check which applies to you!

### Returning Volunteers

If you are a returning student volunteers i.e. you participated in the Rhodes Student Volunteer Programme in 2010 go to page 13.

### New Volunteers

If you did not take part in the Student Volunteer Programme in 2010 go to page 12 to the new volunteer's application procedure.

## Returning Student Volunteer Application Procedure

1. Fill in the forms: Please download the relevant Application form, the Indemnity form and the Confidentiality/MOA form from the Student Volunteer Programme webpage: [www.ru.ac.za/community](http://www.ru.ac.za/community) Click on Student Volunteer Programme. Fill in the Student Volunteer Application Form and email it to the following address [svp@ru.ac.za](mailto:svp@ru.ac.za). We need to update your details. When emailing your application form please save it under your full name. For example, "Peter Jenkins.doc" Please do not send forms whose titles are simply "application form.doc" or "student volunteer.doc", etc. This is essential for administrative reasons. Print out, fill in and sign the other 2 forms. If you are experiencing any technical difficulties please contact [svp@ru.ac.za](mailto:svp@ru.ac.za) or (046) 603 7229, or pop in at Community Engagement Office.
2. Hand in signed Indemnity, Confidentiality & MOA forms: Please submit these forms to the CE office prior to registration. Only hardcopy versions of forms that require signatures are acceptable. NB: Please note if you are under the age of 18, it is essential that one of your parents or your legal guardian signs an Indemnity form for you. The Indemnity form relevant to you is titled 'Indemnity Minor' on the webpage. Once your parents have signed the Indemnity form, they can fax it to (046) 603 8869. This is a legal requirement and you will not be allowed to take part in the Programme until your parents have submitted the signed Indemnity form. If you are 18 or over you can sign an Indemnity for yourself. Please fill in the 'Indemnity Major' form.
3. All three of these forms need to be handed in prior to registration for a placement
  - a. Student Volunteer Application Form
  - b. Memorandum of Agreement and Confidentiality form
  - c. Indemnity form
4. Register for a placement of your choice: You can register for your particular placement at the CE office on 16 February 2011. The CE office is open from 8:00 to 16:30 but is closed over lunch (12:45 to 14:00). We strongly encourage you to register on the allocated date and to ensure you have the option of returning to your old placement should you wish to as placement is on a first come first serve basis.
5. Confirmation of placement: You will be given a confirmation of placement once we have received all your forms and have checked that all is in order with your placement.
6. Programme begins: The programme will begin on Monday 21 February 2011 for returning volunteers. New volunteers begin on 28 February 2011. Once you have registered for your placement, received confirmation and participated in the volunteer training programme, you need to ensure that you arrive as per the transport schedule.
7. Orientation/Training Workshops: Training is compulsory for all student volunteers (returning and new volunteers). The workshops will be different in many respects from previous year's with some new presentations as well as an outline of Community Engagement at Rhodes University. See timetable on page 13

## New Student Volunteer Application Procedure

1. Fill in the forms: Please download the relevant Application form, the Indemnity form and the Confidentiality/MOA form from the Student Volunteer Programme webpage: [www.ru.ac.za/community](http://www.ru.ac.za/community). Click on Student Volunteer Programme. Fill in the registration application form and email it to the following address. [svp@ru.ac.za](mailto:svp@ru.ac.za). When emailing your application form please save it under your full name. For example, "Peter Jenkins.doc" Please do not send forms whose titles are simply "application form.doc" or "student volunteer.doc", etc. This is essential for administrative reasons. Print out, fill in and sign the other 2 forms. If you are experiencing any technical difficulties please contact [svp@ru.ac.za](mailto:svp@ru.ac.za) or (046) 603 7229, or pop in at Community Engagement Office.
2. Hand in signed Indemnity, Confidentiality & MOA forms: Please submit these forms to the CE office prior to registration. Only hardcopy versions of forms that require signatures are acceptable. NB: Please note if you are under the age of 18 it is essential that one of your parents or your legal guardian signs an Indemnity form for you. The Indemnity form relevant to you is titled 'Indemnity Minor' on the webpage. Once your parents have signed the Indemnity form, they can fax it to (046) 603 8869. This is a legal requirement and you will not be allowed to take part in the programme until your parents have submitted the signed Indemnity form. If you are 18 or over you can sign an Indemnity for yourself. Please fill in the major Indemnity form.
3. All three of these forms need to be handed in prior to registration for placement
  - a. Student Volunteer Application form
  - b. Memorandum of Agreement and Confidentiality form
  - c. Indemnity form
4. Registration for placement of your choice: You can register for your particular placement at the CE office on 17 February 2011. The CE office is open from 8:00 to 16:30 but is closed over lunch (12:45 to 14:00) The Student Volunteer Programme has a maximum capacity of 350 so we strongly encourage you to register on the allocated dates as places will fill quickly.
5. Confirmation of placement: You will receive confirmation of your placement from the SVP office once all your forms have been received.
6. Programme begins: New volunteers begin 28 February 2011. Once you have registered for your placement, received confirmation and participated in the volunteer orientation/training programme, you need to ensure that you arrive as per the transport schedule.
7. Orientation/Training Workshops: The training workshops are compulsory for all student volunteers. **See timetable on page 13.**

The series of workshops are held to introduce you to volunteering in Grahamstown and to Community Engagement at Rhodes University. Attendance at these workshops is compulsory for participation in the SVP. **NB: THE WORKSHOPS ARE COMPULSORY FOR BOTH RETURNING AND NEW VOLUNTEERS.** Failure to attend these workshops

without a valid reason will result in being removed from the Student Volunteer Programme. Volunteers will be divided into 2 groups during registration for the purpose of attending the workshops. See timetable below.

### 2011 Orientation/Training Workshops: Eden Grove

Saturday (08h30 – 13h00) 19 February 2011	GROUP ONE
Saturday (08h30 – 15h30) 26 February 2011	GROUP TWO

### Monitoring and Reflection Workshops (First Semester)

Tuesday Afternoon (16h30 – 18h00) 11 August 2011	All Groups
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### Transport

It is compulsory that Student Volunteers make use of the transport provided by the C.E Unit. This is for your own safety. However, students who use their own transport should first inform the C.E Unit office. The pick up and drop off point will be outside the CE office. Please wait outside the CE Office 10 minutes before your allocated time. The vehicle is a Rhode Trip white Mercedes Benz Sprinter. The CE office is situated at 5 Prince Alfred Street (we are sharing the building with the Centre for Social Development). If this transport does not arrive, **call the driver** whose name is Bongani and his number is 072 318 6802. Please have this number with you so that you can call if he is late and/or you have been left behind at a project. ***However, please note that you may not call if you were late in coming to the CE office and the bus left without you. You can call only in the event the driver is late or you have been left at your placement.***

Please write if you have any complaints with respect to transport in the book that is with CE office at reception.

**Important Notice: Volunteers placed at Raphael Centre, Child Welfare, Public Library, Amasango and placements that are of close proximity to Rhodes University do not make use of this transport.**

## Attendance Registers

There is a universal register on the RhodeTrip bus and to ensure you receive your certificate you must sign the register on the way to your placement each week. **THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT. IT IS UP TO YOU TO ASK BONGANI FOR THIS BOOK - REPORT TO THE CE OFFICE IF THE BOOK IS MISSING.** You will also be required to sign a register at your placement organisation.

## Student Volunteer Programme T-Shirts

Student Volunteer T-Shirts are on sale for R25 from the SVP co-ordinator's office. We strongly encourage volunteers to wear them when going to their placements.

## Student Community Engagement Awards' Evening

An Awards Evening will be held at the end of the year. All those who have honoured their commitment to the programme (80%) will receive a certificate in recognition of their contribution. There is also a Student Volunteer of the Year



Award. Those students who have gone above and beyond will be short-listed and considered for the Award. The short-listed students are automatically offered a position on the Student Community Engagement Committee. Awards are all given to the best contributions from Residences, Halls of Residence, Sports Clubs, Societies and Service organisations. The Awards Evening is a wonderful opportunity to thank everyone for their hard work and commitment during the year. Following the Awards there is a short cocktail function. It's always a great evening and a highlight on the CE Calendar. The CE Awards function for this year will be held on 14 October 2011.

## HOW TO BE A GREAT VOLUNTEER - Take the Initiative

Within the Volunteer Programme we encourage the students to be as creative as possible. We encourage you to make constructive suggestions and come up with innovative activities. You could make use of the library for creative and innovative ideas.

Share ideas and suggestions with the Community Engagement Programme Co-ordinators. However, make sure that you discuss and obtain permission from your organisation supervisor before implementing any new activity. To ensure that your volunteering experience is a memorable one, please read the following rules and suggestions very carefully. They have been compiled to aid your experience and will hopefully answer any questions that you may have. For those of you who have never volunteered before, it will give you an idea of what is expected of you and what your role as a volunteer will be.

### The most important principles to bear in mind are the following:

- Be professional.
- Be humble.
- Honour your volunteer commitments.
- Always contact your organisation if for any reason you are unable to attend.

### Here are some specific dos and don'ts that should be followed.

#### DO's

Go in with the right attitude  
Be sensitive to cultural differences  
Take the initiative and be enthusiastic  
Be responsible and committed  
Be creative and proactive in arranging activities  
Notify the organisation if you cannot attend  
Report any situation where you feel unsafe or that inappropriate behaviour is making your volunteering assignment difficult (sexual harassment, etc)  
Dress appropriately (short skirts, tight pants and low cut tops not appropriate)  
Report any difficulties you are having to the Student Volunteer Programme Co-ordinator  
Keep the relationship professional at all times. (Romantic relationships with Clients/patients/child you meet are not acceptable or appropriate)

#### ***DON'TS***

Don't just not arrive when arranged, always let your supervisor know in advance

Don't go with a bad attitude  
Don't give money/clothes/foods if approached by an individual client/patient/child  
If you have something you would like to give/or donate do so through the organisation or the CE office  
If you are asked make it clear you are NOT allowed to give or lend money to anyone  
Don't invite a client/patient/child to your home and/or arrange to see them outside the organisation at which you are volunteering  
Don't give out your address or phone number (except to the supervisor at the organisation if appropriate)  
Don't give alcohol, drugs or cigarettes to a client/patient/child  
Don't project your religious or political beliefs onto others

## FAQ

### ***What happens if I am having problems with my placement, either with the organisation or with my fellow volunteers?***

If you are experiencing any problems with your placement please email [svp@ru.ac.za](mailto:svp@ru.ac.za) to arrange a time to come and speak to one of the CE programme co-ordinators. **Please bring any problems or queries that you may have to us.** In most instances the problems can be easily solved. Do not simply drop out of the Programme without discussing it with a CE programme co-ordinator. If the problem is severe, please call on us immediately. If required, we will try to arrange a new placement.

### ***What if I cannot make it to my placement?***

Generally, it is unacceptable to miss your volunteering placement. Once you have committed to it you should treat it as you would a tutorial or a job. Your placement should take priority. Meetings and appointments should be planned around your placement. If you cannot make it to your placement please phone the co-ordinator of the organisation or project at which you volunteer in good time. The only acceptable reasons for absence are academic tests scheduled or debilitating illness or personal crisis such as death in the family. If your timetable has changed in such a way that you will no longer be able to attend your registered placement, please let the SVP office know as soon as possible and we will attempt to allocate a new placement to you, preferably within the same organisation.

### ***What if other members of your placement group are not arriving for their placement or taking it seriously, or in any way behaving inappropriately?***

Please let us know if there is any fellow volunteer who you feel is being unreliable and not attending when they should. Also if any volunteer is behaving unprofessionally and or inappropriately please inform the SVP co-ordinator or any other CE co-ordinator. We will follow up and investigate confidentially.

### ***Dismissal of a Volunteer***

Volunteers who do not adhere to the rules and procedures of the Student Volunteer Programme or who fail to perform their volunteer task satisfactorily may be dismissed from the Student Volunteer Programme. No volunteer will be dismissed until s/he has had the opportunity to discuss the reasons with the Student Volunteer Programme Co-ordinator. A letter confirming their dismissal will be sent to the volunteer by the Student Volunteer Programme Co-ordinator.

### ***Resignation of a Volunteer***

Although commitment is heavily stressed in the Student Volunteer Programme, should a volunteer need to leave for any reason, please give the Student Volunteer Programme Co-ordinator as much notice as possible, preferably a month in advance so alternative arrangements could be made. Please inform the SVP co-ordinator in writing of your intention to leave the Student Volunteer Programme.

## **Volunteer Placements**

*Find the right opportunity for you*

The opportunities to volunteer are vast and various. Whatever unique skills you have to offer, you can use to help organisations who help others. Whether it's to use your practical skills to design posters or to give some love and attention to patients or just to lend a hand in administration, there is a place for everyone to get involved. In the past students have been involved in a wide range of activities, from maintenance to sports coaching, developing herb and/or food gardens, to running drama and dance classes for youth. Whatever contribution you feel you have to offer, the Student Volunteer Programme has places for students who are willing to give time and know-how to make a difference in the lives of those that need it most. The placements are divided into two focus areas namely Social Development and Education-based Interventions. A description of some of the projects is provided in this handbook.

### **SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTIONS**

#### **Home of Joy**

Home of Joy is a township based "Safety Home, for orphans of HIV/Aids and children from abusive homes. There are 18 children in total and their ages vary from 3 months to 18 years. Volunteers help with everything that needs to be done. There are volunteers who assist the children with their school work and others are organising games with the young ones. There are already residences and societies who are also involved.



#### **Raphael Centre**

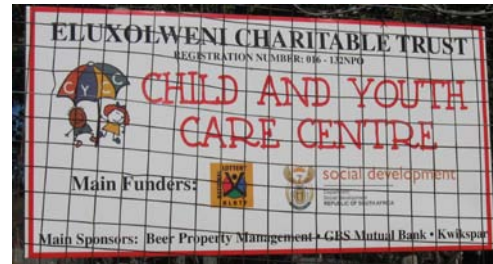
The Raphael Centre has been recognised for its excellence and dedication in combating the spread of HIV and AIDS and to



improving access to support services required by those who are HIV-positive or living with AIDS. The centre does voluntary HIV testing as well as training and education for People Living with HIV and AIDS.

Other programmes include: a prevention of mother to child transmission programme, access to treatment, food support, and an orphans and vulnerable children programme. The Raphael Centre has since its inception, been blessed by the valuable input of countless enthusiastic volunteers. Volunteers help with everything that needs to be done. On any given day, you might find them sorting through heaps of second-hand clothing for distribution, discovering hitherto hidden cooking skills or valiantly creating order out of the some of the administrative tasks! Times for Raphael are negotiable and need to be discussed with the head of the organisation.

### Eluxolweni and Trotter Street Shelters for Street Children



The Eluxolweni Shelter is one of five shelters for street children in the Eastern Cape. Eluxolweni means 'Place of Forgiveness and Peace' and provides residential care, rehabilitation programmes, counselling, meals three times a day, medical and dental care, access to schooling and church activities as well as clothing to local street /homeless children. Eluxolweni's mission is to initiate, sustain and encourage schooling and life skills development for these poor, needy and often neglected children. The primary focus is on local street children in and around the Makana Municipality. Children often enter the Eluxolweni Shelter with a history of sexual or physical abuse and delinquent behaviour. Some children battle with the substance abuse of their parents and the physical abuse that may accompany it. Others leave home because they are neglected. Most of the children at Eluxolweni have been let down by their family, their parents and the adults in their lives, and they desperately crave love and attention. Volunteers play a hugely important role in their rehabilitative routine and students with big hearts, who are compassionate, patient and tolerant, are needed to assist with afternoon activities for the children. Eluxolweni Shelter comprises three different shelters catering for the different sexes/age groups and there are 2 alternate placement options within the Student Volunteer Programme. Eluxolweni Main Shelter houses up to 35 boys between the ages of 6 and 12. Current activities include sports orientated afternoons such as soccer coaching, volleyball etc.

## The Gadra Advice Drumming and Music Project for the Civilian Blind



There are very few activities or programmes running for blind people in Grahamstown and the previous director of Grahamstown Distress Relief Association (GADRA) Advice Office which is located at the Grahamstown Day Hospital is worked in association with the Council for the Blind in creating an Activities Programme for the blind and severely short sighted. Once a week a group of CE student volunteers facilitated by members of Drum Soc share an afternoon of musical activities and drumming with the civilian blind support group.

## The Library for the Blind Current Affairs Discussion Group



A second project that forms part of GADRA's interventions with the Civilian Blind is the weekly Current Affairs discussion group facilitated by student volunteers and members of the Rhodes Debating Society. Journalism students and Debaters are encouraged to register for this highly rewarding programme.

## Sakhuluntu Cultural Group



Sakhuluntu Cultural Group is a community based organisation that aims to keep the youth off the street by coaching them in the skills of dance, African drums, drama, visual art and songs. The ages of the participants varies from 9 to 18 years. Journalism, drama, music and fine arts students are encouraged to register for this great initiative based at Extension 9 in Joza.

## Ethembeni Service Centre



Ethembeni Service Centre was opened in 1983 as an endeavour to combat poverty, malnutrition and loneliness among the aged. The aim of the centre is to improve the quality of lifestyle of the elderly citizens and to provide them with nutrition and health care. Volunteers will help Occupational Therapy, reading books to the elderly, knitting, crocheting, play sports and games

## St Mary's Development and Care Centre

St Mary's DCC provides care and regular meals to children in need between the ages of 6 and 18 years old. Parents apply for their children to take part in the programme. The children are selected from some of the most poverty stricken parts of Grahamstown. Once the children have joined the programme, they remain with it for the duration of their school life. The children go to St Mary's in the morning and get changed into their school uniform. After school, they go back to St Mary's and take part in a number of extra mural activities. Whether you enjoy sports, arts and crafts or are a computer boffin there is a place for everyone at St Mary's. As a volunteer at St Mary's you will be helping in the after school programme. The project co-ordinator will work with you to identify your particular strengths and interests and work out the best place for you to contribute.



## CSD Eyethu Resources and Donations Management Project

The Eyethu warehouse at the CSD is full to bursting with some very exciting recyclable materials donated by the Grahamstown community. What some consider rubbish others consider to be pre-school treasure! Many preschools around Grahamstown are dependent on the recyclable materials that are stored at Eyethu. CSD staff needs assistance both with sorting donated materials and making them ready for distribution to preschools as well as with transporting the materials from the CSD to the Eyethu warehouse. A new aspect to this project is the coordination and distribution of student donated clothes and food-stuffs. Particularly for those of you who care about the environment, this unglamorous task makes a hugely valuable contribution to schools and distress relief associations in the Grahamstown area.



## Mandela Day

Throughout the world, people are encouraged to devote 67 minutes of their day to public service to honour Madiba's contribution to global politics and development. Every year

Community Engagement office will honour the call and also encourage all staff and students to participate. If not sure about your contribution feel free to contact RUCS.

Let's **MAKE EVERY DAY A MANDELA DAY.**

**Mandela Day will be on the 29 JULY 2011.**



THE FOLLOWING PROJECTS ARE NOT FULLY ADMINISTERED BY THE CE OFFICE. STUDENTS INTERESTED IN THESE PROJECTS SHOULD COMPLETE THE APPLICATION FORMS AND SEND THEM TO US AS WELL AS DIRECT TO THE PROGRAMME SUPERVISOR. THEY WILL THEN ADVISE US IF YOUR PARTICIPATION SHOULD BE ACKNOWLEDGED AND YOU WILL RECEIVE A SVP CERTIFICATE AT THE YEAR- END FUNCTION.

## Child Community Project

This is a run by the RU Psychology Clinic in which suitable psychology students are trained to work with children who have been diagnosed as having developmental delays and

involves support and limited therapeutic work with the children. Volunteers will receive training and regular supervision in providing support to these children and their families. You need to register directly with the department for this project. If accepted you must complete all 3 of the forms and email them to [svp@ru.ac.za](mailto:svp@ru.ac.za) so we can ensure your volunteering is recorded on your student record and that you receive your certificate at the year end.

### Rhodes Sports Outreach

Rhodes Sports Administration believes in sharing their resources, both human and capital, with the community. Clubs regularly hold community development programmes around Grahamstown, particularly with the previously disadvantaged communities. Students participate and register via the respective sports clubs. Queries should go to the co-ordinator at Rhodes Sports Outreach who oversees these programmes who will then confirm with us at year-end which students have been regular volunteers for Rhodes Sports Outreach and Development. We ensure your contribution is acknowledged on your student record and that you receive a certificate at our year end function.

## EDUCATION FOCUSED VOLUNTEERING

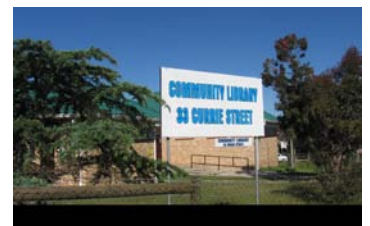
### Grahamstown Public Library

The Grahamstown Public Library offers volunteers the wonderful opportunity of adding greater value to learners' education. The library's resources cover a wide variety of topics. Volunteers may find themselves assisting with a project about the Nile River one week and the next be assisting with the daily running of the library, helping check books in and out. There is also the option of reading to the children. This is a wonderful opportunity for those who love storytelling. For those passionate about education and the importance thereof, the Library offers a meaningful volunteering opportunity.



### Community Library

At the community library, the volunteers focus more on assisting children with research for school projects, showing them where books are kept and how the Dewey system works. Because the library is under resourced, volunteers may also assist with organising and arranging books and displays.



## Fingo Library

Fingo library is based at Raglan Road Multi-Purpose Community Centre. At the library, the volunteers focus more on assisting children with research for school projects, showing them where books are kept and how the Dewey system works. On request from the Librarian, volunteers may also assist with organising and arranging books and displays



## Kuyasa Special School

The Kuyasa Special School has been running for over 10 years and caters for children with special needs. The School is looking for creative and compassionate students to spend one-on-one time with the children and help them with their learning in a quiet and colourful environment.



## PRE SCHOOL INTERVENTIONS

The CE Unit has a special partnership with the Centre for Social Development (CSD) for the placement of 40 student volunteers in its Early Childhood Development (ECD) Centres. CSD has a number of preschools and multi-purpose community centres eager for assistance from warm, passionate and committed students. The preschool children are vivacious and volunteers are soon caught up in their enthusiasm. The schools have a number of basic resources such as paint, crayons, beads, etc but volunteers can also source other resources from CSD's Eyethu Project, which can be used in assisting children in making beautiful handicrafts and other creative activities. Students also assist in the classroom with educational games. There is huge value in having students visit the schools not least of which is the crucial importance of giving them the opportunity to hear spoken English. Placements will include the 6 preschools mentioned below, each with their own unique character and needs:



- *Luzuko Preschool*
- *Noncedo Preschool*
- *St Phillips Preschool*
- *Siyazama Multipurpose Community Centre*
- *Nompumelelo Preschool*
- *The Raglan Road Multi-Purpose Community*

The volunteers placed with CSD will have to attend a workshop on early childhood development (ECD) as preparation before commencement of their placements.

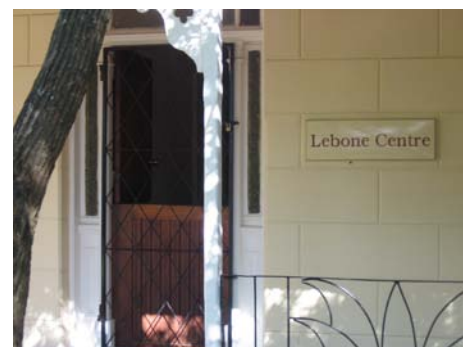
## PRIMARY SCHOOL INTERVENTIONS

### Lebone Love Reading Club

The Lebone Love Reading Club is an exciting literacy building and reading initiative aimed at improving the literacy rate of children from historically disadvantaged primary schools in the vicinity near Kingswood College. The children have been identified by the Kingswood College Integrated Community Development Program Trust in partnership with the principals of these neighbouring schools. Rhodes student volunteers spend an hour a week with the children working on their reading skills. The individual attention paid to them by the volunteers plays an important role in improving their confidence and self-esteem. It is helpful if the volunteers that sign up for this project are able to speak Afrikaans as this is the mother tongue of the majority of children involved in the project. (This project has been run as a pilot project with the view to running similar clubs at primary schools and community libraries.)

### Lebone ACE After-school Programme

The Lebone Centre acts as an aftercare facility for fifteen children each weekday during term time. These children are considered 'vulnerable children' for whom Lebone is a safe-haven in the afternoons. It is hoped that by giving these children the extra attention that they need, they will be able to succeed, both in school and in life. The volunteers work with the Lebone House staff and participate in activities with the children as well as assist with reading and homework. Although the mother tongue of the children is Afrikaans, English is the language predominantly spoken. This is a conscious choice made by the staff as it provides the children with the opportunity to improve their English. Second language Afrikaans will, however, be useful.



### Amasango Career School

Amasango Career School offers accelerated bridging education to street children. Children are assessed on arrival using a very basic tool, which the school has developed, which allows them to place a child in the correct class for his/her current academic level, irrespective of previous



schooling. The initial curriculum is limited to English, Xhosa, maths, art, and educational games. i.e. basic literacy and numeracy, underpinned with pre-school activities to give the foundation these children have never had. When they have reached grade 6 level in literacy and numeracy, Amasango staff "crash course" the children into a full school curriculum. This can be a very difficult time for the slower learners and they often revert to aggressive behaviour. After grade 7, Amasango pupils progress into normal township high schools, facilitating re-integration into society. This works very well for many pupils but for those who are very old (e.g. aged 20 in grade 8) or those who struggle academically, a more skills-based curriculum which prepares them for the world of work is more appropriate. Any voluntary teaching assistance and support is welcomed (and desperately needed). The Rhodes students, who volunteer, act as teacher's assistants and individual tutors to learners. This programme is not for the faint-hearted but is deeply rewarding opportunity to make a real difference. Students who volunteer at Amasango do not use RhodeTrip. They negotiate a time to tutor with the principal at the school and then get then independently each week.

## HIGH SCHOOL INTERVENTIONS

### High Schools Outreach Programmes

In June of 2007, Rhodes Community Engagement started a pilot programme helping learners in Grahamstown East's previously disadvantaged high schools. The High Schools Initiative has 3 facets:

- **LOVE READING CLUBS (LRC):** The roll-out of Love Reading Clubs to grade 8 classrooms across Grahamstown. The aim of our Love Reading Clubs is to provide exposure to English conversation and literacy. Many of Grahamstown's High Schools learners battle with the transition from 1<sup>st</sup> language medium Primary Schools to English medium Secondary Schools, and we are hoping that by providing a way to improve English skills, learners will be better able to access their other subject curricula. We currently have clubs at three schools in Grahamstown East, with one of the clubs being run by Golden Key. Societies are also welcome to enquire about "adopting" a club.

### Nombulelo L RC

It is a sad reality that many Grade 8 learners in the Eastern Cape are functionally illiterate and this impairs their ability to perform academically. The Nombulelo Love Reading Club was started in January 2006 and has grown into a very successful and constructive literacy club. Student volunteers work with a small group of Grade 8 learners and help them further develop their English literacy skills with the view to improved literacy skills that will facilitate better overall performance in the classroom. The curriculum has been designed in such a way so as to make the learning stimulating and engaging and the focus is on literacy and fun and how the two do not necessarily need to be strangers! Any students eager to assist are encouraged to sign up.

### Samuel Ntsika LRC

The Love Reading Club was started in the beginning of 2008 at Samuel Ntsika High School in Joza's Extension 9. We are looking for dedicated and enthusiastic volunteers who will take this task and run with it, bringing a really awesome opportunity to the grade 8 learners at Samuel Ntsika to access English through conversation and reading, giving them greater access to their high school subject curricula.

## High School Tutoring and MERP

**MATRIC EXAM REVISION PROGRAMME (MERP)** has been created in response to the desire of our VC to see more Grahamstown East learners enter University. Matrics will be brought to Rhodes on a Saturday morning for a revision session with student tutors (training is provided to the tutors by RU Faculty of Education) in Maths, Maths Lit, English, Accounting, Economics, Physical Science, Life Sciences, History and Geography and one afternoon per week for a mentoring session with you where you can help them with homework and assist where possible. The programme is having a student Team Leader and needs to maintain communication with the schools and flow of the programme.



**NB:** for all students who want to be involved in any TUTORING PROGRAMME, there are compulsory training workshops facilitated by RU Faculty of Education.

**THE FOLLOWING PROJECTS ARE NOT ADMINISTERED BY THE RUCE. INTERESTED STUDENTS SHOULD COMPLETE THE APPLICATION FORMS AND SEND THEM BOTH TO [svp@ru.ac.za](mailto:svp@ru.ac.za) AS WELL AS DIRECTLY TO THE PROGRAMME SUPERVISOR. THEY WILL THEN ADVISE US IF YOUR PARTICIPATION SHOULD BE ACKNOWLEDGED AND YOU WILL RECEIVE A SVP CERTIFICATE AT THE YEAR- END FUNCTION.**

## Golden Key CM Vellum Love Reading Club

Golden Key adopted a Love Reading Club at CM Vellum Health Promoting School in July of 2007. If you are a member of Golden Key, don't forget to ask your Community Engagement representative about how you can get involved with this exciting grade 8 Reading Club.

## Khanya Maths and Science Club

The Khanya (isiXhosa for "light") Maths and Science Club consists of learners from Grade 7 and upwards who meet every Saturday morning. The Club aims to teach children about Maths and Science – and to show them that the subjects can be enjoyable. The children are also taken on interesting outings. Chemistry Department staff and students, from 1<sup>st</sup> year through to doctoral level, give lectures on both curriculum and non-curriculum based Maths and Science. Please note non-chemistry students who can tutor school level Maths and Science are welcome to sign up to participate. Contact Joyce Sewry in the Chemistry Department directly on [J.sewry@ru.ac.za](mailto:J.sewry@ru.ac.za).

## VAST Outreach

The VAST Outreach programme is assisting high school learners from various disadvantaged high schools in the Grahamstown East area. Working with the Mobile Biology Laboratory students are tutoring Matric Biology. The learners are divided into small groups each lead by a student volunteer who goes through past papers with learners and focus on explaining sections and consolidating class work. In order to be a VAST Outreach volunteer, at least a matric/A-level in biology is needed, with university biological science subjects being beneficial. Students from second year to postgrad are welcome, and are expected to dedicate one afternoon on a weekly basis. Please email [carynmcnamara@gmail.com](mailto:carynmcnamara@gmail.com)

## Student Volunteer Programme Affiliate Organisations

The below listed affiliate organisations are partners of the Volunteer programme with whom students in the Special Events Team assist with on an ad hoc basis. There aren't weekly volunteering placements at these organisations but SVP responds to their requests for assistance regularly throughout the year.

### Grahamstown Hospice

Grahamstown Hospice offers palliative care and brings comfort and support to the families and patients of those affected by terminal illness. They strive to provide quality home based services and free palliative care for all who need it. Hospice also offers bereavement counselling for the patients' family members. Students in the past have helped out in numerous areas, assisting with special events and fundraising projects. Although there are no formalised weekly placements at Hospice the CE Special Events Team may be called in to assist. Their involvement can include anything from organising fundraisers, assisting with street collections to writing letters, selling tickets for events, sorting donated jumble, magazines and goods or even just helping with administration such as photocopying, distribution of newsletters, making posters, etc.

### Grahamstown Red Cross

The work of the Red Cross in South Africa has changed to reflect the environment in which it is working. This means that much of today's work is related to health and disaster management issues, particularly the

devastating impact that HIV & AIDS is having in South Africa. The priorities of the national society focuses on the four core areas of health and care, disaster management (DM), organisational development (OD) and humanitarian values. The Special Events team and or student residences and societies sometimes fundraise for Red Cross, do street collections or collect donations of clothing and food to be distributed as part of their distressed families/ disaster management programme.

### **Settlers Hospital**

Student organisations and societies can play an important role at Settlers Hospital children's ward. They can arrange events and activities for the children and in so doing work alongside hospital staff and contribute to the care and wellbeing of patients. Clubs and societies can arrange visits to children in the ward, play games and participate in activities with the children. Arranged visits such as these provide the children in the ward with much needed love and attention with the aim of improving their quality of life during their stay at Settlers. Student organisations can also make visits to the long staying patients in the Hospital's Barret Wing. These patients' lives are very monotonous and visits from student societies can make a tangible difference.

### **Society for the Physical Disabled**

The Society for the Physical Disabled provides social work services (counselling, advice, assistance with school placements, pension issues etc) to adults and children with disabilities (excluding the blind who are served by Civilian Blind) They also offer a child development clinic for children who are developmentally delayed and run a care group for children with severe physical and mental disabilities who won't benefit from mainstream schooling - this is based at Kuyasa School. Student volunteers from the Special Events Team assist the society with a variety of fundraising efforts and regularly provide willing hands for their street collections and events.

## SUMMARY OF DATES FOR STUDENT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND SVP: 2011

**ORIENTATION WEEK:** 1 to 5 Feb

**TERM 1:** Monday 14 February - Friday 26 March

**CLOSING DATE FOR VOLUNTEER APPLICATION-FIRST TERM:** 17 February

**REGISTRATION OF VOLUNTEERS :** 16 February (returning volunteers)  
17 February (new volunteers)

**VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION/TRAINING WORKSHOPS :** Group 1: 19 February (Returning Volunteers)  
: Group 2: 26 February (CE Reps and New Volunteers)

**MONITORING AND REFLECTION WORKSHOPS :** 11 May

**FIRST TERM VOLUNTEERING STARTS FOR RETURNING VOLUNTEERS :** 21 February  
**NEW VOLUNTEERS:** 28 February  
**FIRST TERM VOLUNTEERING ENDS:** 01 April

**TERM 2:** Monday 11 April – Friday 24 June  
**SECOND TERM VOLUNTEERING STARTS:** 11 April  
**SECOND TERM VOLUNTEERING ENDS:** 27 May

**TERM 3:** Monday 25 July - Friday 9 September  
**THIRD TERMS VOLUNTEERING STARTS:** 25 July  
**THIRD TERMS VOLUNTEERING ENDS:** 9 September

**TERM 4:** Monday 19 September – Friday 21 October  
**FOURTH TERM VOLUNTEERING STARTS:** 6 September  
**FOURTH TERM VOLUNTEERING ENDS:** 21 October

**CE AWARDS FUNCTION:** 14 October

**PLEASE NOTE THERE IS NO VOLUNTEERING ON PUBLIC HOLIDAY**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Where do I go?

\_\_\_\_\_

What day and what time?

\_\_\_\_\_

What should I take with?

\_\_\_\_\_

What are my skills?

\_\_\_\_\_

What am I able to give?

\_\_\_\_\_

Important phone numbers I might need to call:

\_\_\_\_\_

Note: Record in Journal after each session

## ESSAY OF THE YEAR 2010: *What is your vision for Community Engagement at Rhodes University?*

By: Nondumiso N Hlophe

Dwight D. Eisenhower once said "This world of ours...must avoid becoming a community of dreadful fear and hate, and be, instead, a proud confederation of mutual trust and respect." Sometimes, human beings are so unaware of our (argued naturally Hobbesian) self-indulgent disposition. For the most part, as 'Rhodents' preoccupied with the grades, the good times and the memories that happen along the way at university, we lose sight of what it truly means to belong to a community, one that goes beyond 'bleeding Purple'. As a fifth-year student at Rhodes University, a part of me is ashamed to admit that it took this long for me to get directly involved and volunteer with community engagement office. I sat on the committee of a society for many years during my undergraduate studies, which had its community engagement mandate. It was all very removed, the realities and the experience of the city of Grahamstown went as far as the fetching and dropping off of children from Joza for certain events-very 'us' and 'them' at its core, largely fulfilling SRC criteria to ensure the longevity of the society. It took until this year, as a student who studied the Politics of Space and volunteering (first at Kuyasa Special School and then at St. Mary's Day care) for, one, to appreciate just how privileged I am on a daily basis and, secondly, to truly understand that this city extends further than my mind and consciousness had ever needed to register in the "college experience".

As Rhodes students, we (for the most part) are insulated from many of the realities and hardships the greater part of Grahamstown faces: the poverty and unemployment, the feeling of being ignored by the governing bodies and the state, but most of all, the recognition that this as much their town as it belongs to the 6 000-odd students who call this city their 'home away from home', thus breeding a lack of mutual trust and respect. Because a fair share amount of students are so cocooned in purple and so ignorant of the truths beyond the Rat, beyond the Cathedral and (for those who consider themselves "daring") beyond Sheet Street on Beaufort, my vision would be that a year (or an applicable number of hours) of community engagement would be a prerequisite for every student to be eligible for graduation. This is not a new concept: both of the high-schools I attended had some form of mandatory number of hours of community service that each student needed to complete to be eligible to sit for exams. Like here at Rhodes, the programs ranged: from health and nutrition programs with adolescents; sports programs held on campus for the use of our sporting facilities with children from disadvantaged schools; starting veggie gardens in township areas. At one former high school, the Ward 8 program served to foster ties with the home of HIV/AIDS abandoned babies, who died on a regular basis, at the local government hospital. This idea goes beyond simply providing extra hands and services to please that might be in need of them, it extends to realizing the need to acknowledge the space in which we live in and the people who we live with, as much as some students may argue that they are too far removed to be considered in the "Rhodes reality". It acknowledges that while we foster ties initially to help others, we are unassumingly helped by those we encounter along the way, and more importantly, we all learn from one another lessons that are invaluable to the human experience that is life.

Some people argue that including people in community engagement with the sole intention of being eligible for graduation defeats the idea of a willing and able volunteer, who enthusiastically approaches this task with the right attitude- that of the people and not of the paper (be it the degree or the money in employment to follow graduation). I agree, to a certain extent. People should still be given the liberty to get involved in programs where they would actively participate and maximize their strengths, be it physically, emotional, socially, mentally or spiritually. A person who is able to volunteer at a special school may not be able to volunteer at a literacy program in Xhosa-but this is not to say that they are weaker in any one sphere, despite the two both dealing with education-their strengths are harnessed to better serve the community where they see themselves actively engaging with the people.

However, to simply dismiss an ideal as important as recognizing, respecting and building trust within one's community based on the thought that its motivation is wrong (eligibility for graduation, for instance), is wrong. I found that a lot of the students that I went to high school with who started off with a negative attitude towards CE at the start of the year were the same ones who were the first to cry at the end of their time of service, because real relationships were developed. Of course the usual "checks and balances" (supervisor reports sign in and sign out etcetera) would apply. However, the most important check and balance would be the eligibility exam at the end of the year, an oral session conducted by the CE office with a student during the final term of volunteering - covering what the experience had taught them about their community.

There is the Nguni aphorism that says "Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu", which literally means that a person is a person (that is, their humanity is confirmed and reinforced) through his/her interactions with other people. To affirm who you are while simultaneously recognizing the dignity and humanity of others, is a powerful notion. The reality is that the community that one calls home during your time as a degree-seeking student can go beyond training you for a future job. Instead, it can truly educate you to become a person worthy of accolades beyond a paper that reduces who you are to a score, resulting in a degree. I would like to think that, as someone who has walked the stage of the Monument twice (and God willing, will do it a third time in the next couple of years), I have only truly begun my education and that the mentor of this is every experience I have encountered along the way in community engagement. I believe that this vision would give real meaning to the ideal of 'Where leaders learn'; about themselves, about others, from others, with others. It would truly reach beyond thoughts of being conditioned for the academic but affirm (and continuously reaffirm) the realm of one being a true scholar of life.