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Y-TALK

Empowering Young People for Life, Leadership & Service

From the NGS



Dear Friends,

As we continue battling the ravages of Covid 19 all around us, there are brief moments of light that encourage us to keep moving forward. It has been my pleasure to see how staff and volunteers of the YMCA have stepped up to lead the way in their communities, their personal lives and even making positive contributions at national and international level.

Our youth focussed webinars, Y-Leaders Talk series, the Social Enterprise webinars currently underway and International Padare sessions have demonstrated that we are relevant and making a difference in society. However, as this Y-Talk illustrates, Covid 19 has caused many YMCAs, like the PMB YMCA, to struggle for survival. Many others will follow. It is imperative that we stand together as a movement during such times. As the prophet Amos said, "Act justly, with compassion and humility. That is what the Lord requires of you".

Athlone YMCA - Caring in Communities

The Athlone YMCA Community Health Workers (CHW) play a critical role in widening access, coverage of health services and undertaking actions that lead to improved health outcomes in the Athlone Community. Like many sectors, their work was affected by the outbreak of the novel Corona Virus in the country. With the outbreak, there has been a lot of fear and anxiety mostly with their clients and families because of the risk associated with the CHW job which requires them to conduct home visits to offer their services. It was because of this and other identified risks that the Department of Health decided to suspend "home" care services until such time the nation has a handle on the virus.

This, however, did not mean that the clients were not left stranded. The families of our clients receiving home based care were given emergency training from the CHW to be able to perform the basic

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services until such time that the CHW's are able to return to assist the families. The CHWs have kept in constant communication with clients' families.



The good news is that we are now again able to reintegrate the Community Health Workers to their work in the community.

All precautionary measures are in place to make sure that both clients and care workers are protected from getting infected with COVID 19.

Our first new client is a 90 year old who we are caring for at her home. We are proud to be able to support our community in this way.

This development does not come without challenges. YMCA Athlone has received limited stock of personal protective equipment. The CHWs are all from within the communities they work in, and these communities are poverty stricken.

We are running fundraisers to provide food hampers and other essentials as additional support to the CHWs. Our belief is that we cannot send staff into the field without trying to assist them first.

YMCA Fund supports Online Learning

Mpumelelo Zulu, the first beneficiary of the SA YMCA/Charlotte Coleman-Smith (CCS) Bursary fund, is a second year Electrical Engineering student at Durban University of Technology.

He has shared that in a time where students are feeling let down and not supported by their Universities and Faculties, he is happy to be associated with, and a beneficiary of, the fund. Through this relationship he has the resources to continue online with his studies.

While many other students are struggling with access to computers, wifi and data, Mpumelelo has been able to purchase a laptop and monthly data to keep his online learning going.

In addition to this, through the monthly stipend he receives, he has been able to empower himself and get his learners licence.



Mpumelelo Zulu - 1st recipient of CCS Bursary Fund

Ngiyabonga YMCA, niyangi siza kakhulu **(Thank you YMCA. You support me greatly).**

Struggling YMCA begs PMB council to restore power despite R2m bill

This article was written by a journalist of the Mercury newspaper, in solidarity with PMB YMCA

A global non-profit organisation that has helped feed and shelter the homeless during the lockdown in Pietermaritzburg has suffered a huge setback after the municipality disconnected its electricity last week.

The fate of the YMCA – a youth empowerment organisation that has been servicing Pietermaritzburg and surrounds for 145 years – hangs in the balance if it cannot find at least R320 000 to have the electricity reconnected.

The Msunduzi Municipality switched the lights off because the YMCA had not paid its bill for the past three months.

Now, the YMCA faces further loss in funding as its tenants cannot function without electricity and may abandon the organisation.

The municipality said it could not reconnect the YMCA unless it paid its account in full, as the credit-control policy stipulated.

In a written communication with the chief executive of the organisation, Clinton George, city manager Madoda Khathide said that the credit-control policy was very clear in cases of defaulting consumers and that the YMCA's acknowledgement of debt resulting from the lockdown made it a potential candidate for the termination of its existing payment arrangement.

"I am not going to reconnect the electricity in your facility sir, unless you pay what is due. I'm battling to pay Eskom, Umgeni and other creditors. You saw on front-page news that we are accused of mismanaging the city and I have committed to rectifying these by the end of September 2020," Khathide wrote to George.



PMB YMCA Indoor Sport Centre



George said their finances hit rock bottom when the lockdown started in March as the Y-Fit gym had to close in keeping with the risk-adjusted regulations.

Since all of the funds raised through gym membership fees went to the YMCA, the organisation suffered a huge financial loss from that alone as most clients cancelled their memberships.

Then, the University of KwaZulu-Natal notified them it would not pay its R150 000 monthly rent for the student hostels as the students were not occupying the space.

George explained that, in 2018, the YMCA signed an acknowledgement of debt with the municipality after it began experiencing financial difficulties two years earlier when UKZN did not renew its lease for student hostels for a year.

The YMCA offered to pay R10 000 monthly toward its R2m debt with the municipality – a promise it had not defaulted on since then.

"Every month, diligently, we paid R10 000 toward our debt. This payment was done over and above our monthly electricity bill.

When Covid-19 hit, there was no cash flow from the gym, no rental from UKZN, and that affected us badly. I wrote to the municipality explaining our situation and offered that we still commit to paying R10 000 toward our previous debt, but pleaded that they allow us some leeway in paying the current account."

This YMCA is still without electricity as at 31 July.



Locked down in Norway with the YWCA/YMCA...Sunnmøre Folkehøgskule in Ulsteinvik, Norway

Putting Plans on Hold during Covid 19

When the lockdowns started I remember thinking that “Everything will be fine” and “Soon it will be over”. It has been 3 months since then. I am currently working and lingering at Sunnmøre Folkehøgskule, a folk high school, in Ulsteinvik, a coastal town on the North-West coast of Norway.

Here there are low Covid- 19 statistics. This is due to Norway’s response to the pandemic and possibly the population density.

I am being kept busy and safe through this time by the school and the Norwegian YMCA-YWCA (KFUK-KFUM). This is also now my longest time abroad and each new day I achieve a new personal best.

Like everyone else this year due to the restrictions and prevention methods put in place to combat Covid-19, I had to put some plans on hold. Plans for both self improvement and the development of our YMCA. I may claim that these plans would have inspired millions but I guess since they won’t be happening we will never know. LOL.

Since before the lockdowns Ravensmead YMCA had started discussions on recruitment. We wanted to be able to meet the requirements of our community without putting heavy strain on

our current volunteers and staff. The task seemed possible at the beginning of the year but once South Africa was on lockdown we had to postpone most of our work and the plans we had. So we kind of got rid of the heavy strain anyway. Just not in the way we would have liked.

During this time we focused on doing things that were still possible even with the current restrictions.

This is also now my longest time abroad and each new day I achieve a new personal best.

Although I am abroad, with the help of video calls and many voice notes, me and Qulen Lottering, have created a general community survey, in both English and Afrikaans, to gather information to help design programs that are more community focused and to gain a deeper understanding of what is important to people in Ravensmead. We have also continued with our plans of

recruitment by designing a poster and creating a recruitment plan for a time when it will be possible.

It is important to have plans but our plans don’t always happen in the time we have set. So then make a PLAN with T(ea) instead. We are sowing seeds that we hope to reap at the right time.

Written by Keenan Whyte – Ravensmead YMCA

Nelson Mandel Bay YMCA Combating Gender Based Violence

While the coronavirus pandemic and anti-racism protests have been dominating global consciousness, in South Africa a recent spike in femicides has caused fresh horror and public outcry. Apart from the economy and health systems being shattered, there has been more impact with women murdered daily than the shadow created by the pandemic.

A woman is murdered every three hours in South Africa and 51% of SA women have experienced violence at the hands of someone with whom they are in a relationship. Even before Covid-19, domestic violence was one of the greatest human rights violations. As the pandemic continues, violence against women is likely to grow with multiple impacts on women's wellbeing, their mental health and the ability to participate and lead in the recovery of our societies and economy.

In celebration of Mandela Day, the Nelson Mandel Bay YMCA had the honour of spending 67 minutes at Yokhuselo Gender-Based Violence Haven. The Haven is dedicated to helping women and their

“What counts in life is not the mere fact that we lived. It is what difference we made to the lives of others” – Nelson Mandela

children affected by domestic violence, providing a safe temporary home and counselling to help cope with the short and long term emotional trauma. We pampered



the women and their children with hygiene care kits for them to know there are people who care and want to see safe spaces for women.

The increase in violence against women must be dealt with urgently through measures that meet the gravity and scale of the challenge and reflect the needs of women who face multiple forms of discrimination. Covid-19 is already testing us in ways none of us have previously experienced. The violence that is emerging now as a dark feature of this pandemic is a mirror and a challenge to our values, our resilience and shared humanity. We must not only survive the coronavirus but emerge renewed, with women as a powerful force at the center of recovery.

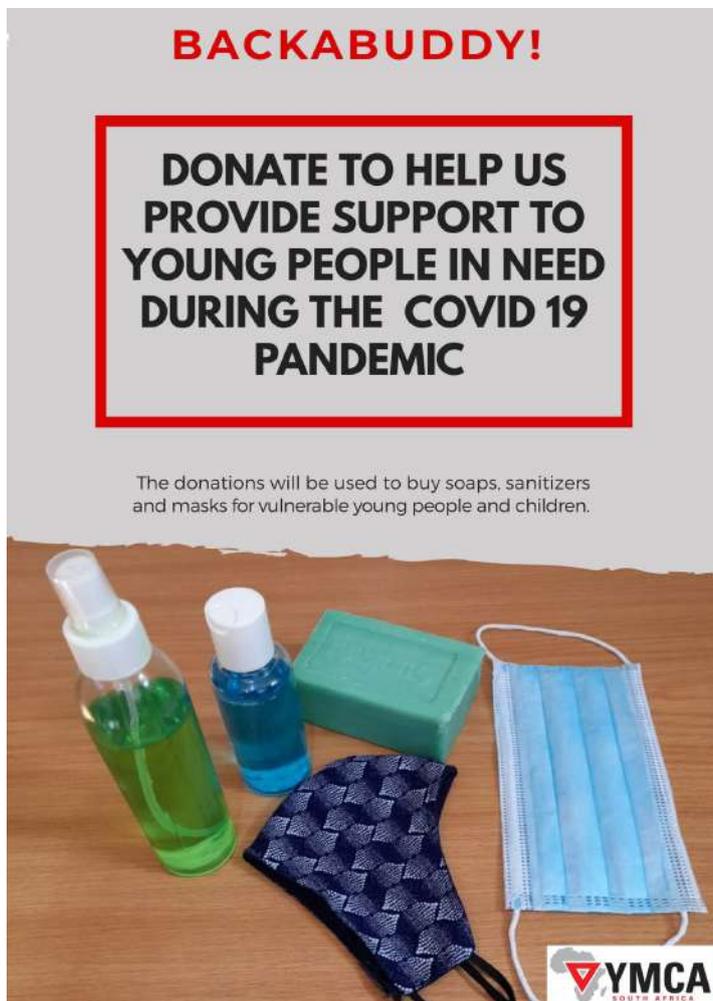
Webinar and Workshop Updates

In the last 2 weeks of July, we have had 2 webinars and one online workshop. The first webinar was the Youth webinar with the topic "what it means to be an active citizen". This webinar was a launch of a dialogue on being an active citizen under the Be An Active Citizen. Be Like Mo Campaign. The webinar was also a commemoration of Nelson Mandela day by being held for 67 mins. During the Covid 19 crisis, being an active citizen is very important and South Africa YMCA aims to empower youth to be active citizens. Young YMCA members shared what being active citizens meant to them and what roles they are playing as active citizens during the time of Covid 19.

The second webinar, which also happened to be the second Y-Leaders Talk Series, was held

on the 22nd of July 2020 with the topic "Opportunities and Challenges in the time of Covid -19". The guest speaker for this webinar was the General Secretary of Africa Alliance of YMCAs – Nirina Rakotomala. In her presentation she pointed out how much Covid 19 has accelerated the urgent need for youth empowerment initiatives in Africa to assist youth who, before the pandemic, were already faced with many challenges such as lack of education and unemployment/ underemployment. Nirina highlighted the importance of YMCA focusing on designing programs that use the bottom up approach that would involve young people in the planning and decision making process.

Young people are part of the solution and are at the centre of the YMCA mission.



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Y-LEADERS TALK SERIES - The 3rd webinar



**Y-LEADERS
TALK SERIES**

#YeNow

Speaker:
Rev. Bafana Khumalo
Director & Co-founder: Sonke Gender Justice

Topic: The Impact of gender-based violence on young people

Date: Wed, 5 AUGUST 2020 | Time: 17h00

Zoom Webinar

For more info: Contact Pasca Ndlovu | pascandlovu@saymca.org.za

Register in advance for this webinar @:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_jhJTk0QhQpWUofOsUxaMQg