

March 2011

Hi, Welcome to our March edition.

From Mario's desk...

The month of March belongs to our girls. What an achievement! They performed at Newlands stadium during halftime, in the Ajax Cape Town/ Orlando Pirates game.

They were very excited and proud of themselves. They also received Adidas clothing from Ajax and that they really enjoyed. The skipping program is taking them to new heights.

In the past month the gang activities has made news again and a lot of young lives have been taken as a result of gang activities. Communities are standing up against gangs, and the release of 65 top gang leaders this year won't make it easier. Yet what really surprised me is that the government has no idea what to do with gangs, this is just my personal opinion.



Fighting crime is not going to work; creating positive opportunities for the youth is the key. Treat them like humans and they will respond as humans, treat them like dogs they will respond like dogs.

Reading the news I can only say we are on the right track, prevention is better than cure.

Any comments please email me at mario@gcu.org.za



Cleaning our immediate environment is of utmost importance in changing the atmosphere in our community. We are slowly seeing some positive signs of our kids taking responsibility for their community. We believe only when this starts happening, one will see real change. Below are some pictures to show what they have been up to.

U/9 boys getting ready to water the field



U/13 picking up glass on the field



U/17 raking the field



One of the coaches doing gardening



In the above pictures you can see what we striving for, to get everyone to work in unity. We're also keen in seeing more positive role models coming through in our community. Because of the GCU using the park and cleaning the park, more and more kids are making use of the park. Creating a safe place for kids to play is so important.

They will normally stand on corners



our girls all they want is a ball to play with



Our projects on Woodlands Primary are going very well. Thanks to the Backpack we are in the process of hiring a librarian to work in the school library 3 days a week, it is a dream come true. The literacy rate is currently 16% and having the library up and running will be a huge help. We are also in the process of putting windows in the classrooms we revamped during 2009, which will be used as a homework room, art room and indoor gym. We are still in the process of painting the school and are coming along slowly, but we are positive we will get it done.



The school garden is looking stunning; this is our first flower in the picture above. It is amazing to think what this garden has done; it has created a very positive mood. For us the flower presents hope - never write something off that seems dead, create opportunity and you give life.

Meet Victor from Barcelona who has offered up his time to volunteer at our program doing some coaching with our u/9.



We currently have boys from four communities and our program is growing rapidly. There are so some much more I can share with you, but it will take forever. Please do come visit us if you can or come watch a match on a Saturday.

Through your help, you are putting a smile on many kids' faces and this is priceless!

Thank you for believing in us, your support gives us an opportunity to create a better future for our kids. We really appreciate your assistance and please know that this is making a huge difference.

We are in need of help to run our programs, but I will leave the ball in your court. If you would love to partner with us please feel free to make contact with me.

Once again thank you.

Regards

Mario Van Niekerk