

Tyume Valley Schools Newsletter

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www.tvschools.org.uk



Junior learners in the English classes Picture © Vicky Riley

After over ten years of working in the Tyume valley we are getting feedback from students who have gone on to further education and are working. Many hold good jobs. They are using Facebook to network and below is a great testimonial from one of the Tyume Valley village children who made it to university against the odds.

"I wish I could be there (at Hobbiton) now... I'm in varsity now. But you guys really helped me with computers... Now I'm not lost when it comes to WRFC101 - one of my good computing modules. Thank you, keep on the good work."

Siya, February 2015

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Over three thousand children have benefited from study camps and extra English classes.

Computer training has become a vital part of enabling students and teachers. We now have one full time and two part time local trainers. Two hundred children and adults receive lessons every week in our dozen small labs across the valley.

Teachers attending our courses have welcomed the introduction of new ideas to stimulate children.

We have facilitated two active school partnerships with the UK and hope to have more.

Your support is vital to continue these activities which are so valued in Tyume Valley.

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Computer class for school leavers

Impressions of TVS after 10 years by Zola Zembe

Zola was born in the village of Kwezana in Tyume and played an active part in the struggle against apartheid. He now lives in Tynemouth.

“It was interesting to see the British teachers in action at a study camp for the first time. I particularly liked the fact that they were using singing, always popular with South Africans, to develop spoken English. The children sang reading the words from the blackboard and then went outside to sing again, this time without the words in front of them. They enjoyed it and it was impressive. I think the priority TVS gives to improving English is correct (although of course maths and computing are also important).”

“It is good that TVS is able to take the children up to the mountains in Hogsback. They were experiencing a different environment, which otherwise they might never see, and this helped them enjoy learning. I think that education should be enjoyable.”

“It was excellent to see the Principal of Jamala Primary School and other teachers taking part.”

We called also at Enkenkwezini High School and spoke to the Principal. She was very supportive of TVS because she has seen the school pass rate for Matric improve to over 80%. She very much appreciates the help her students get from TVS through the Study Camps. My hopes for the future would be for more community involvement in TVS' activities and the local schools; to encourage more school gardens that children can get involved in; and for more sports, singing, dancing and drama. All these activities can make school a place that children want to go to and so encourage them to remain in education.”

TVS Study Camp December 2014 Hard work and fun!

December's study camp was a departure from the usual pattern – and an unqualified success as far as the participants were concerned. It involved an older age group than usual: school leavers from five secondary schools in Tyume Valley. The first week was held at our usual study camp venue, Hobbiton Outdoor Centre in Hogsback.

This was followed by a second, non-residential week in premises loaned by Fort Hare University in Alice. The fortnight's programme was built around the themes of 'Healthy Living' and 'Preparation for the World of Work'. It included an introduction to MS Office; internet searching, emails and graphics; building CVs; and formatting letters and documents. Two of our UK volunteers Stephanie Gallier and Liz Button ran the camp in conjunction with volunteer James and local teachers, as well as Vicky our local coordinator.



Study Camp February 2015

A group of students led by teacher Jerry Parsons from Beths Grammar School, Bexley flew out to South Africa for just one week to run a camp at Hobbiton.

Many thanks to Jerry, Helen, Aaron and Rhys.

“This February I returned to the Tyume Valley to lead the study camp. Our programme was very simple. If English is the national language, then to get on, you need to speak it. With this in mind, we embarked on a programme of language acquisition, application and analysis. We found out what these children knew, whether they could use it and what it could be used for. We developed speaking skills and it was a great opportunity for the students who had been on TVS courses to show what they could do and help their peers.”

“As a teacher, the enthusiasm of these children drives you on and we certainly had the feeling that, had we had even more time, the results would have been extraordinary.”

“The experience made us think about our own teaching and our own lives. We are currently organising letter writers from the UK for the Tyume Valley Schools and planning an ‘in school’ language week for next February (2016), before returning to Hobbiton in 2017 to meet another cohort of learners.”

Jerry Parsons, lead teacher

Changes on the committee

This year several of our long standing committee members have retired. Many thanks to Sue Hubbert, Maggie Ofori and Nic Suggit. We’ve been fortunate that Jim Lewis, a recently retired school head teacher with links to South Africa going back to his time doing VSO has joined us and is actively involved. Caroline Glendinning and Sue Richards have taken on the role of Joint Chair, leaving Margaret Kiloh to have a little more time for her family and other interests. Margaret is continuing as Treasurer. Archie Sibeko, aka Zola Zembe and President of TVS, gave warm thanks at the AGM for Margaret’s passionate commitment in founding TVS. She continues to be active on the committee.

Fundraising

We are a very small charity with no paid workers in UK. All publicity, fundraising and administration is done by volunteers. We are reliant on your generosity. And every pound goes a long way in South Africa.

We are grateful for the financial support from Dial a Flight, The Big Give, Pinmar, The Lord and Lady Lurgan Trust, The SEM Foundation as well as The Church of the Good Shepherd, Carshalton and St Peter’s, Northampton.

A sports and tea afternoon consisting of table tennis, boules, croquet, and cake raised an amazing £300 and we enjoyed a great time. The Hogsback walk in April was also enjoyed by supporters.

We are so indebted to our individual supporters who make a marvellous contribution to the success of our projects by giving regularly and fundraising.

The London Marathon 2015

Karen is a member of the Good Shepherd Runners. She’s never run more than 10 miles before and reached the critical 16 miles in her training in March and said the only thing that kept her going through the freezing horizontal rain and wind was the thought of the children in Tyume Valley and how she could help change their lives.

She completed the run in 4 hours and 52 minutes. So far she has raised over £2000.



Karen in the 2015 London Marathon

You can donate until 26 May 2015 at:

<https://mydonate.bt.com/fundraisers/karenbarker3>

or via our website at www.tvschools.org.uk

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

- Make a regular donation
- Run a quiz in your local pub or village.
- Have a tea party or South African themed BBQ or meal
- Hold a sports or music event.
- Leave Tyume Valley Schools a legacy in your Will. Go to the website www.tvschools.org.uk for more information.

Plans for the future

TVS was originally established as a 10-year project. It has already exceeded that by a year! We have always intended to leave a lasting legacy of activities and local employment. There is more work to be done and we would like this to be done by local people. Grant funding for Vicky Riley, the TVS co-ordinator ends in December 2015.

Vicky has been invaluable in organising the English and IT programmes.

We have begun to hand over responsibility for the IT programme. Our IT trainer Vuvu Tomi is now responsible for organising not just her own teaching timetable but also those of her assistants Nontombi and Bongiwe. Vuvu will also take the lead in organising the study camp in December 2015 for school leavers. TVS Committee members will continue to visit Tyume and ensure that essential planning and preparation for other future study camps is undertaken. We want to set up longer-term partnerships between Tyume Valley and English schools. If you are a school teacher, parent or governor and think your school might be interested, please get in touch – we can help with information and support with securing funding for teacher exchanges.

A major priority is to secure further funding to continue our very successful English programme; we have established links with SADRAT (South African Development, Research and Training) which enables TVS to apply to South African funding bodies. We anticipate being able to continue with broadly the same level of activities until 2017 or 2018. Beyond that, with continued support from our regular subscribers, we expect to be able to continue sending some funding to schools in the Tyume Valley for many years to come, so long as we can set up appropriate accountability arrangements.



Junior learners in the English classes
Picture © Vicky Riley

News from School Partners

Gillian Gape from Settle Primary School visited Kwezana Primary School in January and experienced first hand the ferocity of a summer storm. Roads were impassable safely without a four-wheel drive vehicle and some of the local Primary schools had buildings damaged by the typhoon strength winds. Luckily Kwezana's buildings were not damaged but the school tap (the school's only nearby water supply) ran dry due to the intense heat drying up the local dam (or reservoir as we call it). Water had to be collected from another source so that the children had something to drink during the day and so that the cook was able to prepare a school meal. The water used was rainwater from the nearby church which had been collected in water tanks. Kwezana has damaged guttering and no water tank at the moment so they are unable to collect their own rainwater for the children to drink and wash with.