

# The Mamelodi Initiative Winter Program



\* \* Winter 2011 \*

## The Challenge

Nelson Mandela once said, “Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world.” Unfortunately, drop out rates in Gauteng are extremely high, with only 40% of individuals age 20 and above in the province having passed Matric. Research shows that coloured and black learners are the most likely to drop out, while whites were the least likely,<sup>1</sup> making the issue of dropouts even more urgent in the township communities. Increased drop out rates inherently means less job opportunities for our youth and leads to more reliance on governmental subsidies and higher crime rates in the community.



What research has found is that the drop-out rate dramatically increases from grades 10 to 12. Part of the reason for dropouts is an accumulation of a knowledge gap. The Annie E. Casey foundation and the Center for Summer Learning at Johns Hopkins University have both consistently pointed to summer learning loss as one of the major contributing factors to lack of success in school.<sup>2</sup> John Hopkins University has said that the summer learning loss for low-income or disadvantaged youth is at least double the summer learning loss of non-low income counterparts who traditionally have greater access to summer and holiday programming.<sup>3</sup>

Beyond competing against summer learning loss, many youth don't have the soft skills to succeed in secondary school. The report by the Department of Basic Education said that a “proportion of children starting Grade 9 [are] not in a position to finish secondary school,”<sup>4</sup> leading to a “high failure rate, repetition, and dropping out in grades 10 to 12.”<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.citypress.co.za/SouthAfrica/News/School-drop-out-mystery-20100117>

<sup>2</sup> *Doesn't Every Child Deserve a Memorable Summer?*, Center for Summer Learning at Johns Hopkins University, 26 February 2008, 5 March 2008

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## **The Purpose**

The primary purpose of the Mamelodi Initiative Winter Program is to support the Mamelodi school system and Mamelodi community in giving our learners the skills necessary to succeed in school, careers, and life. Our vision is to see every child in Mamelodi achieve success in secondary school. The program aims to stifle holiday learning loss and provide essential soft skills to students so that they can achieve what is expected of them at the secondary level and be prepared to continue to University. The Winter Program provides a safe space for students to “learn, grow, believe, and achieve.” Through the winter, students are exposed to strong role models, enriching workshops, stimulating activities, and essential academic skills. The program prioritizes building meaningful relationships with youth and endowing them with the understanding that they don’t have to be another statistic.



## **The Program**

The Mamelodi Initiative Winter Program is a three week holiday program, running Monday through Friday. The program ran from 9am – 1pm daily. An average of 154 youth per day came for three weeks to the University of Pretoria, Mamelodi campus to engage in morning small groups, afternoon enrichment activities, and fun-filled opening and closing sessions.

Each day of program started and ended with an all-group session. During these times a variety of activities happened. Every morning, a thought of the day was read out for students to ponder as they continued their day of camp. The mornings were also dedicated to having people get to know each other, so each morning a teambuilding game was played. Finally, many mornings had powerful motivational speakers who talked about a variety of issues affecting high school students and people in general. The afternoon allowed for final announcements and our daily competition between our small groups.



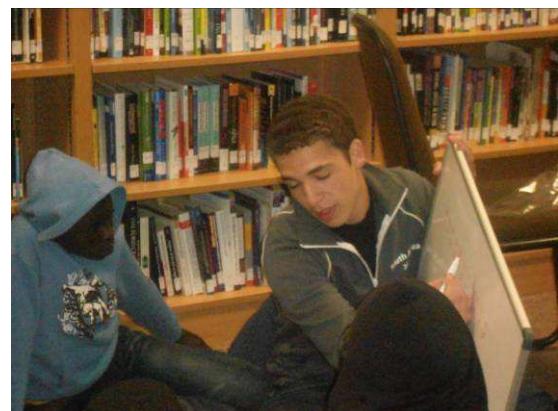
The small groups were essential to the success of the program. During small group time, a class of 6-12 learners and two teachers focused on four academic areas: math, science, technology, and English. The most important part of small group came not with the curriculum, but with the relationships formed. Teachers and learners had ample time to bond, giving learners at least two strong role models to which they are able to ask questions.

The afternoons were set aside for enrichment workshops. Each learner participated in two workshops (one on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, and one on Tuesday and Thursday). This year, twelve workshops were available: soccer, rugby, basketball, netball,

dance, choral singing, acapella and beat boxing, drama, chess, hand crafts, fine arts (painting and drawing), and skills development / community engagement. Each workshop was designed to provide an enriching experience to our students allowing them to explore new skills and gain new understandings of skills already possessed.



Ultimately, when talking about the Mamelodi Initiative Winter Program, it is essential to discuss the unique caliber of the volunteers, especially in the program's incipient year. The program relies completely on volunteers. Co-teachers were predominantly current college students from either South Africa or the United States. The program was designed so that each classroom would have one co-teacher from the United States (our volunteers from the United States were from a variety of top universities, including Harvard, MIT, and Duke) and one from South Africa (our volunteers from South Africa came from a variety of universities but predominantly from University of Pretoria). The program has strong partnerships with the University of Pretoria, specifically with the School of Education and Engineering Department, where a majority of the student volunteers were pulled from. Of the 30 South African volunteers, approximately one-third were from the Mamelodi Township, providing mentors to the youth from their own community. This set up encouraged cultural exchange and learning both in the classrooms and outside of them. In total, there were 53 volunteer co-teachers for 2011. The program also relied on high school students from Mamelodi who assisted with the administrative aspects of the program. There were eight high-school-aged volunteers who performed a variety of tasks, from teaching in the classroom, to organizing registration, to documenting the program.



## **The Goals**

The goals for the Mamelodi Initiative Winter Program focused on four areas: providing a safe and fun program, providing academic skills, providing enrichment activities, and providing individual and personal growth.

### *Programmatic*

- To create a safe and comfortable space for students to grow, learn, dream, and achieve
- To help youth have fun while learning
- To foster an environment where cultural exchange occurs

## *Academic Skills*

- To equip 8<sup>th</sup> grade students with basic tools necessary to succeed in secondary school
- To review curricular expectations with learners to fill gaps from the previous semester
- To have learners set out goals for the academic year



## *Enrichment Activities*

- To expose youth to new activities and experiences
- To engage youth in a culminating project to demonstrate new skills learned

## *Individuals*

- To provide positive role models for our youth
- To grant space for personal, emotional, and spiritual growth

## The Results

Throughout the program, we used several metrics to evaluate the success of the project. Our primary data collection methods were daily attendance, teaching hours, the SAYO, and post-camp learner surveys. These metrics were meant to allow the Mamelodi Initiative to measure its progress towards reaching our goals (outlined above).

Attendance is one indicator of overall satisfaction with the program. There were approximately 175 youth enrolled in the program, with an average of 140 youth per day (some learners missed a week due to family visits or other excused leaves of absence).

Each learner received 22.5 hours of academic time and fifteen hours of enrichment activities, for an effective total of 3150 study skills curriculum hours and 1500 enrichment activity hours delivered to Mamelodi youth.



The SAYO evaluation, an evaluation designed to look at soft effects of programming on youth, demonstrated improvement on three major axes: production of work, engagement in learning, and relations with peers. In every area (of the 12 measured) there was positive improvement. The SAYO is a survey completed by the learner's teacher at the beginning of the program and at the end of the program. The same evaluator does both surveys as to

combat subjectivity inherent in attitude evaluations. When the results were compiled for the Mamelodi Initiative Winter Program, the three greatest areas of improvement were in learners abilities to "strive to give assignments special thought, creativity, or effort," "contribute constructively to group discussions," and "resolve conflicts constructively."

Camper surveys provided exceptionally powerful data in our evaluation process. We received 129 learner responses (of the average 140 campers per day). Of the responses received, 100% of campers responded they were excited to come, had a good time at camp, felt safe at camp, and learned something. Moreover 100% felt their teachers liked them and felt that their teachers were good role models. 98% of learners felt that their teachers kept all their promises, and 95% reported that they made new friends at camp. 95% of students said they would recommend the program to friends. Statements made by learners in the open-ended questions were also overwhelmingly positive (see the thoughts from learners section) and further indicated satisfaction with the program.

Finally, 85 learners signed up for the after school program (the afterschool program is now over capacity and has had to turn away other interested students). This is a great indication of satisfaction with the Mamelodi Initiative.



The results inherently lack understanding of the long-term effect of the program on Mamelodi learners. The Mamelodi Initiative plans to track its students from Grade 8 through Matric year and beyond. Though this data collection will take time, the Mamelodi Initiative is confident that this program will make a long-term difference in the lives of our learners.

## Sustainability

The Mamelodi Initiative is concerned with two forms of sustainability: sustainability of achievement and longevity of the program. In regards to sustainability of achievement in our learners, learners from the winter program have the opportunity to be involved in year-round programming. Learners are able to attend an after school program during the school term and have priority acceptance to a summer program focusing on building lifelong skills.



In terms of longevity of the program, the Mamelodi Initiative grounds programming in strategic partnerships. Campus Crusade for Christ will continue to send US volunteers every January and June-July to act as co-teachers in the holiday programming. Furthermore, the University of Pretoria has committed their support to the program through the use of university space on the Mamelodi campus free of charge and through their commitment of

student volunteers for both the after school program and the holiday programs. The Mae Jemison Reading Room, a partnership between the University of Pretoria and the US Embassy, has been a pivotal partner in recruitment of kids and as a resource for our after school participants to use for research and homework needs. Formal local school partnerships are the cornerstone of our success, as teachers and administrators are essential for effective recruitment of learners. Formal partnerships exist on both the primary and secondary level. Finally, the Willows Methodist Church has created an official mission partnership with the year-round programming and continues to support the efforts of the project. All of these community partners are represented on the Mamelodi Initiative working group.

### Next Steps

The Mamelodi Initiative sees three major next steps in the development of this program. First, the Mamelodi Initiative hopes to continue to grow deep relationships with local schools and to foster relationships with local and provincial government officials to ensure the program is truly supporting the needs of the schools. A major step forward in this area comes with the formation of the Mamelodi Initiative working group, a group composed of a variety of community partners from the US Embassy, the University of Pretoria, and the community at large. Second, the Mamelodi Initiative plans to strategically expand to include up to grade 10 by 2013. Each year, the program will add a new 8<sup>th</sup> grade class while continue to support the rising grades. During this expansion, the program hopes to continually track the progress of its students. Finally, in the coming year a stronger emphasis will be placed on resource development to ensure continued funding for this important effort. This will largely take the form of the development of the Mamelodi Initiative Foundation whose mission will be to raise funds for Mamelodi Initiative programming and other community engagement initiatives serving the Mamelodi community.



**Mamelodi Initiative Winter Program, Budget May – July, 2011**

Income:

Toolquip and Allied	R8 600.00
US Embassy Grant	R1 000.00
Campus Crusade for Christ	R33 670.00
Individual Donations	<u>R3 350.00</u>

**TOTAL Income:**

**R46 620.00**

Expenses:

Supplies:

Classroom Supplies	R3 600.00
Workshop Supplies	R2 000.00
General & Office Supplies	R120.00
Prizes and Awards	<u>R1 500.00</u>
TOTAL Supplies	R7 720.00

Food:

Program Snacks	<u>R32 500.00</u>
TOTAL Food:	R32 500.00

Transportation:

Petrol, Program Vehicle	R1 000.00
Taxi Expenses, Youth	R400.00
Transportation, Volunteers	<u>R3 000.00</u>
TOTAL Transportation:	R4 400.00

Phone:

Director Phone (May, June, July)	R750.00
Co-Teacher Phones, Parent Calls	<u>R1 125.00</u>
TOTAL Phone:	R2 000.00

**TOTAL Expenses**

**R46 620.00**

In-Kinded Resources:

Classroom Space	In-Kind (University of Pretoria, Mamelodi Campus)
Printing, Copying, Space	In-Kind (Mae Jemison Reading Room)
Printing, Copying	In-Kind (Willows Methodist Church)
Basic Stationary	In-Kind (Student Relations Counsel, UP)
Prizes & Awards	In-Kind (Student Relations Counsel, UP)

## Thoughts from Learners

### WHEN ASKED TO NAME ONE THING THEY LEARNED, LEARNERS RESPONDED

**“How to do math in the simplest way”**

*“I learned about electricity, energy, maths (fractions), and we learned about ourselves”*

**“I learned we should listen in class”**

“How to read and I learned things I never knew in this program and I learned how to play games”

**“I learned about BODMAS. I think maths now won’t be hard for me. I also learned love and kindness from the teachers.”**

## “Respect”

**“How to make your own choice”**

**“I learned many things and wish it could never end”**

*“I learned about molecules and atoms, and learned about HIV/AIDS, how you can prevent it, avoid it, and treat it.”*

### WHEN ASKED WHAT THEY WOULD CHANGE ABOUT PROGRAM, LEARNERS RESPONDED:

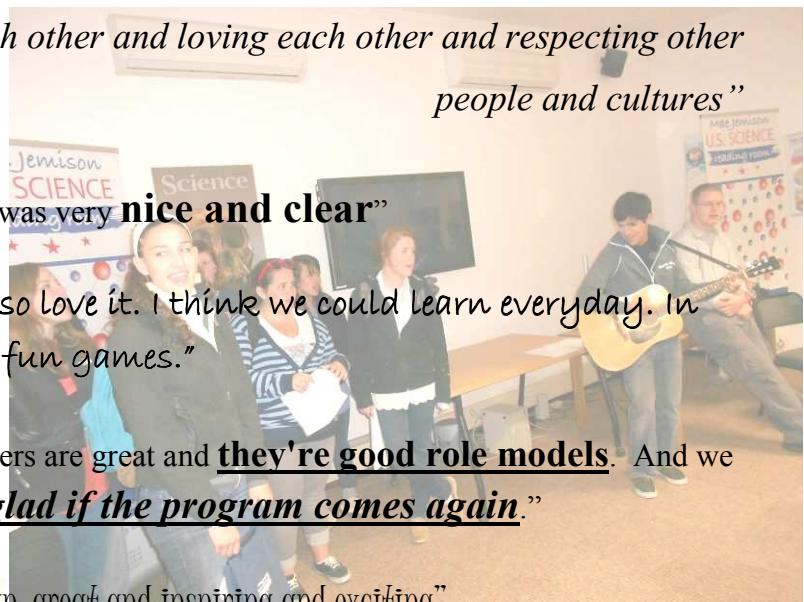
*“I would make an advertisement so more friends would join”*

**“I would change it from 8am - 3pm [program currently runs 9am – 1pm]”**

**“I’ve CHANGED my life now; I’m NOT SHY to talk to my parents with English”**

**WHEN ASKED TO TELL US ONE GREAT THING ABOUT PROGRAM, LEARNERS RESPONDED:**

*"It was about caring for each other and loving each other and respecting other people and cultures"*



**"When they teach us English it was very nice and clear"**

*"I enjoy this program and I also love it. I think we could learn everyday. In this program I enjoy playing fun games."*

**"We learn new things. Our teachers are great and they're good role models. And we made friends, so I would be glad if the program comes again."**



**"Our teachers were very kind and patient to us."**



*"The teachers are nice and make us feel happy."*

**"This program makes me happy everyday"**



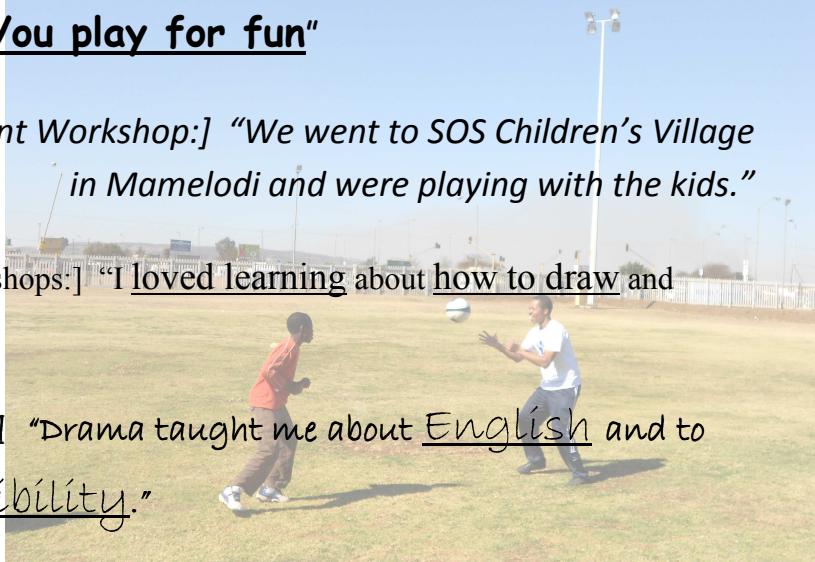
[From the Soccer Workshop:] "There is no coach to yell for missing a goal.

**You play for fun**

[From the Skills Development Workshop:] "We went to SOS Children's Village in Mamelodi and were playing with the kids."

[From the Fine Arts / Crafts Workshops:] "I loved learning about how to draw and make things with your hands."

[From the Drama Workshop:] "Drama taught me about English and to know right and responsibility."



**THANK YOU!!**

*We would like to extend a special thank you to all of the partners that made this winter program possible, most notably:*

**The University of Pretoria, Mamelodi Campus**

**The Student Relations Counsel of the University of Pretoria**

**Edwin Smith, Director of University of Pretoria Mamelodi Campus**

**Gernia van Niekerk, University of Pretoria Community Engagement Director**

**Hanlie Dippenaar, Lecturer for Community Engagement in Education, UP**

**Martina Jordaan, Professor for Community Engagement in Engineering, UP**

**Cru (formerly Campus Crusade for Christ)**

**The Willows Methodist Church**

**Aubrey Bahula of Toolquip and Allied**

**Our Partner Secondary Schools:**

**Gatang, Lehlabile, Solomon Mahlangu Freedom School, and Tsako-Thabo**

**The Mae Jemison Reading Room and Staff**

**The Embassy of the United States of America in South Africa**

**Cru Staff: Pat and Tammy McLeod and Todd and Tara Humphreys**

**Dana Mahan, Missions Outreach Director of Willows Methodist Church**

**All of our AMAZING Volunteers!**

