****

**YOUTH FORUM MEETING MINUTES**

**30th May 2018**

**Rylands Library 9:30-12:00**

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**PRESENT:**  Ellen Morta (Harambee), Nazima Lutta (Vision Orphanage), Tougieda Uren (Vision), Zibele Qwemesha (Childline), Brandon Arendse (Childline), Desiree Classen (St Joseph’s Band), Zanab Baker (Vision), Daniel Du Plessis (CPF Elsies River), Preston Jongbloed (Refocus), Najma Fakier (Life Choices), Shameega Mackenzie (Vision), Candace Amon (Life Choices), Shanaaz Daniels (Vision), Zubaida Hattas (Project Ignition), Anet Joubert (Vision), Sumaiyah Davids (Project Ignition), Deborah Russel (Vision)Colleen Brookes-Gain (WCSCF)

**APOLOGIES**: Janice King (WCSCF)

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1. **WELCOME &** I**NTRODUCTION**: Colleen welcomed everyone and introductions went around the room. Each delegate gave a brief description of their organisation.
2. **TOPIC: BULLYING AND THE MENTAL IMPACT ON YOUTH & THEIR FAMILY’S**

**Guest speaker:** **Preston Jongbloed**

PRESTON’s STORY.

Preston is married and hails from the Heideveld community. He is the director of the **Refocus Foundation** working in the youth space for 15 years. For 16 years he has been at CCFM as a volunteer presenter & marketer. He has also written a book “***Dream Again”.***

His family had a deep-rooted history in gang life and it was expected that he would follow suit. Many of his kinfolk are dead or in prison. It was life as he came to know it. The exact moment when his life changed radically, was at the age of 13. On a sunny Friday afternoon, he was standing on their street corner with his closest friend before going to play soccer on the school yard. As they watched a plane go overhead, he told his friend that someday he was going to fly in a plane. His friend said these words to him “things like that don’t happen to people like us”. Those words tried to kill his dream. Just then their neighbour, an elderly gentleman who was already playing a pivotal role in his young life, shouted at him with concern in his voice asking why he was standing on the street corner and to help carry his shopping bags home. *As he helped the neighbour inside with the bags, gunfire erupted and his friend who was still on the corner was brutally murdered.* Had he still been on that corner with his friend, he would surely have died. That was his wake up moment because it defined where he could end up in life. He chose a life outside of gang life.

He was privileged to become a professional soccer player and at 16, moved to Germany to be educated in Europe. He became a wealthy young man at a young age and could buy his family out of poverty and the environment. At age 24, he retired due to an injury. Financially sound, he came back to SA to work in his old community. At a crossroads in his life, he reflected on the defining moment in his life and made a decision to become a person who would fight for & defend young people & youth at risk as Mr Fredericks had fought for his life. He studied psychology and later felt moved by God to write a book ***Dream Again*** which he did and he used what could have happened to him on that street corner at age 13. A friend had to die for him to gain some perspective of his life. He has been working at schools and prisons with youth ever since.

Working with John J, an international university, they are trying to rewrite the policy about how prison systems were institutionalising instead of rehabilitating young men. They are currently advocating that **Harambee** and **Dept. Education** collaborate around this issue. He has been seconded by the WCED for the next 18 months to roll out his Diversion program called **RECODE** to all the schools in Manenberg. The idea is to change the narrative of Manenberg schools. **RECODE** is aimed at youth bordering on being expelled from school. They do it via a 3 month programme of:

* **Restorative justice between teacher and youth;**
* **Restorative justice between parent and youth;**
* **10 block module - building a character based- value system**

They also offer:

* Mentorship programs
* Train the trainer programs which runs for 2 days.

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| **A quick Refresher on Bullying** | |
| **1. What is bullying?**  Bullying is when a child or a group of children abuse their power to hurt or intimidate others.  **bully**  *verb*   1. Use superior strength or influence to intimidate (someone), typically to force them to do something.  |  |  | | --- | --- | | *Synonyms:* | persecute, oppress, tyrannize, torment,  browbeat,  intimidate, cow, coerce,  strong-arm, subjugate, domineer | | **2. What are the signs of bullying behaviour?**  deliberate aggression, get into fights often,  an unbalanced power relationship between the bully and the victim,  The causing of physical pain and/or emotional anxiety.  They never take responsibility for their actions. |
| **3 What are the 4 different types of bullying?**  **Physica**l (bumping, scratching, shouldering, hitting, tripping, biting, rolling eyes or showing suggestive signs),  **Verbal and written** (name calling, negative comments, intimidation, and threatening or humiliating SMSes),  **Social or relationships** (revealing personal information via gossiping/written or manipulation to humiliate or exclude from a group,  **Cyber bullying**(intimidating or harassing via social networks). | **4. What are the effects of being bullied?**  faking illness to avoid having to attend school,  a low self-esteem,  social isolation,  unexplained bruises and injuries,  becomes upset after using the internet or cellphone  becomes very secretive about online activities |
| **5. What are the consequences of bullying?**  Chronic Absenteeism due to a fear of attending school  Feelings of inferiority  Self-esteem problems  Feelings of loneliness  Social isolation  Emotional problems  Communication problems  Depression  Cutting  Struggling academically  Commit suicide  Rule breaking & Risk of criminal behaviour later | **6.What are the consequences for the bully**   * Those who are **both** bullies and victims of bullying suffer the most serious effects of bullying and are at greater risk for mental and behavioural problems than those who are **only bullied** - or who are **only bullies.** * Children and adolescents, who are bullies, are at increased risk for substance use/abuse, academic problems, and the propensity for violence to others later in life. |

**WHAT WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND ABOUT BULLYING**

**Bullying - is the cause of something deep rooted.**

There’s a distinct deep rooted reason that makes a person become a bully.

Bullying is deliberate…….it’s not accidental.

It’s a choice. It’s personal.

8 out 10 people are being bullied.

Left unchecked the bullied can become a bully in adult life.

7 out of 10 people being bullied, contemplate suicide.

There’s a victim and there is also a bully who is a menace to society.

Left unchecked the bully will continue to destroy lives.

Bullying doesn’t only happen to children and youth….

Grown people are being bullied in the workplace/ by their life partners daily.

Institutionalising children can have serious negative effects which manifests when they are grown up.

**THE EFFECTS OF BULLYING ON THE FAMILY OF A VICTIM:**

**Preston’s personal story**

Preston had some friends over from Germany and because he was out he didn’t check his phone. When he eventually did, he saw that his Mom had called 37 times. When he called his Mom, she just asked him to come to his sister’s house immediately. When he arrived, he was then told that his 16 yr old nephew, a studious young man had committed suicide by hanging himself. Life as they all knew it was shattered. Nobody could comprehend why he had done it as outwardly there had been no sign or indicators that anything was amiss in his life. The entire family was devastated as there were NO answers, just questions. The fact that he planned it…buying the rope with which he hung himself in the garage was/is something that the family can never come to terms with. Suicide is one death that a family rarely has closure on…especially when there’s no suicide note… not that it makes it any easier.

Questions of why had he not spoken to his family, haunted Preston so much that he took to investigating the reason behind the suicide. On talks with his nephew’s school teachers, school friends, he came to realise that his nephew had been a victim of bullying at school.

Because of her son’s suicide, his sister’s overprotectiveness of her daughter, born out of fear – will have far reaching consequences into the next three generations.

The after effects of his nephew’s suicide due to bullying has left a ripple effect and deep scarring within the family. A bright young man who had a full life ahead of him, gone forever. It hasn’t been easy on the family and the family will never fully heal. All they do is find means to cope with their loss.

It’s been proven that families never really recover from suicide.

**SO BULLYING IS LETHAL …….. AND IT CAN KILL.**

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| **“*Refocus Bullying Campaign****has been birthed out of the burden to see our schools and work places freed from* ***bullying and abuse.***   * *Bullying has devastating effects for both victim and perpetrator.* * *Bullying is not just child's play, but a terrifying experience many people face every day. It can be as direct as teasing, hitting or threatening, or indirect as in exclusion, rumors or manipulation. During the past decade, bullying has become more lethal and has occurred more frequently than it had in the previous two decades. In our quest to provide safe working environments for adults and the quality education that young people deserve, this problem can no longer be treated lightly.* * *This anti bullying Awareness Campaign is designed to assist communities in developing solutions that will eradicate bullying from schools and the work place.* * *Bullying can no longer be explained away, as some adults are inclined to do, as a normal part of growing up. Bullying has only harmful, not beneficial, effects for the target and the perpetrator – even the bystander.* * *Many people in our nation's schools and workplaces are robbed of their opportunity to learn and move forward in their careers because they are bullied and victimized daily. Bullying exacts a terrible toll on people, and the scars can last a lifetime”*   [***www.refocusfoundation.co.za***](http://www.refocusfoundation.co.za) |

**WHAT CAN WE DO TO HELP SOMEONE WHO IS BEING BULLIED?**

* Support a person who is being bullied/ if you suspect that bullying is taking place- asks questions/don’t brush it off as something to get over.
* Address the bullying behaviour/ talk to the bully. Bullies often have a void in their lives and/or they are being bullied at home, hence the need to bully someone else. Bullies need to know that what they do to others is NOT okay and the effect of it on the person is devastating.
* Stop videos of bullying from going viral.
* Don’t be a bystander. Bystanders are often peers / teens who witness bullying and cyber bullying in action, who stand by and watch, OR who videotape it and make it viral ... and WHO DO AND SAY NOTHING. However if you are a bystander it’s important to know that **by doing nothing you are sending a message to the bully that their behaviour is acceptable.**Sometimes bystanders are too scared to intervene, seek out someone who can intervene.

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| **Some Food for thought:**  **As adults we know where we are headed, but young people don’t, if they knew then they wouldn’t be at risk. So we should be cognizant of that when dealing with them.**  **They need to know that they are loved and that we are open to listen to them at any time. That could make a world’s difference in his/her life….even save a life.** |

1. **NEEDS & OPPORTUNITIES**

**The Diversion Program** will be rolled out to all schools in the WCape - the main challenge is capacity. Interns who have social work background are encouraged to volunteer as facilitators. If anyone knows of such interns, contact:

Preston Jongbloed – [preston@refocus.co.za](mailto:preston@refocus.co.za) - 076 881 8479

**Train the Trainer courses** are also available**.**

**St Joseph’s Xmas** **Band** has started a music school at Cafda School of Skills for youth interested in music. They teach them how to read / make music. The youth are currently using the bands instruments and instruments left to the band by past members. They are open to all orgs who have their own transport and who would like to send their youth to them. For all/ further information please contact:

Desiree Claasen- [desclc3@gmail.com](mailto:desclc3@gmail.com) – 074 255 4326

**Sumaiyah Davids** an intern at Project Ignition offers Arts Workshops. For further information please contact:

Sumaiyah Davids – [sumaiyahdavids99@gmail.com](mailto:sumaiyahdavids99@gmail.com) – 081 363 2591

1. **Any other Business:**  None
2. **Next meeting: 20th June 2018 @ Parow Library – 9:30-11:30**

**Enquiries**: Janice King (WCSCF Coordinator) Cell: 072 4500 456

Email: wcstreetchild@gmail.com