

PASSOP WATCH



A monthly overview of what's up with PASSOP

September 2011 - Issue 8

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PASSOP appoints new Ambassador



In last month's newsletter we told of a woman named Cynthia who had taken in a Ugandan refugee, Ssekamatte Charles. Though the two could barely communicate, Cynthia offered Ssekamatte a helping hand, food and shelter after finding him on the street, homeless and mentally ill. PASSOP member Arafat Matovu heard about Cynthia and with his help, Ssekamatte was reunited with his family who had presumed him dead.

We have since found out that Ssekamatte is just one of the many people Cynthia has opened up her home to. In September she introduced us to Peter, a white man (and former soldier for the apartheid regime) who ended up on the streets of Khayelitsha poor, homeless and without much hope. Peter's life had taken a turn for the worse with the lasting effects of serving in a racist and oppressive military, a long list of dead end jobs and a recent divorce; he found himself in Khayelitsha with R50 in his pocket, no family or friends and severe stomach ulcers. Cynthia was contacted by her local Ward Counsellor who had been made aware of Peter's plight from other members of the community. Cynthia wasted no time in welcoming Peter into her home, connecting him to her church and giving him a new outlook on life.

For Cynthia, this kindness and hospitality is nothing unusual. Originally from Khamastone in Wittlesea, Cynthia Sonxi made her way to Cape Town in 1984 and found work as a nursing assistant and later on as a caregiver. Confined to her home after learning she had developed diabetes, Cynthia became involved with the Joshua Generation Church based in Khayelitsha that focuses on charitable work within the community.

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Within the church Cynthia works with an organization called Home of Hope, where she cares for those affected by HIV/AIDS and helps at the local soup kitchen. In fact, when that very soup kitchen closed its doors Cynthia opened hers to house the new facility.

Since their first meeting two months ago, Peter's life has drastically improved thanks to a woman who lived through apartheid but did not and will continue to not let history dictate whom she helps. Cynthia is a great example of what modern South Africa should look like, a place where people see beyond race and nationality and look within themselves to help those in need. It is with her compassion, generosity, and good-natured heart that we recognize Cynthia as a PASSOP Ambassador. When we presented Cynthia with an award to honor her noble actions and exemplary humanitarian work, Peter was asked to speak and tears came to his eyes as he reflected on the goodness that Cynthia has brought to his life. "We walk around in society today and people don't want to get involved in other people's hardships," he said. "So when you do come across people like Cynthia, you regain hope in mankind." It is people like Cynthia who inspire us and encourage us to work together towards a better, more united South Africa.

PW

PASSOP website now offers CV Database

For job seekers who may be qualified and experienced but without the resources to outline these skills in a professional manner; and for employers looking for reliable, hardworking help, PASSOP has developed a database of CV's for the Western Cape region. PASSOP offers free guidance and assistance in drafting professional CV's for refugees and others who require assistance in their job search.

If requested, these CV's are uploaded to our online database, which consists of hundreds of people with various qualifications. Employers looking for people with skills ranging from domestic services, manual labor, food service, customer service, bookkeeping, accounting or other more specialized labor can access the database and contact those looking for work.

This database is available on our website:
www.passop.org

PW

ZDP Update:

List of Permits ready for collection available on our website

PASSOP monitors continue to assist Zimbabweans at Bellville Home Affairs Office to monitor the fingerprints taking process, helping with queue management and giving advice and information to Zimbabweans still coming for fingerprints. Our monitors also confirm that there are many Zimbabweans who have not received their passports hence whose fingerprints have not been taken, while others have not received SMS's to come for fingerprints. There are still more than 300 permits that have not been collected at Bellville Home Affairs offices. (To check whether your permit is ready, you can visit PASSOP website at www.passop.co.za).

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PASSOP was one of the organisations which attended a hearing at the Parliament in which the Department of Home Affairs updated the Parliamentary Committee on Home Affairs on the progress of the ZDP. The Director General in the Department blamed the Zimbabweans for not responding to SMSs sent to them instructing them to come for fingerprints and to submit required documents. According to their statistics, out of the over 131 000 SMSs sent out, only roughly 43 000 Zimbabweans had so far responded. We feel that this is clearly because the SMSs are not reaching the applicants and are pushing for the DHA to come up with an alternative method.

The Director General also said that by the end of September 2011, the Department will officially complete the ZDP. However, this is contradicted by what is happening on the ground, where officials tell us that they have received no instruction to stop their work of taking fingerprints and issuing permits. Given the high number of permits that still need to be issued, it is unlikely that the process will be completed before December.

The Director General also mentioned that when the process is completed, DHA will carry out an evaluation, before deciding whether or not to roll out such a special dispensation to other SADC nationalities. This is a positive step and we will push for this to be implemented. Somewhat more worryingly, however, the Department also highlighted that it would start deportations soon after the completion of the ZDP project.

PW

'Susan Forgives'



Susan, a 23-year old Zimbabwean woman, was on her way home from work in a Taxi on the evening of August 30th, when two strangers threw a clear liquid in her face. She initially thought it was water, but seconds later her whole face felt like it was burning. The liquid was acid.

The gruesome attack burnt most of the skin and tissue on Susan's face and neck. Although a plastic surgeon has agreed to work pro-bono, she will need about R450,000 to complete all the reconstructive surgeries needed and the rehabilitation will take up to four years. Although she still does not know why she was targeted, she has forgiven the perpetrators, and just wants to rebuild her life. The first step in doing this is to raise the money she needs for the reconstructive surgery.

PASSOP and Susan's employers, Doctors Parker, assisted Susan in sharing her story with the general public. PASSOP has organised multiple press conferences, sent out press releases and assisted Susan with interviews. Susan has been giving interviews to a number of local newspapers and to YOU magazine, she also did an interview with E-TV's Third Degree. The result of all this media coverage has been incredible. In only a few weeks close to R100 000 has been contributed to a fund established to aid Susan's hospital bills.

Susan feels it is important to share what happened to her and is committed to helping other survivors of gender-based violence and violent disfigurement in the future. To view a video of Susan talking about the attack, [click here](#).

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Susan has also opened a Facebook account and twitter account in an attempt to share her views and experiences as well as attempting to raise funds for her important surgeries. We encourage people to add her on Facebook—"SusanForgives" and to follow her on Twitter-@SusanForgives. Please send her a message of support.

Any donations can be made directly to Susan's medical expense account:

BANK: **STANDARD BANK**

ACCOUNT NAME: **ACID ATTACK MEDICAL EXPENSE ACCOUNT**

BRANCH NO: **020909**

BRANCH: **THIBAUT SQUARE**

ACCOUNT NO: **074421395**

Concert for Susan

PASSOP and Someone's Getting Fired, an event company in Cape Town, are organising a fundraiser for Susan on the 12th of October at the Jade Lounge in Cape Town. Some of Cape Town's finest bands including Jack Mantis Band, Black South Easter, South Paw and Shenfm have agreed to team up to raise money for the expensive reconstructive surgery and rehabilitation that Susan now needs to help her live a normal life. Anyone interested in tickets please e-mail us: office@passop.co.za

Swaziland Independence Day Protest



On Tuesday, September 6th PASSOP with the Swaziland Democracy Campaign and COSATU, organized a march outside Parliament to protest against the South African government's loan to Swaziland's monarchy.

At the protest we submitted a Memorandum to the representative of the Parliamentary Committee for International Relations at the gates of Parliament.

Sadly on a day when we should have been celebrating the independence of the people of Swaziland we were protesting against an unelected leader, an absolute monarch who controls the country as his private fiefdom and who has failed his people.

We protested to demand that the South African government stop meddling with Swaziland's affairs and that it consider sending more aid directly to the people of Africa in need and less to corrupt and autocratic leaders.

PW

Heritage Day Soccer Tournament



PASSOP brings youths of mixed nationality to Heritage Day Soccer tournament hosted by the Community Against Abuse in Retreat.

On Saturday the 24th of September, the Community Against Abuse organisation in Retreat hosted a Soccer and Netball tournament to celebrate Heritage day as a community. PASSOP was invited and came with a team of youths made up of a Zimbabwean, Congolese, Tanzanian, Zambian and two South Africans.

The boys were excited to be given the opportunity to interact and play with their peers from another community. This was made easier by the warm welcome they were shown by the members of the Retreat and the tournament organisers. Our “coaches”(PASSOP staff) and the boys were very well looked after and felt a part of the celebrations.

They played three very spirited games winning two and losing in the playoffs. They won the award for the “Most disciplined and sporting team” for which they received a trophy and each player received certificates of participation.

The 2011 Heritage day event was a wonderful display of community involvement and unity. The African proverb “It takes a whole village to raise a child” was a perfect description of the event. On behalf of the boys, PASSOP sends its thanks and gratitude to the Community Against Abuse for inviting us to be a part of their celebration of their community and of South African history and culture.

PW

Building Bridges Workshop In Masiphumelele

On Saturday the 27th, PASSOP hosted a workshop for women in Masiphumelele.

The “Building Bridges” workshop series hopes to open and deepen dialogue between South African and migrant women in the community, and build a strong and ongoing support network among the women. Participants in the meeting covered topics such as gender-based violence, workplace discrimination, and other unique problems that women face in the community.

The workshop was the first time many of the attendees had been exposed to PASSOP or discussed issues such as gender-based violence, and served as a great starting point for forums to come.

PASSOP will continue the “Building Bridges” workshops to create a safe space for women to discuss gender relations and xenophobia.

PW

Gogo Goes Home



This month the PASSOP team worked tirelessly to assist in the repatriation of “Gogo” (as she is affectionately known--meaning Granny).

Gogo was badly affected by the Xenophobic violence that broke out in De Doorns in November of 2009.

She is an old woman who was working on a farm in the area and since the attacks has not had the mental or physical strength to continue.

Plagued by memories and hallucinations of danger, without a job or money she has been in a desperate situation for a long time.

While repatriation is not in PASSOP’s mandate, mostly because of the costs involved, our staff members managed to bring together the resources necessary to send her home.

PW

PASSOP is supported by:



Donate to PASSOP

PASSOP depends largely on donations from its supporters without which we would be unable to operate efficiently as a small NGO. To donate, contributions can be made to:

Account Name: PASSOP
Bank: Nedbank
Account Type: Current
Account #: 1048074730
Branch Code: 104809, Rondebosch