

Progress report of “Speelhuis Manenberg” at Duinefontein Community Centre

written by Janine Baker and Chris Herrwig

There are about 70 – 80 children coming to Duinefontein Community Centre in Manenberg every day. They were very excited to meet Chris and Susanne, the two students from Germany who came to Manenberg for three month to work in the project. At first the children were shy to speak English and to get in contact with the foreigners but after a while they spoke the language and that is also learning for them. The organisation Selfhelp Manenberg and the children are glad to have Chris and Susanne around. At Duinefontein the volunteers working in the project are now able to change by looking after different age groups. We can at least try to reach every child. The staff employed by the City of Cape Town, who is also working at Duinefontein, was very happy for the new equipment like new toys, stationery and crockery. Now they are more involved and interested in spending time with the children. Before Selfhelp Manenberg started their engagement at Duinefontein the employees there saw themselves more as observers who are only responsible for setting up the place. The relationship with them is much better now and they are also more active. The volunteers of Selfhelp Manenberg and the employees of the city had a meeting discussing together the holiday programme and planning what we were going to do each day of the week. The volunteer Samantha at Duinefontein, who is not the one who was in Germany some months ago, and Janine communicated a lot during the holiday week. In this time the centre opened 10h00 in the morning and closed 12h30 in the afternoon. It opened again at 14h30 the afternoon, but before the children left for lunch time we gave them something to eat and before the centre closed at 16h30 they get something to eat again. The employees of the city were good in deciding the food menu for each day. That is why Chris, Susanne and Janine helped preparing the food.

We decided to do different activities every day like sport tournaments, workshops for art and crafts and free play sessions. We tried to involve every child in every activity. For example the boys had to play netball, which is normally a sport played by females, and the girls soccer, which is often only practised by male. It was good to see that they all enjoyed it. Sometimes it was difficult to involve all of them because of missing resources like less volunteers or proper rooms. For the next month we want to continue with more structured activities and would like to set up one room for homework support. In general all the staff members are satisfied with the development of the project so far even if there are still challenges.

Manenberg, 5th October 2010

