

## The backyard library – small beginnings, great endings



*John and Gail Nicholson*

### Changing lives through books – and a prestigious award for his backyard library

**W**e bring you the heartwarming story of John Nicholson, who started a library in the backyard of his house called Omega View, so that children in the poverty-stricken and violence-torn community of Lavender Hill can have a safe place to read, play and learn.

John and his wife, Gail started the Omega View community project in 2005 with a soup kitchen to feed the children in the area. He was very concerned about the number of children roaming the street, always begging for food. The idea for the library came about because the children would come straight from school and would stay to do their homework in the family home. John started out with 50 books, which were displayed on his dining room table and he would place duvet covers and blankets on the floor, so the children would have somewhere to sit and read.

John realised that a selection of books would help the children with their homework and would also encourage them to read for pleasure, once their schoolwork was completed. When John heard about Breadline Africa, he immediately applied for a refurbished container to be used as a library.

This proved to be Breadline Africa's very first six-metre community container library, which was placed in 2009. He named his library project Siyafunda – a Zulu word that means "we are reading". He now has more than 7,000 titles and he is grateful to the people who have helped him by donating books to the project.

John explained that when the children read, they also receive a sandwich, feeding body and mind. "That satisfaction and smile as they walk out of the library is a good thing.

It gives me a joyful feeling and great satisfaction that I have made a change in someone's life," he added.

"A love of reading and the improvement in the literacy of the children that come to the library in the afternoon has increased and this is what I like to see. That we, in some small way, can encourage and empower the children to develop a love for reading and to understand what they are reading."

This community library has become very popular and has received significant coverage in the media. John has had university students and missionaries from as far afield as Amsterdam visit the project, and a group from the Cape Peninsula University of Technology sacrificed three Saturdays in order to renovate the library.

John and his wife were recently the proud winners of the Afrikaans Language and Culture Association (ATKV) award. ATKV, founded in 1930 in Cape Town, is a society that aims to promote the Afrikaans language and culture.

John was also hailed as a national hero when he was visited by a member of the Executive Council of Cultural Affairs and Sport.

# We welcome the Henley MBA team from the UK



We were thrilled by the opportunity to work with a group of MBA students from the Henley Business School in the UK. They visited during the month of June and their project was part of the Reputation and Responsibility module of Henley's Executive Modular MBA programme.

The team focused on reputation management and how it links to Breadline Africa's achievement of its longer term purpose and sustainability.

We were delighted to learn more about how we are perceived, as a non-profit organisation

operating in the early childhood development and literacy sector in South Africa.

The team loved visiting the projects and meeting the people on the ground, and thoroughly enjoyed the interaction with the children.

## Report Backs

### Container Kitchen – Kerria Primary School, Atlantis, Western Cape



There was great excitement when Kerria Primary School received its brand new container kitchen, thanks to your generosity. The principal, staff and the dedicated cooks were very grateful –

especially because they previously had to convert the school's sick bay into a kitchen, leaving no room for a child feeling unwell to rest. They conveyed their heartfelt thanks to all, as more than 300 children will now

receive a daily meal prepared in their new kitchen. For many of the children, this is the only meal they receive each day. So the new kitchen is a great boost to the feeding scheme project.

# Sometimes, some things just take a little bit longer ...

## Container Classrooms – CC Scheepers Educare Centre, Worcester, Western Cape

We were heartened by your generous response to our campaign for classrooms. There was a delay in securing municipal permits. This has recently been resolved and the prefabricated classrooms will be placed soon. We can't wait to show the new centre to you!



## Container therapy classroom – Waves for Change, Monwabisi Beach, Khayelitsha, Cape Town

Breadline Africa is partnering with Waves for Change, a Cape Town-based non-profit organisation that uses surf therapy to build resilience in children from resource-poor communities, where social ills are rampant

and there is little hope for the future. The plan is to renovate the centre's existing containers, add two new ones on top of the current structures and create an undercover / shaded deck area. This will offer more

space for Waves for Change's life-changing interventions. The two new containers will provide space for the children to learn to repair the surfboards, as well as for a vitally needed secure office.



## Winter Food Parcels



Thank you for supporting our Winter Food Campaign. We visited the families who live on the Vaalkoppies rubbish dump in Beaufort West to give them a food parcel filled with much-needed staple food items and a warm blanket. They also received a storage tub to protect their food from the dust and pollution that surrounds their makeshift homes. Together, we have brought happy smiles to the 'tip people', who make a living by picking through the garbage and searching for scraps of plastic, cans and glass to sell for recycling. A special thanks to Ann Roche for the practical gift of storage tubs.

## Our feel-good story column

### A note from Karen Krick, Wallingford, USA (daughter of the Late Ken Krick)



I was very moved by your 'feel-good' story column and felt that I should share my parents' story, called 'A Love Story is Timeless'. On 9 July, 1942, a young soldier named Ken and his bride-to-be, Mae, were in the final stages of planning their church wedding when he received orders that he was going to be 'shipped out'. Shortly after their wedding, Ken's first stop was Durban, South Africa. At this stage, Ken's family had no idea where he was, until 2 September 1942, when The New York Daily News featured two articles: "U.S. Bombers Help British Stop Rommel" – "Yanks See Action in Egypt" and in the photo accompanying the stories, was a photo of Ken. He was in the Libyan Desert for nearly three years, as his Fifth Fighter Group was

connected to the British Eighth Army. Mae sent letters to Ken, who faithfully responded and he came home in 1945. They had two children, a daughter and a son.

By coincidence, I made a donation to Breadline Africa to help to send a child to the seaside for a day, in honour of a friend of mine in Ireland who celebrated her 70th birthday. I made contact with the office to confirm how to make the donation to their campaign. It was then that the connection to Africa brought memories flooding back. My dad served his country in Africa to win freedom for others. He loved children and would have been pleased that I have brought joy to a child by helping to give them a day at the seaside.

## Christine Oswald, our youngest supporter from the USA

My time with Breadline Africa was, without a doubt, life changing. For two months, I had the opportunity to intern on a voluntary basis with Breadline Africa, catching glimpses of the inner workings of a non-profit organisation and witnessing lives being changed. While working for the marketing team, I researched and wrote about some of South Africa's pressing social issues for articles on Breadline Africa's new blog and even got to travel to some of the projects supported by the organisation. Every centre I visited was a completely new experience.

I encountered some of the hardest working people I have ever met and saw how many lives can be impacted when people like you and I decide to pledge our support.

After visiting a number of sites, there was one facility that really stuck with me, called Bright Minds Educare Centre, situated in Khayelitsha on the outskirts of Cape Town. Christelle Wonderlik, the principal of the centre gives everything she has to the children she cares for, even in the midst of incredible

personal hardship. After visiting the centre, my mom and I decided to make a monthly contribution to the Bright Minds project. We know that through Breadline Africa, our monthly gifts will make a difference in the lives of the children. But there are thousands of centres like Bright Minds who need our help, so I encourage you to become a regular donor. After spending two months working with Breadline Africa, I can attest to the incredible impact that the charity has on people throughout the country.

# Ways to give

## Donating online made easy AND secure



The Internet – hard to imagine life without it! You probably know you can donate funds to Breadline Africa online, but you might have questions or concerns about how this works. Please ask us for our ‘how to donate AND be safe’ instructions if you’re interested in donating this way. It really is as simple as clicking your mouse, and it’s completely secure! Send us an email, and we’ll gladly answer any questions you might have.

## Share the news with your US-based friends!



Please remind your American friends that they too, can donate on the American Fund for Charities portal. This means they can now make safe and tax-deductible donations to any of our projects. Ask them to visit [www.breadlineafrica.org/donate/](http://www.breadlineafrica.org/donate/) for more details.



## Don't forget: £1 = £1.25 at no extra cost to you!

How you can help us even more: if you are a British taxpayer, please remember to fill in and sign your Gift Aid Declaration, which allows us to claim 25% back on the donations you give us. This means we can do 25% more for poor communities – at no extra cost to you!



# Donor Gallery



*Tony and Mary Tucker, UK*



*Naseema Mustapha, Brisbane, Australia*



*Christine Oswald and her mom,  
Lisa Sabath, Cincinnati, Ohio*

## Edna's Corner

Dear Friend

It is said that we can't change the world, but if we can help one person every day, it adds up and makes a big difference.

In this newsletter, we share the success story of the Omega View container library project, which started in John Nicholson's backyard. He has received several awards and has made headlines in our local newspapers, and on radio and television stations.

I recently visited the people living on a rubbish dump 500 kilometres from Cape Town and it was a real eye-opener to see how they survive by picking through the garbage, searching for scraps of plastic, cans and glass to sell for recycling.

Some of our projects have taken a little longer due to delays in obtaining municipal permits, but we are moving forward and will let you know as soon as they have been completed.

Don't forget to send me important dates to remember, including birthdays and special events. I would love to send you one of our personalised cards and celebrate along with you.

I look forward to hearing from you and, as always, thank you so much for your loyal support.

With much thanks.

*Edna*



*Edna with our patron, Frances Greathead*

## Birthday Calendar

Are you on my birthday calendar? Or do you have something special to celebrate or that you want to share with us. Please email [edna@breadlineafrica.org.za](mailto:edna@breadlineafrica.org.za) and I will send you a personalised greeting card.

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