



our developing world's voices

Fall 2009 --Volume 16, No. 1

Our World: South Africa, Botswana and Latin America

The world is so much with us and all that needs to be done, also here at home that this *voices* is months late. We're sure that many of you have been working for Single Payer/Medicare for All, an exit strategy for Iraq and Afghanistan, Diplomacy in Iran, Stopping the coup in Honduras, Ending settlements in Israel to move a real peace process forward, and in California sooo much needs to be done: Clean Elections and removing the 2/3 needed to pass any budget or funding measure throughout the state are top priority.

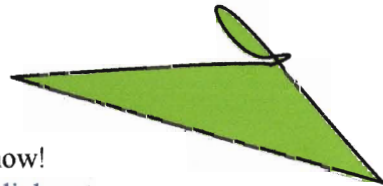
Programs **odw** is offering include:

- * What We Can Learn from South Africa and Botswana
- * Latin America: Past Present and Future
- * Global Food Crisis and Possible Solutions
- * Water, a Global Concern

Contact us now!

odw@magiclink.net

Join us in Cuba 6/29-7/08



South Africa, The Struggle Continues! But People Meet Some Needs!

South Africa faces many of the same problems as many countries, the US, too: inequality of wealth, inadequate housing although millions have been built, immigrants who are blamed for taking jobs in a time of high unemployment*, drought and flooding due to climate change, inadequate health care (they do have universal pre-natal and child health care till the age of six).

* In Britain and Ireland it's called redundancy, in South Africa it's called retrenchment, but a layoff is still a layoff. June 11 the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa issued a statement announcing a court action and possible strike over what they call a "jobs bloodbath." "General Motors South Africa (GMSA) destroyed over 1,300 jobs since 2007," the union charged, "through retrenchments and worthless separation packages. This worst employer in the South African automobile industry" has found that's not enough. Without union consultation, GMSA issued more workers with letters of retrenchment. As a public relations move GMSA issued a vehicle payment protection insurance providing cover for up to nine months for a two-year period if an individual was retrenched and had purchased any GM brand vehicle between May 4 and July 31 this year, he said. The extended warranty was GMSA demonstrating its faith and confidence "not only in our product, but the fact that we are here to stay", while the vehicle payment protection provided consumers with peace of mind.; it did not rescind the layoffs.

www.magiclink.net/~odw click for *voices* and for gifts of giving on the web

New President Jacob Zuma has many followers, especially the poor, who are hopeful for change. (Sound familiar?) Some people are in a wait and see mode and others are upset with his polygamous marriages (allowed by Zulu tribal law). But everyone seems happy with his positive move to make anti-retrovirals available to all AIDS patients. Hopefully the prevention program will swing into force soon. He faces many huge problems.

People are remarkable at seeing a need and finding ways to meet it.

Vicky Mudau found friends, skilled counselors and others and together they founded Reashoma Drop-In Centre. So inspiring! Children living with single Moms dying of AIDS, or with Grannies or in an all child household because parents have died come to Reashoma (means: we are working) for a hot meal before going to school. Then the Grannies come for a good meal, counseling if they want, fellowship and a chance to do their crafts and sell them to earn a bit.



They go home when the kids come after school for help with homework, another good meal, counseling, help with making memory books and learning to grieve and help others grieve. They can choose between art, music (marimba is popular), dance, drama, working in the organic garden or playing sports. They go home happy! Without Reashoma they would be in despair would probably drop out of school and what would be their lives?.

Inspirational! This is why we're trying to raise funds to help them. Check out our website for the gift of giving opportunities or call 408-379-4431 or write. \$30 each, 2/\$50

2.

www.magiclink.net/~odw click for *voices* and for gifts of giving on the web

There are other after school drop-in centres with pre-schoolers using the facilities earlier but Reashoma was the most exciting!

The special needs schools were also inspirational because there was real learning going on.

One for “Intellectually Impaired” had students age 5-35 (they’re supposed to let them go at 21, but keep them longer to become self sufficient). They group them by their interests: bead work, art, sewing, cooking, carpentry, metal work, brick making, etc. They learn basic math, reading and writing through their activities and they are so happy! They can see what they’ve created! And everything they make of quality is sold to staff or the community!



Our friend Ernie ordered two small chests of drawers, the quality was so good!

The physically disabled center is not part of the Education Ministry so they have a small space for the learning and meals they provide. In a Capetown township the School for the Deaf is doing so well the Ministry asked them to take on some autistic and hyperactive kids. The deaf have proven to be very patient with the others and really help with the teaching. Up to age 12 there is academic learning. From age 12-15 they sample the vocational classes and at 16 choose the one they want to apprentice in. They often get a job in the company they apprentice with. A happy place with cooking, electric and auto shop, metal work, boat making, etc. On the way to this school we passed a huge section of new housing and then old Khayelitcha, the shanties. The need



is so great, as soon as a shanty is vacated it’s rented.

A flood caused by the rising ocean (climate change) washed many away so temporary ones built on a rise were offered and are still being lived in. Housing is still millions short. 3.

For the last time we had the privilege to visit Albie Sachs in his Constitutional Court chambers. He and Pius Langa, the Chief Justice retired the end of October. The term is 15 years or age 72.



Albie Sachs, Retired Constitutional Court Judge with Vanessa and Oliver

We first met Albie when he was an ANC constitutional lawyer in exile in Mozambique helping them write their constitution and writing a draft for the new South Africa he never doubted would be born. There he was car bombed by the South African military. If you saw the PBS film *Endgame* you saw a re-enactment. After a year of recuperation of the loss of an eye, an arm and shattered ankle he returned to his country and completed the constitution with colleagues and became a Constitutional Justice. He lives and breathes justice.

His new book "The Strange Alchemy of Life and Law" has a dedication, "The lovely little boy that Vanessa and I brought into the world two years ago has to our delight used the word 'why?' If one day he wants to know why we named him Oliver, why his Daddy has one arm, and why his Daddy is called Judge, he can find the answers in this book."

A great read! One is invited into the process of his coming to decisions on his cases. It stretches one's mind and the reader gets to know the writer. Hopefully he will be at Santa Clara University in February. Check our website in January. www.magiclink.net/~odw. In January he'll be at the University of Chicago Law School. To see him in person is not to be missed!

Nozizwe Madlala Routledge, an ANC Member of Parliament (MP) for 15 years. Now most MPs have no experience so she is preparing an orientation course for them at the University of Cape-town. She and others in 1994 had to learn from scratch. As Deputy Minister of Defense, a pacifist Quaker she developed the training program for those being demobilized and for those remaining: peace keeper training. As Deputy Minister of Health, following the constitution she tried to give anti retrovirals to AIDS patients against Pres. Mbeki's wishes. An uphill fight. Husband Jeremy is with Quaker Peace Centre Alternatives to Violence and A Gun Free SA



Alternatives to Violence is a global Quaker initiative that in South Africa is offered in high schools, prisons and communities. We visited Karel's group which began with former youth drug or alcohol addicts who wanted to turn their lives around. A week-end Alternatives session got them so enthusiastic that they recruited youth of all ages and races in their neighborhoods to join. They are so dedicated to making a difference and building a better world that Barby was in tears at the end of the session. They all gathered round to comfort her. A Gun Free South Africa has resulted in many gun turn-ins and it works with Alternatives, but both programs are wanting for money. They have schools on the waiting list that want the training.

Sizeka Rensburg, an economist, working with small businesses is now looking at rural opportunities. We're concerned the land reform scheme won't succeed if all the resources for agriculture go to large growers. Drought (climate change) makes productive land less available. We hope she will send us some good news. The TCOE report spells out some positive developments. Husband, Ihron is now Deputy Chancellor of the University of Johannesburg, a combining of many universities including some Afrikaaner ones, a challenge of integration! So far they're doing well! Pres. Zuma has divided the ministry of Education into two ministries: K-12 and tertiary (includes Universities) but technicons and the equivalent of community colleges now have the mission of graduating students with practical job skills. Ihron thinks this makes sense, the country needs skilled workers. He thinks the K-12 system will take two decades to reach "white" standards. Bantu education was deliberately designed to be inferior, to train people to be servants

Institute for Healing of Memories/Father Michael Lapsley

Happy news from Father Michael. The Institute has a new home with better space for people to share their stories in the healing process. Funds needed. avra@healingofmemories.co.za They work all over the world but don't ignore home in South Africa. Many are much more productive citizens because they've been listened to and helped to change their way of responding to their situations. Many are now counselors and all more positive people in their communities. We met Michael in Zimbabwe, an Anglican (Episcopalian) priest in exile in 1985 doing Human Rights work, before a letter bomb blew off both his arms. He is still busy and universally loved.



www.healingofmemories.co.za/

5.

BOTSWANA

Our first time in Botswana was a rich experience thanks to a few Botswana Quakers who do so much despite their small numbers as is the case also in South Africa. Kagisong means Peace, the



Quaker Centre where we stayed thanks to Sheldon Weeks. He arranged a visit with a leading Quaker, Sheilagh Willet who led us to the only Women's Shelter in the country, a Quaker project and to the Human Rights Centre.

The Kagisano Women's Shelter changes the lives of women and children affected by domestic violence in Botswana. The Drop-In-Centre offers counseling, medical and legal support, empowers women with survival and life skills so they can start income generating projects. The safe house offers a three month temporary home. The program sensitizes and disseminates information: gender based violence, the link between domestic violence and the spread of HIV/AIDS. The arts and crafts teacher is a volunteer who got her life back coming to the centre so she knows where these women are coming from, knows how art and crafts can enhance self-esteem.



An outstanding program we want to support through gifts of giving. \$30 each or 2/\$50

6.

www.magiclink.net/~odw click for *voices* and for gifts of giving on the web

Botswana has a healthcare system that we would love to have: Dr Martha Butale is a dentist in



the huge dental wing at the large Gaborone Princess Marina Hospital. No premiums to pay and a very small payment to see a dentist, doctor or ophthalmologist. Referral appointments take no longer than six weeks. Emergencies are referred immediately. A dental mobile unit goes into the rural areas and to all schools. If exams show children need treatment a permission slip explaining what is needed and when it can be given free is sent home. There is also mental health care and a large mental hospital in the capital. There are two other major teaching hospitals and many provincial clinics. This is financed by the government's share of the mines: diamonds, soda ash, copper, and coal. Tourism is a major source of income for the economy.

University loans and grants include overseas training. Revamping it and restructuring the accounting to increase payback will make more help available. Holidays precluded school visits.

Ditshwanelo, The Botswana Centre for Human Rights showed us the work that still needs to be done: Abolishing the death penalty (SA has done that), educating lawyers and providing support for Legal Aid (exactly the same problems we have). They also aid the indigenous. The constitution bans torture as does the African Charter on Human and People's Rights. The Centre developed excellent teaching modules for high schools on Human Rights that we could use! Contact us to borrow them. The Director, Alice Mogwe, was the first Black in a University of Capetown dorm so she's experienced in the need for Human Rights advocacy!



At the National Museum was a juried exhibit of their world renowned baskets! Magnificent! And we were able to buy some to share with others at our Handcraft sale. They're all gone so we'll have to go back. Anyone interested in Botswana/South Africa in 2012? 7.

our developing world voices
13004 Paseo Presada, Saratoga CA 95070-4125
408-379-4431
odw@magiclink.net

US Postage
PAID
Saratoga CA
Permit No 208

Address Service Requested

***A nonprofit educational project teaching about
“developing countries” and diverse cultures:
reality tours, programs, teacher workshops.
Barby and Vic Ulmer CO Directors
Midwest Rep: Marilyn Peretti
Webmaster: Meiyu Chen
Weekly volunteer: Gay Lyn Godfrey
and thanks to many others.***



*We're asking for a
\$15 donation per year from our readers to mail voices and support broader circulation.
Please update addresses and emails. Save trees and emissions. Thanks.*

Latin America

We are saddened, even angry that the US didn't follow the law with the Honduran coup. President Obama called it a military coup but then didn't follow through with stopping all funding to Honduras. He let the State Department state the US recognized the November election, sending the message to Latin America we're back to accepting and encouraging coups and interventions!

“For sixty year the US has paid for global security around the world.” President Obama in Olso

US Intervention History in Latin America:

- *Eisenhower's overthrow of elected President Arbenz in Guatemala 1954,
 - *JFK's little-known 1963 intervention against Cheddi Jagan in British Guiana,
 - * and the Bay of Pigs fiasco in Cuba
 - *Nixon/Kissinger's assassination of Salvador Allende, the elected president of Chile 1973
 - * Reagan's invasion of Grenada in 1983,
 - *Reagan's contra war against Nicaragua and subsequent interference in elections from 1990
 - *HW Bush's overthrow of Noriega in Panama 1989,
 - * Ambassadors' intervention in EL Salvadoran elections threatening a cut off of remittances from Salvadorans in the US, the biggest block of income into the country
 - * GW Bush's aid in the coup attempt in Venezuela against Chavez,
 - * US waivering in declaring a military coup in Honduras
- Not exactly seen as global security!

www.magiclink.net/~odw for gift of giving