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Sihlalo Outreach Newsletter September 2022

Sihlalo Outreach Pty Ltd is a not-for-profit Public Benefit Organisation in Salt River, Cape Town. Its mission is to provide training opportunities for young adults disadvantaged by lack of opportunity or education, or by illness or poverty. Sihlalo was started by Australians Karen and Keith in 2019. They have a love of South Africa, and passion for practical capacity building and skills development, personal growth through learning on the job, team building and empowerment of the next generation.

It's been a long while since our last newsletter. Our commitment to regular communications slipped off the radar whilst we survived Covid, developed skills, recruited the right people who believed in our vision, learnt to ask the right questions of our suppliers, battled product shortages, built up our product range, invested in research and development (and learnt from many product failures), and waited in vain for Keith's ban on travelling back to South Africa to be lifted after he inadvertently overstayed his visitor's visa by 2 days in February 2020 (BTW he's still waiting.....in Australia). Sihlalo news has changed so fast that yesterday's news is often already old....

We have learnt many expensive and demoralising lessons, but we are surprisingly still on track. We now have a fully-operational workshop, reliable suppliers, a resilient, committed workshop team whose skills are growing daily, our own bakkie, an open kitchen for breakfast and lunch, great barista in our coffee shop and a growing product list. Along the way we have met like-minded, wonderful people who have supported us by mentoring, skills sharing, donated to our training programs, ordered products, forgiven our failures, believed in us, encouraged us to extend ourselves, and spread the word about our activities, our trainees, and our mission.



Our workshop team is Margo (workshop manager), Ismaeel (painter and finisher), new trainees Baxolile and Mbasa from Zonnebloem High School, and Wilson (workshop foreman). We've recently recruited Claude (barista, toy shop manager, house keeper), and we are supported by Nieyaz (experienced cabinet maker and spray painter) in Keith's absence.



To find out more about our workshop training schedule, or to donate to the Sihlalo Youth Theatre program, please contact Karen or Margo on info@sihlalo.org.za.





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We have made and painted gorgeous Wendy houses, and the toy shop has an increasing number of traditional Victorian toys made from African woods. We are currently taking orders for personalised 2022 Advent calendars, and we are on countdown to fill toy orders for ZA and Australian markets before Christmas.



Margo and the trainees have been making beautiful working fire engines, hand-turned items and hand-decorated iconic South African taxis. Our product range includes bespoke household decorator items, garden furniture (including a range developed with a wonderful, supportive, forgiving South African designer), owl and dolls houses, and furniture restoration.



Sihlalo Youth Theatre program

We have built our youth program over the past 12 months to include modern dance classes from Miss Sophia, and African music classes with Kudakwashe. Finding safe transport for our enthusiastic children from Phillipi has been the biggest challenge, but we now have a regular reliable taxi service to bring up to 20 children aged 6 to 16 years each week to Saturday classes. Last month we hosted a very successful benefit concert to raise money for the youth program, with generous soloists Jürgen Schwietering, and Kenneth Abrahams.



Thank you to our many Sihlalo supporters through these past two unique years! Expect more Sihlalo news in October 2022!! Maybe then we will have a picture of Keith in person, with the team!

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