



# GR@ILVINE

## GRAIL PROGRAMMES NEWSLETTER

Kleinmond, South Africa, December 2017



Cape White-eye. Picture by William Scrooby, The Grail Centre.

### **Place of contemplation, connection and courageous action?**

By Shirley Pendlebury (Board chairperson)

As the year ends, the moment is right for reflection, appreciation and renewal. Here I reflect on two symbols that lie at the heart of the purpose and work of The Grail Centre Trust in Kleinmond. One symbol is the big tree ('mthimkhulu'); the other is the grail.

The big tree casts its wide shadow over the amphitheatre at the Mthimkhulu Village Centre. It signifies a place of gathering, growth and transcendence. Over many, many years this tree has sent its roots into the earth. It is a wise elder, a community anchor. Its strong branches give shelter from the sun, catch the wind and reach towards the endless sky. In this gathering place, people may come together to build social cohesion, heal past wounds, honour one another's dignity, and – through dialogue – find ways of acting in concert to open local pathways to social justice and economic self-sufficiency.

Like the tree, the grail is a multi-faceted symbol. It stands for the mystery of existence, for the presence of the spiritual in the material world, for our oneness with the earth. As a chalice or serving vessel, the grail represents a willingness to sacrifice for the good of others. The grail also symbolises the quest for higher meaning and purpose, a quest that calls upon us to be steadfast in intent, action and solidarity even, and especially, when things seem hopeless.

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This year, events in Kleinmond have been a stark reminder of how much these symbols matter. In the previous issue of Gr@ilvine, Yvonne Sliep and Annemarie Hendrikz described the context and events that brought Kleinmond into the national headlines in September 2017. The symbol of gathering to build mutual understanding and concerted action for social justice has special resonance in a town that mirrors national patterns of inequality and structural violence. Kleinmond is a microcosm of South African inequalities, but because it is small enough, here we can blaze pathways for social change. The big tree symbol marks the ways in which the The Grail Centre Trust and its Programmes can deepen their work for the greater good of Kleinmond. This is not to lose sight of pressing national and global concerns. Rather it presents an opportunity to gather under the big tree to co-create models of action and interaction at a local level that illustrate possibilities for a more just and environmentally attuned society on a larger scale.

As Kleinmond was simmering down, Trustees and Board members of The Grail Centre Trust met with some members of the Grail Centre intentional community for a strategic "think-well". Our purpose was to begin envisaging a direction for a renewed and more integrated organisation. In the wake of protest, some disquiet troubled our thinking about the role and place of the organisation on local soil. A concern for local imperatives rightly infused our ideas for a global

programme for community development and training. Several inspiring maxims emerged from the strategic think-well. One maxim, especially, encapsulates the values and aspirations reflected in the symbols of the big tree and the grail:

*“Use the Grail Centre and Mthimkhulu as places of contemplation and connection, and a courageous space for social justice”.*

Contemplation, connection and courageous action. These three terms bring together crucial facets of the Grail Centre Trust’s founding purpose, spirituality and activism, holding them together in creative tension and through multiple connections. Some of these vital connections may be tarnished or forgotten, others may never have been fully realised. The coming year offers a chance to renew worn connections, to make new ones, to change those that are exploitative, and to honour, strengthen and cherish those that enable courageous action for a better world, starting where we are, in Kleinmond.

### **Caring for the Carer, Smart Kids and World Aids Day**

By Heleen Sliep

In their daily work in the community, the Community Health Care Workers (CHCWs) at Mthimkhulu are confronted with issues of sickness, suffering and death. It is therefore very important to ensure that they have time and space to distress. We have thus initiated **Caring for the Carer** sessions that are conducted by a professional on a quarterly basis. The first session was on Friday 24 November and the CHCWs thoroughly enjoyed it.



‘Caring for the Carer’, Mthimkhulu, 24 November.

The children from **Mthimkhulu Smart Kids** crèche had their annual debutante ball on 24 November as part of their fundraising activities. The parents and teachers worked hard to make this an enjoyable evening. The children were very excited and they all looked very smart in their outfits. On 29 November the Mthimkhulu Smart Kids (MSK) went on an outing, taking a slow stroll down to the harbour where they had lunch at the ‘Boathouse’ restaurant.

**World Aids Day** was celebrated with a collaboration between Mthimkhulu CHCWs and the Kleinmond Clinic on 1 December.

### **Wishes for the Festive Season**

By Tft Team

#### **From Shula, a powerful reminder:**

“We are the children of these sands that stretch beyond time, the seeds carried on the winds, the relatives of everything that lives or moves freely in this place of history, and we are proud that we have been blessed by God to live the simple life, at peace with our environment and grateful for this blessing.”

San leader – Dawid Kruiper



#### **From Noksie, some wise words from Earl Nightingale:**

“Learn to enjoy every minute of your life.

Be happy now.

Don’t wait for something outside of yourself to make you happy in the future.

Think how really precious is the time you have to spend, whether it’s at work or with your family.

Every minute should be enjoyed and savoured.”

#### **Eunice sends timeless guidance from Proverbs 3 v 5 & 6 (NIV)**

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding, in all your ways submit to him and he will make your paths straight.”

#### **Ntombi gifts us words on the power of hope:**

Hope turns challenges into opportunities. In an era ruled by market such that life itself is a commodity, the spirit to fight on dies, the lenses to see get blurred and the energy to act is weakened. The only thing that keeps us going is hope. Hold on to it – it is both life and service against injustices. That is the purpose of living.

#### **From Jude, a blessing, taken from the beautiful words of John O’Donohue:**

“May you awaken to the mystery of being here  
 And enter the quiet immensity of your own presence.  
 May you have joy and peace in the temple of your senses.  
 May all that is unforgiven in you be released,  
 May your fears yield their deepest tranquilities,  
 May all that is un-lived in you  
 Blossom into a future filled with love”.

#### **From Ginoca, a wish originally wished by Simone de Beauvoir:**

“I wish that every human life might be pure transparent freedom.”

The Tft team wishes you a very special festive season!

## **2018 - 2019 Training for Transformation Diploma in Development Education**

Applications are open for the 2018 - 2019 Training for Transformation Diploma in Development Education!

### **Aims of the Diploma**

- To build a new level of leadership in the development education field that is grounded in good theory and practice.
- To build the skills, insights and abilities of teams, from NGOs and community organisations, to empower local self-reliant community development efforts and to link these efforts within wider national and global movements within civil society.
- To build confidence, knowledge and skills to work with and challenge local and national governments to ensure macroeconomic policies that are to the advantage of the marginalised.

### **Residential Phases**

At the Grail Centre in Kleinmond, South Africa

3 September 2018 – 28 October 2018 (Phase 1)

06 May 2019 – 30 June 2019 (Phase 3)

### **Home Phases**

Applied field work in participants' communities, under the guidance of country mentors.

29 October 2018 – 05 May 2019 (Phase 2)

01 July 2019 – 2 September 2019 (Phase 4)

For more info email [tft@grailprogrammes.org.za](mailto:tft@grailprogrammes.org.za).

### **The Grail Centre Festive Season wishes**

By William Scrooby

The Grail Centre wishes you a safe, joyful and peaceful Festive Season! We would like to ask you to be kind to the environment by using water wisely, so that enough will remain for plant and animal life.

## **ABOUT US**

The Grail Centre Trust is based in Kleinmond, Western Cape. This Not-for-Profit Organisation delivers two programmes, namely Training for Transformation and Mthimkhulu Community Development Programme. In addition, the Grail Centre Conference and Retreat Centre can accommodate groups of up to 40 people.

### **The Grail Centre**

Tel. +27 (0)28 271 3410 Fax. +27 (0)28 271 4704

Email: [grailadm@mweb.co.za](mailto:grailadm@mweb.co.za)

Website: [www.grailprogrammes.org.za](http://www.grailprogrammes.org.za)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/grailcentre.kleinmond](http://www.facebook.com/grailcentre.kleinmond)

### **Training for Transformation**

Tel. +27 (0)28 271 4887 Fax. +27 (0)86 576 88 65

Email: [tft@grailprogrammes.org.za](mailto:tft@grailprogrammes.org.za)

Website: [www.trainingfortransformation.co.za](http://www.trainingfortransformation.co.za)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/TrainingforTransformation](http://www.facebook.com/TrainingforTransformation)

TrainingforTransformation

YouTube: [www.youtube.com/user/TFTGrail](http://www.youtube.com/user/TFTGrail)

### **Mthimkhulu Community Development**

Tel. +27 (0)28 271 5213 Fax. +27 (0)28 271 5639

Email: [info@grailprogrammes.org.za](mailto:info@grailprogrammes.org.za)

Website: [www.grailprogrammes.org.za](http://www.grailprogrammes.org.za)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/Mthimkhulu-Community-Development-Program](http://www.facebook.com/Mthimkhulu-Community-Development-Program)

Our work is not possible without the support from funders and donors. You too could help us today to expand it. If you so wish, contact Eunice at [eunice@grailprogrammes.org.za](mailto:eunice@grailprogrammes.org.za).



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