



GR@ILVINE

GRAIL PROGRAMMES NEWSLETTER

Kleinmond, South Africa, April 2018



Winnie Mandela. Picture by Graeme Williams.

Winifred Nomzamo Madikizela-Mandela, a woman with the spirit of a fish eagle

By Ntombi Nyathi

She was, to use the words of Maya Angelou “Phenomenally a phenomenal woman”.

I was in class on the morning of Tuesday 3rd of April. We were waiting to start a session on human rights. A woman of Italian origin approached me and said, “*Ntombi, I am sorry about Winnie, but was she not some kind of funny woman? Yes, she fought against Apartheid but she ended up not so good...*” I did not have the courage to talk back to this woman. I looked at her and walked away. I am still wondering if I should have said something. In the afternoon of the same day I sat in a bus and young black woman came and sat next to me and she started talking right away, “*Where do you come from? Today is a very sad day for African women. Did you know Winnie Mandela? She died yesterday*”. And she started crying. My motherly heart reached out to her, I embraced her and I told her that I live in South Africa and yes, it was not the happiest day for African women. So, we shared our sorrows, wiped our tears. Before we went our separate ways I learned that this young woman was from Ghana. When I arrived back in my room I got uncountable messages about Winnie from other African women friends of mine, but none of my European friends. In fact, one of the African young women from Uganda had Winnie as her profile picture.

I sat on my bed and reflected on my day’s experiences.

IN THIS ISSUE

TRAINING FOR TRANSFORMATION

Winifred Nomzamo Madikizela-Mandela, a woman with the spirit of a fish eagle.

By Ntombi Nyathi – p. 1-2

MTHIMKHULU VILLAGE CENTRE

Kleinmond Dreamers: Exploring the past, present and future.

By Heleen Sliep – p. 2-3

THE GRAIL CENTRE

Group Winter Special at The Grail Centre. – p. 3

My face was wet with tears that I could not control. I wondered if how we understand and are impacted by Winnie’s life is shaped by our racialized positioning more than we know. There is a clause in the African Feminist Charter that challenges African women to tell their story. As I write I feel that African women have to tell each other’s stories. Except for her own book, Winnie’s story was told by the media. When I think about Winnie I describe her as a woman with the spirit of a fish eagle. The storms of Apartheid gave her strength to fight stronger, the light inside of her never ceased to shine, because in the words of Maya Angelou “nothing can dim the light that shines from within.” 491 days in isolation without a bath, what woman would remain sane! Winnie remained angry, but with the focus of a fish eagle never hesitating to connect her pain to purpose. This is captured in one of her many letters to Mandela. She wrote:

“In a way during the past two years I felt so close to you. It was the first time we were together in similar surroundings for that length of time. Eating what you were eating and sleeping on what you sleep on gave me that psychological reflection of being with you.”

I wonder how Shakespeare would have written this play, when one finds love and courage from pain and incarceration, hope where there is no hope, courage from the smell of death, light in the darkness. Who can find words more than Maya Angelou’s suggestion

that nobody is born with courage, but one is born with the potential to be courageous. I keep asking myself these questions, maybe we should all do so.

What if Winnie was never born into this world? What if Winnie was never married to Mandela? What if Winnie went abroad to safety with her children and communicated with Mandela from a distance? What if Winnie stayed under the same roof with Mandela post Apartheid? What if Winnie became the president of South Africa?

Like the young woman from Ghana I mourn the loss of a woman whose life was lived with purpose that will inspire generations to come in Africa and beyond... only if we tell her story the way we know it; that she was a sinner who kept trying, she was a tireless fighter, and she was phenomenally a woman of phenomena...

Kleinmond Dreamers: Exploring the past, present and future

By Heleen Sliep

Mthimkhulu Village Centre has been a hub of activity over the past three months, with different courses on offer. One of the inspiring courses we would like to highlight started as a three-day introduction course to becoming a tour guide. The main difference from other tour guide offerings is that particular attention is given to history. Ultimately, tourists will be taken on walking tours through different sections of the town while learning about the history and different cultures of Kleinmond. Jolene Young, a social historian from Cape Town, facilitated the course. She conducts these kinds of walking tours in Simons Town and hopes to develop local talent to do something similar for Kleinmond. Linda Brand and Yvonne Sliep, two of our Board members, also attended the course to get an idea of how we could take this forward. The participants - who are currently also enrolled for a Cape Nature course - have shown great enthusiasm in learning many new aspects of their history that was not taught in school. Although the history covers as far back as 1750, attention is given to the last fifty years.

Participants generated their own list of questions on what more they would like to find out about and are now collecting relevant information from others living in Kleinmond and other sources of documentation. Due to the enthusiasm of the group the course continued an additional five days in collaboration with the 'Narrative Foundation' to bring in the life stories of the participants themselves. Under the facilitation of Yvonne Sliep, they explored their own stories and are using the information to develop electronic portfolios that will enhance their employability. Part of the process included creating a collective "tree of life". The roots were filled in with their



"Kleinmond Dreamers" at Mthimkhulu Village Centre.

own family history, the trunk symbolised both formal and informal education, the different branches highlighted the emerging interests of the participants and the leaves all the significant people in their lives.

Then they filled in fruits which were outcomes they have already achieved. Finally came huge blossoms, which contained their dreams and ambitions. From that exercise they started calling themselves the "Kleinmond Dreamers". What stood out during this exercise were all the things the participants spoke about that they would like to give back to Kleinmond once they have 'made it' in life. A few things listed included establishing a high school and public transport for scholars. They will donate scholarships so that young people will have more opportunities. They would like to see a museum that displays part of their history with an outlet that sells local craft by Kleinmonders.

The last exercise they did before this article went to print was writing poetry inspired by the dish they relish most in their own homes. The following collections of sentences come from a combination of what all the participants contributed.

*Vissersdorp
Familiebymekaar
Almal om eentafel
Lag en gesels*

I love coming home
One perfect moment
Fresh fish from the sea
Low in fat but rich in Omega 3

*vanaandlekekmosweer my vingersaf
ek is die diegelukkigstemeisie
my ouma het pottekosgemaak
my ma se hoenderkerrie is die beste*

sweet delicious scents
stealing through the streets
fresh snoek on the coals
gekapteuiensuurlemoen

*reuk van seelewe
seelewe in jou agterjaart
tamatie pasta engekapt epiepersilie
geure wat jousmaaksintuie laat bewe*
#kleinmonddreamers

Group Winter Special at The Grail Centre

This is the perfect time for reflection and contemplation in our peaceful environment in Kleinmond.

The Grail Centre offers group discounts from **1 May to 31 July**

15% for groups using 3 – 5 cottages

20% for groups using more than 5 cottages

Discounts apply to bookings of two nights or more.

Email now grailadm@mweb.co.za!

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.

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.

The Grail Centre

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

grailadm@mweb.co.za

www.grailprogrammes.org.za

facebook.com/grailcentre.kleinmond

Training for Transformation

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

tft@grailprogrammes.org.za

www.trainingfortransformation.co.za

facebook.com/TrainingforTransformation

youtube.com/TFTGrail

Mthimkhulu Community Development

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

info@grailprogrammes.org.za

www.grailprogrammes.org.za

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