

UPROOTING THE ROOTS OF CRIME...



Kyle a Valued Citizen Poet To Change The World

There are 13 prisons in South Africa which have provision for juveniles, with 1 275 youngsters between the ages of 14 and 18 years old behind bars, according to the Department of Correctional Services March 2010 statistics. Of these, 504 were awaiting trial and 771 had been sentenced. Alternatively, juveniles suspected of committing a crime are supposed to be sent to a reform school, but there are only two in the country, together, they can accommodate 280 youths.

"There is no child that is born a criminal, but a child can be moulded to commit a crime offence. With that in mind, children that commit crime can also be loved, trusted, nurtured to be valued citizens, so we as Valued Citizens Initiative in partnership with the Johannesburg Metro Region from the Gauteng Department of Health and Social Development and the National Lottery Distribution Trust Fund believe that it is crucial to give a second chance to a child in life" says Moeletsi Pule - Diversion Programme Coordinator. Hence since 2008, we have developed and facilitated the iCHOOSE Diversion programme to 307 diverted children in conflict with the law and only 2 re-offended.

iCHOOSE Diversion programme guides for two months for 48 hours, a large percentage of children that are referrals from the Randburg Magistrate Court, and small percentages of that are self referrals from parents, schools, Honeydew Police Station and orphanages.

The Programme's objective is to divert young offenders from the justice system, educating them to communicate openly and effectively, express their feelings in an appropriate manner, heal their emotions through visual art working on the concept of projecting themselves into the future as valued citizens. iCHOOSE brings individuals between the age of 9 to 25 years old to accept their uniqueness and acknowledge their inter-dependence breaking the cycle of the victim as they come always blaming a situation.

The iCHOOSE programme for young offenders is coupled with two support programmes; one focusing on parents/ guardians of children at home and the others on educators in schools. Parents/caregivers of young offenders meet twice a month at a support session facilitated by Silas Pillay. These workshops take the form of an open dialogue where parents/caregivers have the opportunity to discuss the challenges they are experiencing with their children and seek advice on possible solutions to build trust, speak with honesty and transparency, discipline with respect and dignity and open the channels of communication.



Explaining My Life

The iCHOOSE programme also aims at supporting the reintegration of young offenders back into their school communities and to achieve this, Valued Citizens Diversion Officers work with educators at the schools that

young offenders attend. Workshop are held with all the educators of the school where they are invited to learn more about discipline, respect, dignity, emotional intelligence and how to boost the self-confidence of these children.

Let's Shout together against crime and build a crime free South Africa!

ARE LEADERS BORN OR DEVELOPED?

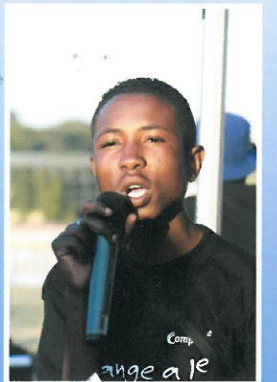
In partnership with Computershare's Change a Life programme, Valued Citizens Initiative believes that leaders are born and developed but need to be revealed through persistent yet patient nurturing. But for a leader to be revealed s/he has to be dedicated in establishing him or herself as a leader, and be guided and developed to show their abilities.



Discovery Of Individual Abilities Within Our Young Leaders

Hence of the 305 diverted children from iCHOOSE Diversion programme, Valued Citizens Initiative in partnership with Computershare took 32 diverted children to iCHOOSE to Change a life leadership programme to give them a platform to reveal what their previous troubled life had hidden.

As a leadership programme, iCHOOSE to Change a Life aims at empowering diverted children from crime to become leaders, in their own lives and those around them; for them to become leaders of positive change in their communities and schools. The programme includes a six months training that educate diverted children with skills such as - understanding leadership; discovering the leader within assessing strengths and acknowledging weaknesses; developing an open communication with self and others, and the vital one, action plan crime prevention projects. It is through this extensive programme that Valued Citizens Initiative have managed to reveal leadership qualities within individuals like Amogelang Pitso, Buyisiwe Jaas, Sechaba Matsoso and Kopano Thulare.



Amogelang Pitso Committed To Change Lives

Now Amogelang Pitso has grown to be a leader of positive change in Cosmo City, as he led other young beneficiaries to take part in a Crime Prevention initiative, called Change a Life Day.

CHANGE A LIFE DAY - STILL FEELING IT...

With the spirit of the world cup still hovering among South Africans, Kopano Thulare, Michael Thompson, Samuel Legotsa and Amogelang Pitso, young ambassadors of a leadership programme called "iCHOOSE to Change a Life" rallied together and organised a "Change a Life Day", thanks to the guidance of Valued Citizens Initiative and Computershare teams. The purpose of Change a Life Day was to use soccer as a platform to unite the inhabitants of Cosmo City and other surrounding communities to stand against criminal activities.

"Shouting for the government to create a crime-free society, as though it has sole responsibility for crime prevention, is unfair and time wasting. We have initiated Change a Life Day in Cosmo City, one of our most crime ridden townships, to urge people to roll-up their sleeves and take action in an effort to create a crime-free society during the Soccer World Cup and beyond", said Amogelang Pitso.

The event entailed self-empowerment workshops ranging from child and woman abuse to parenting skills, as well as an exhibition soccer match between Computershare soccer team and a team composed of Kaizer Chiefs, Orlando Pirates Legends and The Legends SA soccer players. With entertainment provided by DJ Fresh, Delano Appolis (a young leader), DJ Chavi from YFM, Cheerleaders from Computershare and a live performance from Moeletsi Mohamohe (a young leader), and Boiling Point, an up-coming Hip-Hop group.



Dj Fresh Playing For The Spirit Of Ubuntu

