

Reading and Writing Program at Holy Angels

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On 01 April 2022, the reading and writing program at Holy Angels, headed by the Jozi Book Fair (JBF), took off. The objectives and aims of the program are to educate, encourage reading and writing and provide a safe space for sharing information about challenges the participants face in their daily lives. This is in order to have a common understanding and establish ways about how to overcome the challenges as a collective.

The program consists of 3 groups which are the Poetry Buddies (PBs), Tsohang Batjha (TBs), and out of school youth. The group at large mostly consists of young children who are vibrant and ready to learn.

In the session with TBs run by the JBF team, each TB had to anonymously write the challenges that they face in their community, in their schools, and personally. This was a hugely successful activity as it gave the team insight into understanding the type of children that they were dealing with. From the activity, it became clear that the team was dealing with children that are based in communities where crime, teenage pregnancy, and peer pressure thrive as those were the most common issues across.

On the other hand, comrades Enrichia Smith and Simphiwe Mantjie, also of the JBF, facilitated a session with the PBs who had great fun colouring, reading, and having discussions.

“It was amazing to see the depth at which the children understood the reading,” Mantjie said. The session was a lot of fun. The children also enjoyed it as they asked when the JBF team was coming back again, Mantjie added.

The spot-check evaluations filled in at the end of the session confirmed that the children enjoyed the session and are curious about what the next session has to offer them.

During the TBs session, the children were active and were able to identify the causes of the issues they raised and talked about ways for how to overcome them. It was an indication of the high level of awareness that they have about their communities.

The TBs raised many other challenges such as a lack of access to proper healthcare, mental issues, perfectionism, and toxic mentality.

The second part of the session was based on, “When the rain clouds gather”. They understood the reading and they could summarize it in their own words. The participation of the TBs was very impressive, which told the team that they were understanding and learning a lot from the discussions had.

The spot evaluation by the TBs also indicates that they enjoyed the session, and they fully understood every discussion. They look forward to discussing more challenges and getting more readings.

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