



Time Travel and Therapy, Inathi Child and Youth Care Centre

Goal

Learn about the historical development of the facility as part of the orientation process after placement.

Identifying needs of the children and contribute to the improvement of the care of the children.

Working together with the communities so that children feel part of society.

Facts

Inathi Child and Youth Care Centre

The Inathi Child and Youth Care Centre originally started by Sr Xavier (Gerda Marianne Pohl) in 1982 as St. Martin's Home, after leaving Sacred Heart Mission and acquiring the land on which Inathi stands today. She started by taking in destitute children, providing shelter, food and clothes as well attending to many other needs of the children. The home was registered in October 1999 as an NPO and registered in May 2000 as a Children's Home to cater for 95 children. Before the home was registered, Sister Xavier relied on overseas donors for funding and donations.

The home is situated approximately 40 kms from Port Shepstone in the Oribi Flats farming area on the part of Fredheim Farm which is registered in the name of the Catholic Diocese of Umzimkulu. The area used for the purpose of running the home is leased from the church and the home is responsible for all maintenance of existing buildings and the water reticulation system.

In March 2009 the home was closed pending investigation and the children removed by the Depart. Soc. Dev., due to an anonymous letter received by them, (DSD as you all know) being the legal custodian for all children in the Republic of SA. The letter accused one of the staff members of abuse. After numerous consultations, including public meetings, it was decided that the service provided by St. Martin's Children's Home was vital to the community, and the decision to re-open the home was reached, and a new Board of Management was elected in September 2009.

After an arduous period of investigation, negotiation, staff selection, restructuring and re-alignment, and having worked closely with the DSD, the new board successfully re-opened the home in March 2010 and renamed St. Martin's Child and Youth Care Centre, the term 'Children's Home' no longer approved by DSD and 'CYCC' preferred by them.

In 2013 the Board agreed to change the name to Inathi Child and Youth Care Centre due to confusion with St Martin de Porres School for the deaf in Port Shepstone as well as 3 other "St. Martin's" Homes which was adversely affecting fund raising. It was felt that as the children were Zulu speaking that it should be a name they could relate to. Therefore, following approval at the 2013 AGM permission for the name change was sought from DSD and was finally approved and the amended NPO certificate re issued to INATHI CYCC in July 2016.

The home is registered to accommodate 60 children from ages of 6 to 14 years and as it is not the policy to separate siblings. There are children outside of these age groups (youngest 4, oldest 17) in order that a small family unit can be maintained and nurtured. Cases are referred to the centre by Case

Managers who identify them from all spheres of life and children are placed on court orders. Most of the children are rescued from extreme neglect, poverty and/or physical or sexual abuse. Many come from a background where they have been orphaned and left with no responsible family member to care for them. Some have even found themselves responsible for “child-headed households”, looking after their younger siblings, while they themselves are only 9 or 10 years old! As a result, they bear emotional and often physical scars, with a number being HIV Positive and requiring consistent Anti-retroviral treatment. Medical care is obtained via regular visits to public hospitals and clinics. Each case can take up to a minimum of 2 years to finalise, and depending on the success of each case, children and youth can be re-integrated with families/relatives and foster parents. Upon admittance, the children are enrolled to formal education, working with the local schools.

The life of Sister Xavier Pohl

Sr Xavier, born Gerda Marianne Pohl, came to Africa when she was just 23 years of age. Left Germany 30 June 1964, she came to Rhodesia with a group of nurses. There was still an outbreak on leprosy and syphilis, when her time to serve there was done. She came to South Africa with precious blood sister to Marianhill Monastery. She worked at the Orphanage in the boys' section, taking care of the boys. She also worked at St Vincent Home for a period of 2 years and was asked to take charge of Assisi for 3 months to replace Mother General.

In 1972 she started working at Sacred Heart children home. The home was recognised as she managed to secure funding. At that time, they had 160 children to look after, and none went to bed hungry. For some kids they said they first ate meat and certain foods on her arrival, She soon became a mother to many children teaching them life skills and the word of God. She also focused on gardening and enlarged piggery to boost income. As years went on, children were no longer allowed to stay at the institution, she strongly opposed to that law.

Six children were removed because of their age and they cried out to her saying “Do not leave us alone”. At that very moment she left the need to create a home that had no boundaries. She left the institution in 1982 with those children and went from door to door trying to find shelter for them. She was offered a place to stay in a chicken farm in Umzumbe and in return they had to slaughter 500 chickens a day. She left the children on the farm and went Overseas to try and secure funding. During that period, she was given an order to go to Holland to look after the elderly but refused because her calling was to look after the children in need. She returned with some money. They only stayed for 3 months on the farm as they were allowed to bath once a week.

She met a lady from Germany, late Mrs Kimmich, who was very supportive and helped her search for a place to stay. She saw a place on the newspaper that was for sale. When made enquiries she was asked for what purpose she wanted it for. When she mentioned she wanted to create a home for needy children, she was told that the place has already been sold.

Days turned into nights, night turned into weeks with no luck of finding a place. Suddenly she received a call that changed her fortunes but mostly that of the children. She was told the place was still available. She came to have a look at the place. It was just a small house, and everything was overgrown. But she fell in love with the place. Although it had nothing it was something. She was very thankful and said to herself “I have been given a bread. It is up to me that I eat it as it is or I better it”. This would eventually keep her going.

She moved in with the children. They had to start working to make the place look appealing. Children had to gather wood and cook under trees as there was no electricity and running water. She had to hire people from Nyuswa to help pull the weed in return for a few cents, bibles and catechism books.

She arrived at Oribi on the 02 July 1983 with two 5litre container of water and R800 that she was given by mother of superior from Marianhill. A generous donor gave her a primer stove. She would soon start focusing on gardening, had chicken, pigs and cattle. When the things were ready they would

go (Sister and the Kids) through the townships Izingolweni, Nyandezulu, Nyuswa to sell potatoes, tomatoes, mealies and carrots etc.

She started networking with local farmers and Mr Dunstone allowed her to fetch water every day. Sometimes, she had a breakdown and would have to carry the water back home by buckets. In 1986 November 20 they had electricity. Sr would do a lot of writing, writing letters asking for donation and help locally and abroad. She would go to the shops asking for help with no luc. Three white people came to her asking if she knew that living with the black people was against the law. She replied saying to them “If your Government law clashes with my Christian law there is nothing I can do about it “. They left and newer to come back. She struggled with close to no help from the Government.

Information from Cherly Gamble

“When I first met sister Xavier it was back in the early 80’s. She would come to town with a group of young people to sell second hand clothes and mass to raise funds for the home. However when set up her table to sell, the Municipality police would come and chase her away. In 1982 I converted to Catholicism and our parish priest Paul Schoeder used to mention her at church and plead with members to assist her as she was struggling on her own. I got to know more about her, and I joined on her board of management and members of the church would start helping, donating clothes and food staff.

She went on and named the place St Martin Children Home. A home that would soon become home to many kids, a home that did not choose Colour, Race and Belief. She started receiving donations from overseas and locally and started expanding the home. She would never chase any child away no matter what time of the days. The age of the child did not concern her but the need of the child. She went on to build reservoir, church, expanded children dormitories, all bits by bits depending on donations.”

Some of her favourite sayings

1. “It does not help to complain. Otherwise they will smile and say we got her”.
2. “A child in need is a child indeed”.
3. “God will provide”.
4. “There are many rooms in my father house”.
5. She would refer to St Martins as a tree “A tree does not choose which bird may live on it, it is there for all birds”. It has no restrictions.

Scenario, Preparing for an inspection at St Martin’s Home for Children, because of registration of the home in 1999

Today is an important day for St Martin’s Home. There will be an inspection by an Health Inspector from the municipality and a Social worker from Department of Social Development. They will check up that the home is running properly, that the premises are kept neat and clean, that the children are well taken care of. If they have too many remarks, it might cause problems for the Children Home and at the end they can even close the institution. If they are positive the registration of the home can continue.

Sr Xavier has for decades worked tirelessly to take care of destitute children. She came to Oriibi Gorge in 1982, found a small house that was overgrown and was able to move in with her children. This was the start of St Martin’s Home. From that on she has worked very hard to develop the place and find funding.

Sr Xavier believes in active children that help in the household and do ordinary farm work, just as at home. So, the children assist every day (except Sundays) in household chores,

gardening, harvesting, taking care of chicken, pigs and cattle, of course depending on age and skills. They do not all the time stay in the institution, but sometimes go to neighbouring townships, for instance to sell potatoes, tomatoes and vegetables.

All the staff, assisted by the children, help in preparing for the inspection. Even some persons from the local community and the church have come to support. They clean inside and outside, prepare a meal and make themselves look nice with traditional beads and necklaces. The children have a chance to express their needs and life at St Martin in writing and drawing. It's important that the inspectors understand the needs and life of the children to find the best treatment and support.

Everybody is a little bit nervous for the inspection. We better prepare the best we can.

Roles

The children play children at St Martin's Home, 59 children

The staff play staff, care workers, social worker

The PSTA members play community members

Sr Xavier - *Judy*

Two inspectors – *Veli, Ebbe*

Bishop/ pastor - *Wellington*

Everybody keeps their age and gender

Key Questions

What are my needs? (What are the needs of the children?)

- How do I want the adults to treat me, give me love and attention?
(How do I treat the children, give them love and attention?)
- How do I feel important and needed?
(How do I help the children to build confidence and self-esteem?)

Activities

- Gardening – *Mdu, Henry, careworker*
- Cooking, stew – *Winnie, careworker*
- Bead making (Inathi) – *Thabani, careworker*
- Play games – *Kindness, careworker*
- Express feelings in drawings, poetry, small essays – *Siyabonga, Judy*
- Make a drawing of St Martins – *Mnqobi, Lorentz, careworker*
- Songs and dances – *Gulshera, Nokuthula*

Time Plan

13.30 Preparing of the site

15.00 Welcome, introduction, name tags

15.30 Initiation, song, prayer

15.40 Activities and discussions

Inspectors arrive

16.30 Gathering. The children make presentations. Inspectors report.

Dance, song, prayer

17.00 End of Time Travel

Reflection

17.30 End

10th August 2018

Ebbe Westergren, Kalmar county museum/ Bridging Ages

Gulshera Khan, Port Shepstone Twinning Association