

# AMY BIEHL FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER

VOLUME VIII, NUMBER II

FALL 2004

DEAR FRIENDS,

IT HAS BEEN A WHILE SINCE OUR LAST NEWSLETTER. HOWEVER; WE HOPE YOU ENJOY READING ABOUT THE MANY EXCITING DEVELOPMENTS AND ACTIVITIES THAT HAVE TAKEN PLACE OVER THE LAST FEW MONTHS. IT HAS BEEN A VERY BUSY AND PRODUCTIVE TIME FOR THE AMY BIEHL FOUNDATION, THE TRUST AND THE BIEHL

FAMILY. AUGUST 25, 2004 MARKED THE 11<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF AMY'S DEATH YET HER SPIRIT CONTINUES TO THRIVE.

WARMEST REGARDS,  
ZACH BIEHL



## Change in Cape Town-

Exciting news from Cape Town...this spring Solomon Makosana took over as Program Director of the Amy Biehl Foundation Trust. Solomon has been with the ABFT since 2001 and has been doing a wonderful job. His experience in education along with his tremendous people skills has brought a wealth of support and involvement from South Africans of all races, ethnicities and economic status. Solomon replaced Ashleigh Murphy who served the Amy Biehl Foundation Trust tirelessly for several years. Ashleigh remains in Cape Town and still serves as a Trustee, her years of dedicated service is truly appreciated.

him to have an impact on his community. Whilst the vision of the ABFT is to Weave a Barrier Against Violence by making use of a number of education programs, he said to himself "as a believer in education as a liberation mechanism, here is an organization that I can identify and associate myself with".

*"I was fascinated by the incredible story of Amy Biehl. It practically demonstrated what reconciliation, forgiveness and restorative justice are about. The tragic death of Amy and the lessons there of have left many South Africans spell-bound."*

-Solomon Makosana

## Solomon Makosana's Profile-

- Solomon served as a headmaster for 15 years.
- Became an inspector of education for 6 years.
- Qualified at UCT BA Hons. (History) B.E.D. (UWC).
- Solomon is a member of the board for SA Institute of Race Relations, Primary Science Program, Extra-Mural Education Program and St. Josephs College.
- Solomon also is a member of the Black Cricket Forum and the WP Cricket.

Solomon was employed by the ABFT after the tragic death of a colleague Zunade Dharsey. He left Public Education after he was convinced that the Provincial Government of the Western Cape (under Democratic Alliance) was not prepared to cherish the transformation of education. Solomon saw in the ABFT a credible organization which was grass rooted and could enable

## Program Updates- After School Programs

The ABFT currently sponsors four After School Care Programs at primary schools in Guguletu, Khayelitsha and Strand. They serve over **700** children Monday through Thursday afternoons. Students are educated in life skills, drama, dance, arts and culture, literacy and math. Teacher development and training takes place on Fridays. Children receive a nutritious meal including sandwiches and soup in the winter months.

The Mural Project operating as part of the After School Care Programs involves **30** boys. Students are trained in basic art and painting skills and design and paint

## Program Updates, *cont.*-

murals which are displayed in their communities and in the United States.

### Sports Development

Evolving from what was once part of our After School Care Programs, this project promotes the physical, mental and spiritual values of sport. We have recently partnered with the City of Cape Town for resources and venues that provide soccer, chess, handball, table tennis, boxing, basketball and netball. Our soccer and netball teams have begun to play matches against city teams.

### Youth Reading Role Models

Run during the school day in over 20 primary schools, this program trains grade 7 students in reading aloud to grade 1 students. Approximately **200** grade 7 readers and **3000** grade 1 students are currently participating. The program also hosts guest readers to model quality reading skills. Brian O'Connell, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Western Cape was our recent guest. More recently, an ABFT-sponsored parent reading club has brought adult learning in creative reading and drama skills.

### Amy Biehl Music Program

Currently **1000** students in grades 4, 5, 6 and 7 participate in this program hosted by two primary schools. Two music instructors train students in music theory and practice on the recorder. Through partnerships with the South African Navy Band, Diocesan College, and the Bishops Boys School, the Foundation currently provides **25** committed students with further training in violin, guitar, piano, and saxophone.

### First Aid Training

The Foundation sponsors Level 1 first aid training courses for community participants free of charge. Since it's inception in 1998, over **5000** people have been trained and issued Level 1 first aid certificates. Some of the programs greatest successes has come through workshops and training in Cape Town's Malmesbury, Pollsmoor, and Goodwood prisons.

### Peer Education Program

Having already trained **60** HIV/AIDS peer educators in George, the program has recently come to Cape Town. Fifty-nine primary and high school students are now being trained to reach out within their own schools and to their peers.

### Condom Distribution

With the help of the city, we distribute several thousand condoms a month in public locations such as clubs, train-stations, corporate buildings, and convention halls. In the last year, more than **600,000** condoms have been distributed by the Foundation.

### Greening and Environment Program

Working with Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens and the University of the Western Cape, this program improves the external environment of participating schools while developing school based environmental education programs. The program has been implemented in 15 schools, work shopping approximately **1000** students to date, on the cultivation of plants.

### Khayelitsha Golf Driving Range

Our range was officially opened in May 2000 and represents the only driving range in any of the townships adjacent to Cape Town. Fifteen local high schools visit the range on a weekly basis to be trained by club coaches. The range is also in the process of becoming an "eco-park" with the goal of generating and distributing alternative energy to its surrounding communities.

*\*Nathan Doty a current ABFT intern helped prepare this report\**



### Program and Staff Changes-

The Amy Biehl Foundation has been forced to close our George operation including the Community Baking Trust. Amy's Bread is still sold in Western Cape Pic n' Pay grocery stores. Financial strains of these programs began to take away from our more successful projects in the Cape Flats and could be maintained no longer.

When Peter and Linda Biehl began the Foundation, their aim was always extracting the potential of all their employees and volunteers and to encourage their metamorphosis. ABFT's Samora April has moved on after four years to pursue other career opportunities. We are very happy for Samora yet, we will miss him. Another difficult goodbye came with the departure of Leyla Hairdarian. Leyla and her husband Ryan have moved to Johannesburg to mentor young black filmmakers.



## **Fundraising Letter Campaign-**

The Amy Biehl Foundation has been sending out letters requesting a donation of \$100 from 1000 of our most eager supporters. Many of you have probably received this letter and many more will receive it. The funds generated from the campaign will go towards strengthening the American infrastructure of the Foundation. This initiative is vital to the long-term sustainability of the ABF, the ABFT and our programs. To date the campaign has raised over \$17,000. We thank all of those who have made such generous donations.



## **Amy Biehl High School Graduates First Senior Class!**

By Tony Monfiletto

In 2000, Amy Biehl High School opened its doors in an effort to give every student, regardless of learning ability or socio-economic status, the chance to succeed. Our mission is one of scholarship and community service, just like our namesake.

We set the bar high, requiring that every student pass two college classes at the University of New Mexico or the Albuquerque Technical and Vocational Institute in order to graduate. Additionally, every student must design and complete a year-long community service project that is relevant to their college coursework. We wanted our young people to prove that they could make it at the next level before leaving us, and to care about the issues facing their community.

We sought Linda and Peter's consent in naming the school after Amy, a person that young people could relate to, and they graciously agreed. But the road to success has been long, and there was a time early on, when I called Peter and conveyed my fears that

what we had set out to do might not be possible. "Don't worry", he reassured me, "we have faith in young people."

Now four years later, on May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2004, all twenty-six of our seniors in the first graduating class successfully completed their college classes and defined their passion for community service. For instance five of our students raised \$50,000 and built a Habitat for Humanity House, naming it "The Amy and Peter Biehl House."

Peter and Linda believed in us from the start, and four years later, their son Zach stood up, at the same age Amy was when she passed away, and addressed our graduates, encouraging them to not let anything stand in the way of their dreams. It was a very inspiring speech, which included the reading of Amy's last journal entry, which ended with "And here I go!"

"And here YOU go", continued Zach, "Don't be content with just stopping to smell the roses, plant a few rose bushes yourself!" Spoken just like a Biehl.

On a lighter note, later that night, Zach entertained us all at the staff graduation party with his rendition of James Brown's "Get Up"! Needless to say, a good time was had by all, and as always, we appreciate the support of the Biehl Family.



## **Our Friends in Seattle Came Through Again!**

My name is Jessica Markowitz and I am nine years old. My dad was born and raised in South Africa; he misses his country of birth. My mom is very connected to the Amy Biehl Foundation and introduced me and my brother to Linda Biehl. Linda has stayed in our home many times, we now call her Makulu.

This year we started a pen-pal program with some of the kids from the ABFT. The children from my school, Montlake Elementary were so excited and couldn't wait to receive letters from our new friends. Many of our pen-pals wrote us about "Freedom Day" and the tenth anniversary of the first free elections in South Africa. My brother Josh and I wanted to help South Africa celebrate this very special time. We decided to raise money for the ABFT and came up with the idea of a car wash and bake sale. We planned the date to be on April 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>, to honor both Election Day and Amy's birthday. What a success! We raised over \$1500, we're so proud! I must admit my brother Josh was

really nice and helped us increase our total. He told all his friends to make a donation instead of receiving any gifts for his eleventh birthday. Thanks Josh!

Thank you ABF for teaching us to be compassionate and caring, we can't wait to start planning our 2005 fund-raiser.

Jessica Markowitz

*Thank you Jessica, Josh and the Markowitz Family.*



## July 2004-What a Month!

July was a very busy month for the Amy Biehl Foundation and the Biehl Family. Themba Diniso, our Youth Reading Role Models program coordinator and Nombulelo Moeti a Desmond Tutu Emerging Leader and product of ABFT After School Programs, came to California for a three week stay. During their visit they participated in many exciting events and activities.

The week of July 12<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> the Amy Biehl Foundation collaborated with the Brad Evans Foundation, Community School Partnership Fund, the Orange County Department of Education, Orange County Human Relations, Soka University, and TAP (Tolerance Among People) Club to present the Warren L. Steinberg Summer Leadership Institute for Teens. This 5-day program was named for Warren L. Steinberg, a wonderful man and decorated community activist, ironically Mr. Steinberg passed away on the Sunday preceding the Institute's beginning.

The purpose of this "peace in action" institute was to bring students together to learn ways to lead other teens, with an emphasis on creating programs that pursue peace. Linda, Zach, Themba and Nombulelo all participated along side many other community leaders in the mentorship of the student participants. Needless to say, the students were taken completely by our South African guests.

In connection with the Warren L. Steinberg Summer Leadership Institute for Teens, the first annual Amy Biehl International Youth Festival was held on July 30<sup>th</sup> at Soka University. The afternoon event celebrated the talents of the world's youth; music and art were in prime display. Murals from ABFT artists were displayed along side of murals painted by local Orange County youth.

We have many people to thank for making these wonderful events take place. Lucy Steinberg, a dear friend of the ABF and the Biehl Family, spear-headed an amazing group of people who all worked so hard on these projects. Cyndie Borcoman, an awe inspiring energetic spirit coordinated the murals in Orange County as well as exposed Themba and Nombulelo to countless local youth. Gwen Haas and her family for hosting Nombulelo and working so hard on the planning of the events. Denise Weiland and her daughter Sara for all their assistance. Linda Safran from Soka University for all her efforts in the coordination of both events. These women have continued to support our work and we are truly honored to call them our friends. Thank you to all the other volunteers that made the Institute and Festival such successes.

During their stay Themba and Nombulelo had the opportunity to visit San Diego. Between trips to the zoo and Sea World they visited with the staff and participants of the Family Literacy Foundation. For Themba this meeting was very valuable since our program, Youth Reading Role Models was inspired by the Family Literacy Foundation.

On July 29<sup>th</sup> the Biehl Family added a new member. Denise White said "I do" to Zach. The wedding was held on a perfect summer evening aboard the yacht "Destiny" in the Newport Beach Harbor. Linda served as "best man" and Themba and Nombulelo added an appropriate South African feel to the ceremony performing a traditional Xhosa wedding song. Denise and Zach were truly honored to have Archbishop Desmond Tutu give them a gift of a blessing that was read during the ceremony. Denise and Zach thank all of their family and friends who shared in their special night and the hundreds of friends world-wide who sent wishes of love and happiness. A special thanks to Larry and Judy Kendall who came from St. Louis to take part in all the activities and served as wonderful photographers. The Kendalls are truly a part of the Biehl Family and the evening would not have been complete with out them.

Amy and Peter were missed terribly during this special time; however, their presence was always apparent. The night was a major party in the finest of Biehl tradition.





## Linda Biehl's Calendar

*As you all know, Linda is a very busy woman, this is just a brief glimpse of her schedule and the amazing people who have contributed to all her activities.*

### January-

1/10- Ahmed Kathrada received an Honorary Doctorate at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. Chuck Korr facilitated this award for "Kathy". Judy and Larry Kendall hosted me as well as several gatherings for Kathy's new and old friends in their home so we could celebrate with the honoree.

1/12- Zach and I attended an evening organized by Bill Furlow with interested members of St. Michael's Church in Tustin. The dialogue centered on "Restorative Justice" issues. Mr. and Mrs. Benton Bejach, members of St. Michael's later visited the Amy Biehl Foundation Trust in Cape Town.

1/14- Trevor Murphy gave Zach, Denise and me a tour of "SOY", a youth program and center in Costa Mesa, California. Trevor is sharing his experiences learned from his role as Program Director of the ABFT in Cape Town. Zach is now a member of "SOY's" board.

1/18- I was privileged to speak at Trinity (Wall Street) Church in New York on Martin Luther King Jr. weekend on my experience with reconciliation.

1/21-2/11- I returned to Cape Town and participated in many events celebrating "10 years of freedom".

### March-

3/1- It was exciting to be on "The Today Show". Katie Couric was very pleasant and I enjoyed the experience.

3/5-3/28- Again, back to Cape Town! It was a very productive trip but also a sad one. One of Amy's mentors, our friend, and great South African Dullah Omar lost his battle with cancer. His death was mourned by all of South Africa which hopefully helped ease the pain of his family. I was one of many thousand who attended his memorial service in Cape Town. During this trip Kira Jones of Amy Biehl High School visited the ABFT programs in Cape Town, bringing a suitcase filled with much needed art supplies.

### April-

4/5- Irvine High School student Allison O'Leary invited Zach and I to a conference at UCI. We enjoyed sharing our experiences with the students.

4/7- I appeared on the "Anderson Cooper 360" show on CNN. Our story was the first of a week-long series on forgiveness.

4/27- Julie Rawls organized an informal evening with Irvine's Amnesty International group.

### May-

5/16- It was my great honor to receive an Honorary Doctorate from Franklin Pierce College. Many people made this a very special occasion. I thank everyone for their warm hospitality. Mr. and Mrs. Jackson Blair brought me to their home for the weekend and held a luncheon on my behalf.

5/24-6/21- A very busy time back in Cape Town climaxing with "The Talisman" Stanford's amazing choir singing for ABFT's programs and friends. GREAT AMBASSADORS!

### June-

6/22- Back home to work on wedding plans.

6/25-6/28- I was honored to attend a "Faith in Politics" retreat with some of the most inspiring South African and American leaders.

### July-

7/10- Themba Diniso and Nombulelo Moeti arrived in California. Thank you to Gwen Hass and her family for hosting Nombulelo. Thanks to Cyndie Borcoman and the Weiland Family for showing our guests such wonderful hospitality.

7/12-7/16- Themba, Nombulelo, Zach and I participated in the Warren L. Steinberg Summer Leadership Institute for Teens previously outlined in this newsletter.

7/29- I served as "Best Man" for Zach as we welcomed my beautiful daughter-in-law Denise into our family. I performed all my "duties" and had the help of Nombulelo and Themba as we performed a rap instead of the traditional toast.

7/31- A wonderful day at the first-annual Amy Biehl International Youth Festival at Soka University. Thank you to Linda Safran, Denise Weiland, Sara Weiland, Gwen Haas, and Cyndie Borcoman for all their hard work. A special thanks to Lucy Steinberg who was the moving force behind this tremendous event.



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