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# Interact News



VOLUME 1 ISSUE 2

FALL 2009



**YOU CAN  
ACT NOW!**

We are racing to raise \$60,000 dollars by December 15, 2009!

The funds will be used to sponsor a trip to New York City for the 14 School of Hope mentees from South Africa in January 2010!

**See How You can ACT Now!**

Visit our donor page for more info.(p.5)

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*by Erika Lee*

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## ACT TEAM SECOND INVASION

ACT sent a second team to Cape Town, South Africa in August. The 9-member team included second timers Rachel Kim, Maria Bae and Hannah Tran, and 3 new young volunteers from Antioch Missionary Church, Jiwon Kim, Hong Choi and Moses Nam. Two mentors from our inter-ACT program, John Pringle, and Carol Liu (also ACT Director of Marketing) led the team with Erika Lee. Hope Arises Tours, owned by Adrian Lange arranged the itinerary for their 14 day stay in South Africa. Once again lives have been touched and transformed. The team was able to serve the residents in Grabouw, delivering prayers and parcels of food to the needy and clothes as startup capital for small business training to families living in the

townships. They spent fun, quality time with the local township kids helping out Daz, Tim, and Lees of VOH with their weekly



**ACT II members: John, Rachel, Moses, Hannah, Maria, Jiwon, Carol, Erika, Hong, & Aaron of VOH**

soccer clubs. The team encouraged the teens at the School of Hope, raising the funds for their

all important Matric Ball and serving them on their special night. During a field day with the 8-11th graders from SOH, the team instilled in them an understanding of teamwork playing dodgeball, tug of war and various relay races. They were also privileged to join the grade 10's on their first tourism practical to the aquarium. Unknown to the team; they were used to answer the prayers of a worker, by preparing a home in which he could be reunited with his family after living apart from them in a shack, because he had lost all of his earthly possessions amidst the political unrest in Zimbabwe. [see "Rebuilding a Life", p. 5]. Because of your generous giving, they became available to be used in such a valuable effort. Thank you!

## A Night to Remember...

### Grade 12 Matric Ball at SOH a Success

The 14 matric students of the School of Hope in Cape Town had their share of glitz and glamour at this year's Matric Ball. The yearly event marked an exciting time for our mentees in the Interact Program and the pictures show the excitement in their faces. This year's ball also allowed for giving hearts to shine

as most of the girls were outfitted by Silver Lining. The venue, kindly provided by the His People Conference Center was transformed into an enchanting place fitting for the masked ball. An amazing four course banquet was prepared and served by the Grade 11 hospitality students of the school, headed by their



Erika Lee, Laura Collura, and the 2009 Matric Ball Honorees

teacher/chef Chantal Johnson. Serving at the tables was the ACT Team from New York who also raised most of the funds for the event. The excellence in service and dedication that these young people have shown indeed

## Facing the Challenge ...



*“No one should die because they cannot afford health care, and no one should go broke because they get sick. If this is our belief, should it only apply in our country?”*

Rich and poor have this in common: The LORD is the Maker of them all.

- Proverbs 22:2

As I painted the rooms for Patson’s home, held the babies infected with HIV close to me, joined hands with those living in the shanty towns, looked into the eyes of the School of Hope students during our times together—the one question running through my mind was: what makes me any different than them? And God kept quietly telling me, ‘Nothing, absolutely nothing.’ I have been sick. I have taken things that don’t belong to

me. I have been in need. I was reminded of this reality when I nearly fainted and collapsed on the field during a kids’ sports clubs we were helping at. I was utterly helpless: barely able to breathe and too weak to even ask for help; it was only because our host saw I was in need and gave me a banana and water that I didn’t have to go to a hospital. Someone noticing. Something so simple saved me.

There’s the story of a man who was robbed, beaten and left for dead on the side of the road. Two men saw him and passed him by. But, a third man saw the one

in need and did all he could to get him back on his feet. This Good Samaritan couldn’t ignore what he saw; and he didn’t stop and analyze how this man ended up there and if he deserved help, but with the means he had, simply met the need of a man God placed in his path. One thing I am so proud to say about our NY team is that everywhere they went, they gave not out of their abundance or overflow, but even in spite of any lack they faced.

There’s been something going around on the social networking sites that’s wildly popular— No one should die because they

cannot afford health care, and no one should go broke because they get sick. If this is our belief, should it only apply in our country? If there’s one thing God has taught me: it’s not up to us to choose who is deserving, because in the end, none of us are .deserving of the grace of God and blood of Jesus.

I believe that there’s a need you have noticed and have the opportunity to meet today, with the means you have available to you. I challenge you to not walk away.

Love,  
Erika Lee, Executive Director

## Night to remember (continued)...

made this night, one to remember for the honored Matrics.

As icing on a cake, Erika Lee, founder of Active Compassion Transforms and leader of the New York team gave a moving speech that will forever be engraved in the hearts of these young people to inspire and empower them to move past their circumstance

and forward to their goals.

The very next day, while most were still in their beds, the team ran an exciting sports day for the rest of the school . There were prizes and lots of good fun! It is such joy to witness these young people enjoy the sweetness of life. Thanks to everyone who made this trip possible for the team. You indeed gave us not just a night, but a trip to remember!

Smiles all around (top) Erika speaking about 'leaving a legacy' (bottom)

A glimpse of the delicious food (above) The NY team ready to serve! (right)



# Changed Lives.

*I asked God, "What could you possibly show me this time, that you didn't the last?" God hearing my request, he began moving in the smallest parts of my life to tell me, "Wait on me."*



"I went to Africa in April, and it was just so amazing there. When I came back to NY I slowly started to lose my way, to the point where I was just running

## Tim's weekly soccer club with the boys in 'Iraq'

around in circles. Many times I failed and thought I could do nothing right. So when I heard Erika was going to Africa again, without thinking I said, "YES!!!!". However, as time passed I started to get doubts, and collecting money for Africa was really hard to get. I just wanted to give up, but I kept trying because if God really wanted me to go he'll let me go. I thank God I was able to go. When we started to get to work, I forgot how difficult it could be too. But when I was able to see the school of hope students and see how energetic and loving they are, it made me think twice. I know they have what it takes to do anything, and through all the hardships they never give up. They keep trying, all of them are just slowly stepping up and its a blessing to see that. So it made me think no matter how hard

something is, its not impossible. So before I would say, "Is it over yet?" to where now I say "can i do more?" Even though I went before, God still showed me many different things, and I was so blessed in many ways and I probably wouldn't realize that in New York. We also didn't really have leaders like we did in April. We were so used to just following orders but now all of us in our mission team had to step up. And finally listen and do what God wanted us to do instead of just following orders. I'm glad that all of us found courage inside of us that we didn't even know about to just listen to our hearts.— **Hannah Tran**

Simply put, this mission trip in particular was just another way of God displaying his mighty sovereignty. Before the trip and even on the plane there, I was really doubting why I'm going back again. I asked God, "What could you possibly show me this time, that you didn't the last?" God,

hearing my request, he began moving in the smallest parts of my life to tell me, "Wait on me." Throughout the course of my two week stay there, I walked away with something far more valuable than what any teenager can find in their summer vacation. I learned how to persevere in situations where I didn't always have my way, I learned to see with eyes of compassion when walking into the tin shack homes of patients with HIV, I was taught by Him how to see beyond their circumstance, beyond their sickness, and to really bring forth the angelic son and daughter each person is. By painting the walls of a home for a man physically separated from his wife and daughter, it brought me so much joy, to be a part of the answer to that man's prayers. As we were just playing soccer, or net ball with the children in the townships, I realized that the game itself wasn't connecting us, but our own ability to love and let others inside. God's grace is what's universal; that's what's constant in each relation-

ship. Ahhh, best of all - I got to see my friends at the SOH! Such a sight for sore eyes. It was such a comforting feeling to be able to hangout with them again. We cracked jokes, found new common interests, it actually felt like we've all been friends for decades. Disappointing to say our goodbyes once again, but I feel like I have a connection with South Africa. Yes, something naive for someone my age "would" say, but I'm just so excited to see where God will take me in the future - and how I'm going to get there.—**Rachel Kim**

This mission trip was freaking awesome! I really liked it. It was life changing and heartbreaking -all those experience I've had are nothing compared to what African people have to go through. i mean we served at the matric ball which was very back breaking but it was good. we also went to aquarium and Robben island where we got to see the sites. And the people were amazing there- Robin,

Safwat, Baz, John, Adrian, Masi and more it was a one time in a lifetime thing. I feel truly blessed by this trip and i thank Erika and all our team members who really showed me how it was to truly be a person.—**Moses Nam**

It was a real pleasure for me to host the team from NY. I especially was so encouraged and inspired by the faith of the younger members of the team. The way that they stepped up to the plate to serve the needs of people they've never met before made such an impression on me.

I went from hosting and driving the team around to becoming a member of the team myself and the friendships that I have had the privilege to forge through this have blessed me immensely."  
- **John Mohammed, Thembalitsa and Hope Arises Tours**

While on this trip, my first impression was skewed by the common information available in the local and international

news... For the most part, despite my faith in the heart prompt towards the call placed on Erika Lee's heart, I had to overcome some heavy dosages of partiality. our first mission visit brought us to the village of hope, where they currently care for eight infants born with AIDS/HIV and/or TB. For the most part, I was unable to contain my tears and anguish against the reality that they were born into. Despite my personal understanding, I searched for answers as well as prayed for their well being. As a result of my experience and heart usage of basically one hundred percent of my varied talents, I feel a strong desire to remain working in this vein beside our team leader.—**John Pringle**

Africa was great it was something beyond what i expected. There I was really happy to be out on a

mission field helping others. What I remember the most was when the team was going out into the shacks handing out food parcels and praying for the people in each household. If there was more time I would've loved to go back and done more. Africa was a great experience. It was really great meeting the new people and how they were so welcoming.

—**Hong Seok Choi**



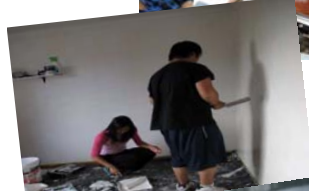
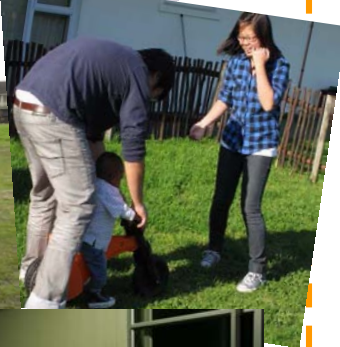
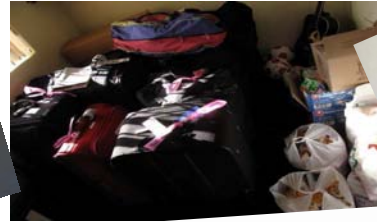
**Around Cape Town: the ACT team serving the local community and enjoying it!**

# CAUGHT IN THE ACT!

*"Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones"*

*Prov.16:24*

Hey it was wondrous yesterday at the matric ball i did think i was dreaming but it was real but i just want to tel everyone thank you for everythng.- Baldiah Just want to say thank you to everyone who made it possible for me to be in matric and to those giving me courage and hope to go on an showing me that my dreams are not impossible thats its all up to me to determine if i want it- Dawood  
tnx 4 everyting u dun 4 me nd tha class tmrw i wud lyk 2 proper tnx u nd the ny team use made my nyt and 1 that i wil remb as lng as psable tnx erika – Safwat  
hey all u foks today.... just wanna say thanks 2 tha team frm new york and that we love u guys and that u mean alot 2 us. we enjoyed the fun and games that we had and it was lots of fun..... i wanna say goodluck 2 the team who won the activities and it was a tite between the 2 teams. enjoy the rest of weekend and stay safe.... peace out and love u all ... Thoriq



# Rebuilding a life...Patson's Story

Patson Musabayana came to stay in our church in Cape Town last year during the xenophobia riots, and from the very first day we met him, we could see he was a man that was broken by life. He was formally a marketing manager in Zimbabwe, and fled after the army and police started to abuse their power in that nation that is run by a dictator. He made it to Cape Town, and stayed in the slums of Crossroads. He was attacked on numerous occasions, and the final attack was with Adrian Lange of Themba Training in July 2008. God miraculously saved both of them from being shot by thugs, and then Patson became a close friend of Adrians. Through a series of counselling sessions,

Patson started to heal, and was employed by Themba Training. From working as a gas pump attendant to survive, he is today by far their best trainer, and a wonderful encouragement to many poor and impoverished breadwinners in Crossroads. In the midst of all of this Patson was still staying in a leaking, terrible shack, and the New York team came in and prepared a beautiful home for him at our facility in Crossroads. For the first time in over 5 years, Patson has a home again with running water, electricity and security. The team painted a beautiful room for his daughter, and kitchen, lounge, and main bedroom. The New York

team spent hours on painting murals/pictures in his daughters bedroom, and also donated finance for us to buy the parents, and the daughter brand new beds! We salute the New York team for making a significant difference to this man and his family! -Adrian, Hope Arises



Patson at Crossroads, the team painting the 'gray room', the artistic team behind

## Ways to ACT!

Apply to be a mentor or volunteer in the different areas involved with running ACT! Drop us an email at [info@activecompassiontransforms.org](mailto:info@activecompassiontransforms.org).

Your donations go a long way. You or your company can give the School of Hope computers and other supplies. We know that \$30 can get you a 2 week supply of NY hot dogs so we really appreciate that you have decided to give in these times. A \$30 donation pays for a mentee to be on the iMi mentoring platform for 1 year! That chance for change you give is priceless! With your gift, you can even help bring them here to share a good ole' NY hotdog!

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You can also give online by visiting our website listed below :

### ACTIVE COMPASSION TRANSFORMS

P.O. Box 1619  
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website:



\$60,000

## Support our Events!!!

In January 2010, ACT is going to hold a gala to honor the mentors and mentees of our interACT program. Celebrate with us and hear more about the vision of ACT. For every \$100 of total donations, you get a free seat to one of the best kick-off parties of 2010! Bring a friend and help us to raise our goal of **\$60,000** by **December 15, 2009**.


Help our mentees come to New York in January 2010 by helping us reach our fundraising goal of \$60,000. Not only a life-changing experience, but a life-changing relationship. This is the heart of interACT—you can ACT!

ACT Concert Series. Enjoy a night of music and hear our call to ACTion. Check our website for updates on ACT III on Tuesday, November 10th at Bar Nine, 807 9th Avenue, NYC.

Watch out for more of our fundraising events soon!

Be a part of the ACTion!

**embrace. engage. empower**



ACT is 501c3 organization. All contributions to ACT are tax deductible to the extent provided by law. **EIN #26-3875889**

**THANK YOU TO ALL OUR DONORS and VOLUNTEERS! From the Board of Trustees**  
ERIKA, CAROL, MICHAEL, MARYKNOLL

# REFLECTIONS.

by Carol Liu, ACT Director and interACT mentor



Carol and her buddy on the field trip to the aquarium, grade 10 SOH student, Bianca

*"I had been praying that God would really show me what it means to be compassionate; to experience brokenness"*



ACT team visiting 'Iraq' slum to deliver food parcels and provide spiritual encouragement to the impoverished

"That's just how it is here..." On the outside, 14-year old Bianca (above) from the School of Hope is just your average teenager – she was eagerly telling me about her plans for the weekend, school, her favorite and not-so-favorite subjects, asked if she could braid my hair... She had a smile on her face, was energetic and ambitious, and I found her so endearing. Her future aspiration was to be a tour guide, and she went on to describe what she had learned in her tourism class. When I asked if she had any siblings, I saw a glimmer of sadness come across her face. "Well, I'm the oldest... now. My older sister was shot at work last year." When she saw my surprised and upset reaction, she continued to say, "that's just how it is here..."

brokenness, and He showed me this in different ways. Active Compassion Transforms, ACT, is the non-profit organization in which I am serving on the board of directors. It was formed this past year after the executive director's trip with the Thembalitsa foundation, the 3 branches of which are education, healthcare, and training. The purpose of the trip was to see and participate in what the Thembalitsa foundation is doing as a whole, and continue to work with ACT and the School

fancy hotels and banquet halls. To these grade 12 students, it was the most lavish event they had ever been to, and we wanted to make this memorable and special for them.

We painted the new and uninhabited home of a father, Patson, who had once been "rich"; he lived in Zimbabwe, but due to the civil wars, lost basically all his material possessions. His life of privilege, owning a number of shops and his home, was now minimized to living in a shack not unlike the ones in the pictures and described below. Through the Thembalitsa foundation, Patson attended the business training program and has

and then continued to talk about her family and put on her usual smile. Inside, I was fuming for her, thinking to myself, "that's not right, it should not be that's just how it is here". I also discovered later that Bianca's family lived in one of the poorest slums in the area. I didn't press any further about how her sister was murdered, but all these scenarios were running through my head: was it a robbery? A hate crime, an act of violence? All the stories and news articles I had read about the history of South Africa, from the legalization of apartheid and the resulting decades of turmoil, uprising, and civil war before the country finally became a democracy in 1993, suddenly transformed from another news story about vio-

of Hope, the mentoring program, and execute the logistics. Throughout the trip, I felt God saying to me, "you are not your own" (1 Corinthians 6:19). The true illustration of that in the everyday would mean deliberately giving up myself to Jesus Christ, which in turn should be reflected in my relationships with others and serving them. Following God does not mean that life will be easy; in fact, I found myself going through many internal battles throughout the trip. Voices of

"graduated" – he is now employed by the foundation and is assisting with training others that are in a similar situation as he was. We painted the rooms inside his new home, and decorated the room for his daughter, Leayanda, who has never lived in a room by herself or that she can call her own. By way of background, Cape Town is composed of 50,000 residents, with about 35% of those residents suffering from HIV/AIDS. Apartheid was a legal doctrine implemented in 1948 in which the government segregated education, medical care, and other public services, and provided black people with services inferior to

lence, hate crimes, and poverty, to a brutal realness, a heart issue. A story like Bianca's, together with hearing the other difficulties that the School of Hope students shared (teen pregnancy/parenting, living in foster homes, not knowing who their real parents are, friends that had contracted the HIV virus), and the visit to the poorest slums in Cape Town described below, all contributed to this feeling that was beginning to rise inside me. The author and pastor Bill Hybels calls it a "holy discontent" - that "firestorm of frustration" that isn't just mine, but it belongs to God. He is the one who put this in my heart. I had been praying that God would really show me what it means to be compassionate; to experience

doubt, cynicism, negativity, asking God why He sent me...but I knew they were not from God, and I prayed that He would reveal Himself to me. I definitely learned what it meant to be a servant, both in a physical and spiritual sense. My teammates and I served as waiters and waitresses and later, busboys, getting down on our knees and counting and washing dirty plates, forks, and spoons, at the School of Hope's prom. This prom, held in a local church, did not hold a candle to most of our own high school proms held at

those of whites. This resulted in the blacks living in "townships" which were areas of shacks that were separate from the whites, whose living conditions, in my opinion, were not unlike the suburbs of Orange County, California. Bringing this to the present day, although apartheid is legally abolished, it is not apparent in lifestyle. These slums still exist, and you would never see a white person living there, or even working as a cashier or lower tier job, for that matter. A "normal" job, if a colored person living in the slum would be so fortunate to have one, would be picking apples or work-

Reflections continued...



A small business like this hair salon would be opened by one of the poor in the slums and provide steady income for their families

*“Normally, I would just stand there and not want to touch anything, but God removed that barrier and filled me with compassion”*

Painting the walls at Pat-son’s new home at Crossroads



cashier or lower tier job, for that matter. A “normal” job, if a colored person living in the slum would be so fortunate to have one, would be picking apples or working with a local lumber company.

The Thembalitsha foundation nurses, along with Adrian Lange, a full-time volunteer and head of the Themba training program, brought us to slums to visit HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis patients. We brought not only physical nourishment in the form of food parcels – rice, beans, oatmeal, even Korean instant noodles – but desired to identify with the people and provide a spiritual source of

wishes. It was not feeling sorry for them; rather, I could identify with them – remembering that we are all the same, created from dust. “The LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being” (Genesis 2:7). There was an HIV positive woman and her young son, and all she wanted us to pray for was her health; that she would feel better so she could start working again; that her life would be changed/turned around. We prayed for her, that she would find work and find joy in the Lord.

At the third house we visited, we discovered that the woman had moved to Cape Town with the

could feel the reward of helping someone, but I realized that jumping from one career to the next was not going to be the solution. In fact, God has been putting opportunities to serve others and share my faith; I just had to grasp it and see my role in the corporate world right now. While I am not sure what this means for me long-term, God has reassured me that He is leading me in the right direction, and all I have to do is trust and follow.

encouragement to show them God’s love in whichever way we could. The first slum we visited, appropriately named Iraq, in essence felt like an abandoned war zone. The residents were downtrodden, faces sullen, and that there was no hope. The typical hut’s roof was made with whole branches layered with scrap tin and cardboard layers from boxes, inner laid with plastic tarp and stones or rivets/nails to keep the tarp down, with rubber hoses as straps. Upon closer inspection, soda bottle caps with nails in them were holding these structures together. The amenities inside

hope of finding a job and providing for her ill mother. Despite her circumstances (her home was probably the worst condition of all), she greeted us with so much warmth and joy. Adrian saw this and asked if she knew the Lord, and she said yes. He told her that he wanted her to get started by selling the donations we had brought from New York, the clothes, shoes, etc. that people here did not want on the street corners. He then invited her to Themba training, where the foundation helped train the attendees to start a small business, such as a hair salon and provided a grant to help them start a small business. The program is a “micro MBA” training, where the impoverished

Upon returning from South Africa, I had the opportunity to share with my bosses, co-workers, friends, and family. To my amazement, it opened up many other doors; ranging from candid conversations about my faith, to even an interview by my company’s office of corporate engagement and charitable services group about ACT. God’s work is only beginning...and I felt Him showing me His promise throughout the trip. Marveling at the beauty of His creation, I was in awe of our Creator and His provision, and being out of New York and my comfort zone only revealed this even more.

would be a makeshift cot with blankets, and perhaps even a clock and a few pots and pans that were probably picked out from junkyards. The floor was also covered in tarp. Flies and gnats were everywhere, and it smelled of body odor and urine. Normally, I would just stand there and not want to touch anything, but God removed that barrier for me and filled me with compassion, so much that I wanted to hug them, that I shed tears for them. I am not immune to being around or serving people of poverty, but the difference was being a part of these people’s desperation, stories, hopes,

are empowered and receive the business training they need. Adrian asked me to choose items that I thought would sell for the most value and bring them to the woman. He then wrote out a price list for each item, as the foundation had done studies on where, when, and what to sell in order to make the most profit. I continued to speak with Adrian about this training and microfinance structure, and was so intrigued by the simple ideas that have transformed the community. It only made me realize that God can use my training and skills in finance to serve Him and the poor in greater capacities. A year and a half ago, I was looking to switch industries and pursue a career in which I

*For greater things have yet to come  
And greater things are still to be  
done in this City  
- Chris Tomlin*



God’s light and promise shining down on Cape Town and on Table Mountain

# Want to Know More?

email: [info@activecompassiontransforms.org](mailto:info@activecompassiontransforms.org)  
We are also on: Facebook Causes, Multiply, Twitter



## ACTIVE COMPASSION TRANSFORMS

P.O. Box 1619  
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[www.activecompassiontransforms.org](http://www.activecompassiontransforms.org)

# Why ACT?

Active Compassion Transforms exists to make change accessible.

We believe that every person has the capacity to transform their lives for the better and it is our mission to foster connections and collaborations between individuals and organizations and give them access to the opportunity to make a difference in the world around them.

Our vision at ACT is to embrace, engage and empower. We hope to inspire people to embrace their full potential and to engage in the lives of individuals in any part of the world to make an impact and empower them to transform their communities and countries.

ACTIVE COMPASSION TRANSFORMS IS A COMMUNITY OF INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS LIVING OUR LIVES TO BE THE CHANGE IN THE WORLD.

## Baie Dankie!!! Thank You!!!

*ACT is a completely volunteer-driven organization. We'd like to say thank you to everyone who have kept us moving forward, especially ACT Concert Series musical artists: Judy Kang, Joanlie, Emme and the Swedes,*

# SPOTLIGHT

## MENTEE PROFILE



**Name : Dawood Van der Fort**  
**Age : 18**

Coming from a challenging past being a gang

leader, he came to School of Hope and met the encouragement of people that he never experienced before. He now aspires for a great future in business and hopes to help his community deal with unemployment. Dawood is one of the 14 mentees participating in interACT, an innovative cross-cultural e-mentoring program connecting caring New Yorkers with 12th graders living in Cape Flats, SA. To learn more about the program please email us or visit our website.

## ACT's impact! Village of Hope, New Baby Unit!!!

XOXO

**Because of your generous giving to April's ACT Team, we were able to pass on the blessings we received and donate to the baby unit at the Village of Hope (VOH) in Grabouw. They were able to buy new cots and for the little ones to sleep in. (see pictures on the right ). The unit has grown from housing 2 babies to 9 beautiful children that are staying at the baby unit while the team equips and educates their families to properly care for them.. From all the little babies in VOH we say Baie Dankie!!! Which is Thank You in Afrikaans.**

