



EMBRACE. ENGAGE. EMPOWER.

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FOR ACT, VOLUME 2, ISSUE 1  
TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH COMPASSIONATE ACTION

WINTER 2010

# interACT News



**LEFT:** EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ERIKA LEE SHOWING THE MENTEES HOW TO USE THE IMENTOR PLATFORM TO COMMUNICATE WITH MENTORS IN S. AFRICA  
**RIGHT:** THE MENTEE CLASS OF 2009 AT THE STATUE OF LIBERTY IN NY

**AMBITION.  
ACTION.  
ACHIEVEMENT.**

**ONE MAN** embracing an impossible vision set before him forever transformed the landscape of the city. The Brooklyn Bridge. Rockefeller Center. The visionaries behind these hallmarks of New York City faced incredible opposition to see beyond the visible, let alone make it reality. But because they persevered and rallied others around their vision, these things stand today.

We set out on what some have called ‘overly ambitious’ goals our first year. However, I

believe *ambition spurs action, which inevitably leads to achievement.* And we have much to celebrate! We saw sparks come to life, ambitious dreams birthed in the mentees during their time in NY. Nothing can replace the sight of Shaena, bursting with excitement on the subway, doing her new moves after spending a few hours with a renowned choreographer, or Sakhe, sharing with the group insight and inspiration he gained during his afternoon with motivational speaker, Kevin Singleton.

Whether it was these powerful encounters or activities like stepping on the ice in skates for the first time, or learning

how to play Taboo, I witnessed the wonder of eyes opened wide and opportunities grasped with both hands. I saw growth and recognition of abilities and courage inside oneself that can now be nurtured and cultivated. This unquantifiable gift is what you have given to these students coming to NY. I was overwhelmed at the welcome, love, and generosity of those here in NY who took part in the students’ journey. This is what touched them the most as well and it’s these very things that will cause their ambition to flourish into action and achievement, forever transforming the landscape of South Africa.

~Erika Lee

**"Hope sees the invisible, feels the intangible,  
and achieves the possible"  
Author Unknown**

IT HAS BEEN A JOURNEY of having to mail your Mentor every second week on a prompt and that alone was an amazing part of the beginning process. and coming to NY and meeting them in person was more than one can ever ask for. Then in the end just bearing the fruit of all those prompts that we did and that was NY how wonderful and

flying international for the very first time very exciting indeed. Also just having had wonderful people showing us around having Erika and the team plan everything for us when we came here was just

tremendous!!!!!! Every place seen and every day spent was beautiful and precious. This place is truly breathtaking and very much different from where I come from which is South Africa and the people here are just welcoming and warm! For ACT also just for looking after us well and providing truly a blessing. I could not have imagined in my wildest dreams that i could end up here in America NY!! Here I am blessed and humbled by this experience! This journey has brought change



in so many ways in my life like just becoming confident and allowing myself to find bit by bit of who Lee-anne is and that's

**THIS EXPERIENCE HAS BROUGHT ME TO A POINT OF FEELING NOW I CAN DO ANYTHING IN LIFE EVEN IF IT SEEMS FAR AWAY**

been awesome!!

It has made me want to go and make a difference back home in my community if not yet my country. I've grown into a strong young woman. Hopefully when go back I want to help out with the program twice a week at my old school. I'm planing

on doing Childcare work voluntarily in South Africa when I return. I plan to raise support to do this here in the USA, so if anybody reading this feels led to support me financially in this please let me know.

In closing,

I just want to thank the ACT team and everybody else for making this trip and journey happen and one to remember for always!! Much love and Respect!!!!!!

~Lee-Anne Jumat

FEBRUARY 2010  
VOLUME 2, ISSUE 1

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# PERFECT PAIRS

(FROM WINTER 2010 TRIP)



BUHLE  
&  
BRITTA



ELISA  
&  
EMILY



JASMANE  
&  
ANNE



LEE-ANNE  
&  
JULIE



RALDIAH  
&  
GRACE



MISHQA  
&  
CAROL



SAFWAT  
&  
ELI



SAKHE  
&  
WILL



SHAENA  
&  
CONNIE

## Safwat's inspiring visit to New York

~ Eli Fuchsberg

**A**FTER being matched with my mentee, six months followed of Jamba Juice fundraisers, benefit concerts, video making, and most importantly, a continued dialogue with my mentee, Safwat. Through the

conversational prompts on i-Mentor, I had learned not just about this diligent student from half-way around the world, but myself as well. While the experience of conversing with peers, offering advice, and sharing opinions can be commonplace, to be able to do this with a student from the diverse background of Cape Town was truly a unique

experience. Searching for answers and providing advice to situations I had not previously been confronted with required searching myself, and at times, even asking peers for advice as well.

When the holidays finally came,

*(continued on Page 6)*

### Did You Know?

- 90% of mentees have never had a mentor before
- 70% of mentors have never mentored before
- 94% of mentees graduate from High School
- 77% of mentees enroll in college

**THE MENTEES ARE HERE, THE MENTEES ARE HERE,** reads Erika's E-Mail. You could not help but hear the excitement pouring through. I have followed the journey of these courageous students by viewing the website and through email updates from Erika, the Executive Director of this progressive organization, so aptly titled, Active Compassion Transforms. With hard work and dedication, the ACT team was able to bring 10 students from the School of Hope, in Cape Town, South Africa, who were given a chance through the kindness of the ACT team and others who are giving them hope in their young lives.

On this incredible trip, the mentees would meet their Mentors who had spent months through interACT, a secure online mentoring program, getting to know each other, listening to the heartbreaks of these wonderful children. They spent time building a relationship and the mentors guided them in the right direction. These dedicated souls were living up to ACT's mission which invites you to take action, to have compassion and such acts will certainly lead to transformation. The students were also paired with individuals who were established in fields that piqued the mentees interest and they spent time shadowing and learning the ropes of their careers they hope to pursue. Having fun in the big apple was part of this amazing journey.

My two charges were Mishqa and Lee-Anne who are interested in Social Work and Child Care. I took them to a WIC center and all the staff got involved in showcasing our work world. They were given a brief history of WIC and then

stopped at each work 'station' to learn more about the daily activities. We were entertained by a video of past events while getting ready for the day's get together. Lee-Anne and Mishqa donned gloves and aprons, chopped and stirred, adding their culinary skills to the preparation of the kale and bean soup. The Nutritionists gave their good for you blessings as we dived in to this delicious soup made by the hands of those who cared. Good to the last drop!



Everyone was in step as we moved to the beat, challenging our limbs and having fun. Lunch was a spread of yucca, rice and beans, chicken, plantains and green salad with avocado, washed down with orange juice or water.

We walked through the neighborhood, pointing out places of interest and walking off the hearty meal that seemed to have stuck to our ribs. We romped a little, posing for photos on sidewalk benches. When we returned to the WIC center, Lee-Anne and Mishqa were given the opportunity to talk about their day, which they eloquently described as one of joy. We feel the same, thanks for sharing bits and pieces of your lives with us.

On the weekend the mentees decided to thank their

mentors and all who contributed to make it possible for them to take this journey. They prepared tasty and satisfying dishes from South Africa, names that have now escaped me. We were treated to dancing by a fearless mentee, who creatively did a solo act. We had a poet in our midst who made his feelings known through his words. He told us the interpretation was up to us. Poet Laureate, I heard words of pain, joy and most of all gratitude.

Their teacher, who looked as youthful as those whose lives she was working to transform, spoke from the heart about the transformation she is witnessing in her beloved students. Tears were shed, tears of joy and gratitude for Erika and her crew. The students were lost for words except to say, thank you. And if may add my penny's worth, Thanks to the ACT organization for their superb job! Erika, et al, you are an inspiration and I am so grateful Carol to have met you that fateful morning, on the street while I was hustling to fundraise at Jamba juice. Glad to have been caught in the ACT.

Kudos

**PAULETTE SINCLAIR-WEIR was a job shadow participant. Deputy Director of a WIC Program and a Registered Dietitian Me. Sinclair-Weir is also the founder of CHOOSE TO CARE. See "Our Program Partners" page 7 for more info...**



# REFLECTIONS



**B**EING IN NY was an incredible experience that started with a little bit of hope and a pinch of desire. I met so

many wonderful people from the moment we arrived. Mike and Nii made this amazing "American breakfast" yum.. yum.. yum! It totally warmed our frozen bodies. God has revealed himself in a picture of generosity through every single person that we met there. It was encouraging to experience the love and support that people have not just for the students but our country, South Africa. One of my favourite moments was

meeting Erika's parents and hearing them sharing their testimony. It was a "God moment". The entire trip was filled with many of those moments but for me the best was listening to the students on the flight back home of how this trip has totally changed their lives!!! That pinch of desire became a fulfillment of a dream!

~ Christeline Carolus

**W**ELL, MY TIME IN NEW YORK was most grateful and I experienced a lot of new things and meet outstanding people which made a huge impact on my life by showing me what's out there in the world of today and by showing how God can

impact your dreams and hopes and that you could always turn to the ALMIGHTY if you need help. I would like to thank those who believed in me and hope that more people could help and support other kids in the program and help them see what's out there and to not give up on their dreams.



~Safwat Thompson

## What a difference a year makes...

Notable ACT first-year accomplishments:

- Received our 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status from the IRS.
- Successfully launched and completed one year of the interACT Mentor program with 14 NY/South Africa mentoring matches.
- Organized and led two impACT voluntourism trips to Cape Town, South Africa with 16 participants (4 participants went on both!)
- Brought 10 participants from South Africa to NY for their NY interACTIVE experience trip

# FROZEN TEARS by Sakhekile Qoyi

## FROZEN TEARS

Due to the extreme dew that was in ma heart felt  
I felt felt ma soul melt, just because her smile cracked  
With ma braile here i was to be met  
before all that, i stood as a statue with intentions to liberate

What was in ma soul kept/came to ma mind and i heard it sank  
Type of GREATNESS that can never be matched  
deceased we were not, but ash did meet ash  
What ma heart searched in ma psyche it was wrapped  
Astonishing as it was, even claps were less  
The tik- of the Tech, was to be paracritical and i sucked on his breasts  
I slept on his chest and hope was most definately trapped  
This was no test but i passed the step, to acknowledge that ma life was not complexed yet

Ma days were mapped, i was there and and i still dreamt  
in great anticipation of ma birth  
I allowed ma dehydrated mind outlet its-self best  
so heart warming to see how much it dranked



On the slow snow our motions were slowed  
whiles our mental states were being caltivated and mowed  
It was attention seeking but i paid less attention to how much it was cold  
some of the best keys in life is to be rigid and be bold  
preventing for your soul to be sold for a pile of gold  
humanly ma self i have out grown

Life risks are sometimes taken to prevent life from escaping us, not us trying to  
escape from life/ because we can never escape ourselves.

## .. Safwat

I couldn't believe that Safwat was actually coming to America! Acting as a tour guide while watching Safwat's interest in my favorite neighborhood, museums, Broadway show, and pizza place made me think of these familiar sights in a new light. When I asked Safwat what his favorite part of the day was, licking his lips, he said, "that was some tasty pizza." Although unplanned, I couldn't help but agree. Something so commonplace and simple, when viewed from this outside

context, was pretty amazing. At the mentor appreciation dinner I was talked into trying a sautéed tree worm - viewed from this outside context, not so amazing.

Through the mentoring program I learned about Safwat's family, town, sports team, and school. Me and Safwat discussed the differences between American and South African schools, the importance of internships as a way to gain knowledge, and being true to oneself. I left Safwat with a white dress shirt for interviews and gave a promise to help with his

resume. Safwat has become a representative for ACT in Cape Town and is to sit for his graduating exams in the upcoming month.

It is these unique experiences and shared dialogue that make the ACT mentoring program so powerful. To be able to connect to someone from halfway around the world who is searching himself is truly an inspiration. I am grateful for the opportunity to have participated in the ACT mentoring program and for having a mentee like Safwat.

# OUR PROGRAM PARTNERS



**THE MISSION** of Choose to Care is to provide shoes for children and young adults around the world. Whether for dress-up wear, daily wear or for playing sports, a pair of shoes protects feet from cuts, injuries and infections, and boosts the comfort and confidence of its young

The desire to give of myself to those in need is constantly on my mind. Although I have donated to numerous causes, I wanted to create a more concrete project. The word CHOOSE is a play on

the word SHOES. The logo for the Choose To Care organization will have a pair of shoes hanging from the letter C.

My first attempt to purchase shoes for a group of young children brought such delight to them that I finally decided to give it a try and approached my family who gave me a nod. Of course this tiny venture with no money in the till will be an arduous task, but I am determined to go ahead.

Paulette Sinclair-Weir

*Not only did Paulette give of her precious time and experience, but her organization gave funds for each mentee to purchase a pair of shoes to build towards their future.*



**Since March 2009**, ACT has partnered with iMentor Interactive (iMi) to bring the ACT mentoring program to the School of Hope in Cape Town, South Africa. As the Partnership Manager of iMentor Interactive, I've had the amazing pleasure and honor to work with Erika and the ACT staff to make this program possible. I can never forget the feeling of joy and happiness when I was first assigned to manage our partnership, particularly bringing this program to Africa and connecting NYC Mentors with South African students. Why? I was blessed to have the opportunity to visit Africa twice in my lifetime.

Meeting the students was an amazing experience for me, one that I will never forget. It reminded me of my first time experiencing a new culture, a

new way of thinking and a new way of interaction. It also reminded me about the wonderful people that I've met and the immense impact they've had in my life. Hearing the students like Lee-Anne and Sakhe talking about their trip and their mentoring experience has truly made me realized why do I have a passion for mentoring. In addition, it was a further testament as to the importance of Mentoring programs outside of the U.S and how technology like iMi can bridge the gap presented by distance and cultural differences.

With the strong iMi- ACT Partnership, the dedication from the mentors and the hard work from the teachers; the students from School of Hope will forever leave a lasting impression in our lives.

Jonathan Vallejo

We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future. -Franklin D. Roosevelt

# caught in the act



**Top Row:** Welcome to New York Mentees!, Lee-Anne/ Mishqa in Times Square, Leadership with Kevin Singleton, Paulette & Erika

**Second Row:** Miss Christeline finds "love", Steps of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Wall St Bull, Miss Liberty

**Third row:** Happy Birthday Jasmane!, Serving at the World Vision Storehouse, Lee Anne & Mishqa teaching at PS 2

**Last Row:** Career Panel, our Chick-Fil-A tour (YUM!), Makin' movies at the Apple Store

# Why **act** ?

Active Compassion Transforms exists to make change accessible.

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.



2010 INTERACT MENTEES

## You can be an instrument of **CHANGE**

The interACT Program seeks to impact the lives of South African Youth living in the challenging environments of Cape Town through the use of unique online mentoring platform. We are seeking adults living in the New York/New Jersey metro area who can commit to writing 2-3 emails per month via an online e-mail platform to high school students living in a different part of the world. At the culmination of the online mentoring program, the mentees will be sponsored by ACT to come to New York and meet their mentors in person and to take part in job shadowing opportunities!

If you love learning about different cultures and making a difference, we invite you to consider being a mentor! You can do both within your

Embrace. Engage. Empower.



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

## How to ACT...

Your **donations** go a long way. If you believe in our vision and work, we invite you to **become a monthly partner** and receive quarterly updates from our 2010 mentees!

## Support Our **EVENTS...**

📅 June 12-22- be part of our 2nd NY interACTive experience trip for our remaining five 2009 mentees

📅 August 13-24- journey to South Africa for our annual impACT trip

cubicle or your home and impact change even for just 30 minutes a week!

Please contact :

[info@activecompassiontransforms.org](mailto:info@activecompassiontransforms.org) for more info or visit us at

[www.activecompassiontransforms.org](http://www.activecompassiontransforms.org) or you can start applying online at <https://act.imentorinteractive.org/>

Also, ACT is seeking volunteers within its operations, so please contact us at [info@activecompassiontransforms.org](mailto:info@activecompassiontransforms.org) if you would like to volunteer for the following departments: Executive & Operations, Development (Fundraising), Legal & Tax, Education, Marketing, Public Relations, and Technology.



Is a completely volunteer driven organization.  
 We'd like to say thank you to everyone who  
 have kept us moving forward. We couldn't have  
 done it without you!



**ACT would like to thank the following:**

Organizations:

NLN, AMC, Jireh Church, MSNY, Vision Church, Choose to Care, the Good Neighbor Foundation, Goodwin Proctor LLP

Individuals:

Kevin Singleton, Rose Davidson, Paulette Sinclair-Weir, Nathan Bridges, John Pringle, ACT career panelists, Karin from the UN, Frankie, Lawrence, and Jan from Tishman Speyer, Vivienne LaBorde and Rossie from Skadden & Arps, Amy from Apple, Kelly from City at Peace, Jonathan from iMentor, Lindsay Phillips, Brian Parker, Patrick & Kathy Lee, and the ACT 2009 mentors

Job Shadow Hosts:

Amos from Zereoue  
 Mark from Madiba  
 CityYear  
 Paulette from WIC  
 Grace from NYU  
 Bradley from Groovalooos  
 Luam from Broadway Dance Center  
 Tinia from Ethical Culture Fieldston School  
 Lisa Bing  
 Tina from Le Pain Quotidien  
 Christine from PS 184  
 Debbie from the Diabetes Center  
 Rose Davidson  
 Kevin Singleton from Elevate New York  
 Joanne from Chick-Fil-A  
 Choddie from Edward Jones

*Hanging with the mentees...*



AMC



NLN



Jireh Church