

# Report

Greenbury Secondary School

Camp 06-08 March 2009

Umgeni Valley Nature Reserve



## Objectives

- Provide a life-long adventure learning experience.
- Learners will have a better understanding of leaders and leadership.
- Learners will learn about teams and how to work in them.
- Learners will enhance their leadership skills.
- Learners will develop their team work skills.

## Introduction

School is an institution of learning and the methodology used to develop and capacitate the learners involves very little input and space for a learner to participate in the process. People have various ways in which they go about their selection process for leaders. They also have varying views about how leaders should behave and the information they should be given to firstly identify, enhance and use this ability.

The learners who attended the camp had mixed emotions and a few perceptions of what leadership and team-building is about. Some had admitted that although they had been in the school for a number of years they had never seen some of the children present on the camp.

## Expectations

Among the 43 learners that attended the camp, their expectations had a common thread running through them and that was to have fun, the fear of the unknown and missing family. Many displayed an underlying excitement and a willingness to learn and apply themselves to the process. Many of them

had not associated with each other in school and posed a fear of the ability to associate and work with 'strangers'.

### **Process**

The camp provided an opportunity for learners to explore their thoughts and feelings regarding their current understanding of leadership and teams. They were challenged from the very beginning to see things differently. Every aspect of the camp created a new experience and challenge, whether it was physical, mental, emotional, social and academic. Experiential learning has a dynamic that extends far beyond text books and a classroom environment and this was evident in the response of the learners. The location and facilities took them out their comfort zone and this added a multi faceted experience for them.



### **Evaluation**

Initially, the learners did have a concern about the camp; the program, activities, accommodation and food. As the excitement set in as the day unfolded and these concerns quickly faded. They were placed into trying situations and they truly rose the occasion making use of every opportunity to learn. It is evident that programs of this nature are lacking as the learners have indicated that not only has it been a learning experience but rather life changing:

**Karl Maharaj** – “I unlocked a part of myself that I never knew I had.”

**Nosipho Dlamini** – I actually realize that I love nature and realized how beautiful and precious it is. I felt terrible because I am one of the people who litter, which is not good but I am going to change my ways now.

**Jason Chinsamy** - ... it changed the mentality of my thinking... I have developed into a greater person. I learnt that in order for people to lead they need followers and as well as follow before you can become a leader.

**Sapna Bigun** – ... it made me realize the potential others have and how to work better in a team. I’m going to play an active role in not only being a leader in society, but also helping to develop other leaders. I have seen immense potential and I believe that this is needed to better our future.

**Kamalika Moodley** - ... It help me increase my self-esteem which I lacked.

**Kavilan Naidoo** - ... the course identified our strengths and weaknesses, but with the help of our friends and team we learnt to overcome these weaknesses. It has opened my eyes and helped me evaluate a situation and see things in a different perspective.

**Selina Dhanasar** - ...you guys made us comfortable and safe and I had a fabulous and a life changing experience ... for making us strong and leaders. Your development and skills that you have instilled in us will stay with me forever.

**Felicia Naicker** - ... this knowledge and skill has untapped and built a very strong-willed side to my character. It has allowed me to ... embrace my inner potential and leadership skills, truly an unforgettable experience.

**Mr. Sudesh Panday** (Educator) – I evaluated myself as a leader and found my short comings and strengths. A priceless experience for all.

**Mrs. Nafeesa Shaik** (Educator) – I think the entire course should be promoted to different levels in the teaching fraternity. The course has also given me the opportunity to evaluate my leadership skills.

**Mrs. Nalini Munisamy** (Educator) – I have also realized how in “control” I am as a teacher – needs review. The lines that separate teacher and learner also need reassessment (shift in thinking). I believe this is the beginning of a paradigm shift in terms of my relationship concerning the learners and teaching style.



These are just a few of the experiences that many of the learners share. Not only were the learners challenged by the physical activities, but the Educators were challenged by the content of the discussions during the debriefing/discussion that challenged the learners thinking and understanding of leaders, leadership, teams and team-building.

### **Follow-up**

Having gained this valuable knowledge, skills and experience I do believe letting the learners loose into the environment will be detrimental without a follow up program that will allow them to use this newly acquired skills. The learners have indicated their interest in starting a Peer Counseling Project and they were given guides lines for strategic planning. This will be the only way we maintain the enthusiasm, excitement and create an opportunity for them to hone their newly acquired skills.

### **Conclusion**

I truly believe that the objectives of the camp/ program have been met, not only is this evident through their evaluations but also the learners’ attitude to life. Every one of them has to some degree shown a change in their thinking and behavior from our initial meeting on Friday. As this program unfolds I do believe that by introducing learners to the leadership program as well as the follow-up projects from an earlier stage will have a much greater impact, allowing the school and the learners to benefit for longer periods from this knowledge. The DDP has indicated their commitment in partnership with the school to support any project the learners initiate and drive.