



# Inscape Charity Projects and Social Responsibility - 2009

## ST VINCENT'S COMMUNITY PROJECT

As part of Joburg's Leadership Programme we received what, to many of us, would be a challenging task for our community project.

We were given the task of doing creative activities every Friday with a group of forty hard of hearing children aged between 2 ½ and 5 years old at the St Vincent's School for the Deaf. Communication and interaction with the kids seemed to concern practically the entire group as none of us could speak sign language. The fact that some of the kids are also autistic seemed rather daunting. But, within the first few minutes of our first visit with the kids, our worries all pretty much disappeared.

Not only were the kids full of life and eager to learn, but we too were excited to teach and challenge ourselves to communicate using our hands (i.e. making visual examples of how to do the activity), smiles and laughter. Some of the activities we did with them include finger painting, noodle-necklace making, clay sculpture, biscuit icing and hat making. With each visit, a new relationship is always created as we work individually with different kids each time. Whether it be working with blue-eyed Kyle, the two and a half year old terror, "Fluffy" the dreamer or Brandon the beautifully shy blonde (to mention just a few), there is always so much gained on both sides.

Learning the few words we know in sign language has also been an awesome experience and after each session with the kids each one of the first year students is guaranteed to leave with a smile on our faces and paint all over our clothes. *Melanie Cook ID01*



Our experience at St. Vincent's has really been a roller-coaster of emotions and a huge learning curve. Our emotions have ranged from excitement and nervousness to anger and frustration. Our main goal for this project was to give the children a new and exciting playground which they would be happy to call their own and so we thought it would only be fair to let them decide on the cartoon which they wanted. So we compiled a mood board together and gave them stars which they could stick next to their favourite cartoon character, Kung Fu Panda came out on top by far.

Having worked with the children I believe that we have all learned very valuable lessons that we will be able to take forward in life, the main lesson, for me, is never to take things for granted. Every day we are blessed with the ability to hear and the kids of St. Vincent's will never have that opportunity but they still have smiles on their faces and a positive outlook in their minds. *Kyle Marks - Design Foundation*

