



# South Africa-Washington Internship Program

S A W I P

***To prepare, inspire and support a new generation of leaders in South Africa with the necessary skills and tools to address post-conflict challenges in the process of building a sustainable democratic society”***

## Our First Newsletter

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## Graduation ceremony '08

*SAWIP had its first graduation ceremony at the end of September 2008. The following is an account from a guest, and now a new friend of the Program!*

A tremendously uplifting experience

For me, what began as a late invitation to a graduation dinner for students from a programme I hardly knew about has resulted to my becoming increasingly more involved. That must surely be attributed primarily to SAWIP's extraordinary ability to engage, inspire and uplift all those who have the honour of taking part in its activities.

The inaugural graduation was a triumph! The evening's proceedings were of a jovial nature; with delicious offerings from Jonkershuis Restaurant at Groot Conrstantia. An excited group of parents, diplomats, friends and of course the students mingled effortlessly whilst the bubbly flowed most generously. This set the tone for what was to come because with all that joy came a serious message from our guest speaker Mr Greg Nott, who in his address brought out the very best of a true South African. His message of selfless service and sacrifice



**Vuyolwethu Goni, an alumni from the class of 2008 receiving her certificate of completion from Laurence Ntimane, Chairman of the South African SAWIP board**

throughout his professional and personal life was truly humbling. I am sure that the graduates were inspired to deliver their remarks with a renewed sense of purpose and life-long service to their community –and deliver they did!

I cannot recall any other occasion of this nature where so much inspiration and genuine appreciation has dominated the speeches that were presented. For those of us that were privileged to attend, it became clear that South Africa has a bright future indeed and that we must facilitate more of these opportunities. SAWIP has a special role in that sphere. The

graduates pledged their belief and service to our country. The excitement of Washington cannot be ignored but it is evident that the bright lights and grand occasions that come with the programme are not what motivates our future leaders. It is leadership, courage and service that rang true in their collective message. They shared with us the overwhelming feeling of achievement and growth that resulted from their continuing SAWIP experience.

How fitting then, it was - in conclusion - to be addressed by our chairman Mr Laurence Ntimane; who chose to abandon his prepared notes but 'speak from the heart'. His message was simple and penetrating – serve, be humble, be thankful and grow.

With the selection process of the new students now in its preliminary stages, I await with great anticipation our next students. I am positive that the message from our previous 'class' will have an inspiring effect on them, and that they too will make us proud to be South African and to be associated with SAWIP.

*Aubrey Ngcungama*

## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

*Thanks to the dedication of a great number of people all over the world the past four years have seen the South Africa Washington Internship Program grow from a small pilot to a fully fledged program with its own mission, vision and goals for a very bright future.*

*Although we do not want to get too ahead of ourselves I think that it is time that we reflect upon the last couple of years and see what has been achieved both here and in Washington DC. In this publication we have tried to touch on most, if not all of the major highlights over the past couple years.*

*We start with our wonderful graduation ceremony, a night that will surely be remembered both by the alumni and the guests. The energy and enthusiasm of the students was felt by all and there was more than one guest that went away with a renewed sense of commitment to our fledgling program and the country at large!*

*This year we are being assisted in our programme co-ordination and management as well as programme development by Jean Scrimgeour and Sally Currin. We are also in the process of securing our Section 21 (in SA) and 501c3 (in the USA) status and will soon be operating as a fully fledged not-for-profit.*

*In this newsletter we have also included a short biography of the advisory Committees, both in South Africa and the United States as well as updates on the students. Although most of us are still at university completing our degrees we are still giving back and using the skills we learnt on the program and in Washington all the time.*

*Our 2008 community service garden project is flourishing and we have included a couple of before and after pictures as well as a short write up of what we did and will hopefully continue to do.*

*And finally, we have included some information about the 2009 recruitment drive. We have started the new year with a bang and included another university thus further attempting to fulfill our commitment to include students from all tertiary institutions in South Africa.*

*Jean Scrimgeour*

## Additional Capacity

*With a growing program so too do we have growing administrative and financial needs. Fortunately, our team has grown and our Programme Development and Program Management functions are being met by:*

**Jean Scrimgeour** is a SAWIP alumni from the class of 2007 as well as worked as team manager in 2008. She has just completed her post graduate studies in International Relations and offered to join the SAWIP team on a full-time basis before starting her Masters next year.

**Sally Currin**, an educator by profession with many years of community development experience, has taken on the role of Programme Development in a temporary capacity.

## The US and SA Boards

*Both SAWIP, SA and Washington DC, are in the process of registering as non-profit organizations. Once this status has been granted they will establish Boards. At present both are served by Advisory Working Committees.*

The South African Advisory Committee consists of Chairman, Laurence Ntimane; Secretary Brian Currin; Michael Currin; Reitumetse Phiri; Greg Nott and Ingrid Fourie



*Holly Hasset and Thulani at Nelson Mandela's 90th Birthday Celebrations at the South African embassy in DC.*

The US advisory Committee consists of: Frank Cantrel Jr; Kevin Sullivan (chairman); Hugh 'o Hara; Declan Heery; Bryan Sims; Tom Woods and Holly Hasset.

## Alumni Update

*For those of you that are wondering where the SAWIP alumni from previous years are this article will provide all those answers.*

Michael Currin, alumnus from 2004 and one of the original founders of the program is currently in his final year of Mechanical Engineering at the University of Cape Town. He is also serving as a SAWIP committee

member and is still involved with the selection and orientation of the new students.

Reitumetse Phiri, our first official alumni from 2006 finished his candidacy at Fluxmans Attorneys and has recently taken a position at Dewey and LeBoeuf an internationally renowned law firm. Rei is also member of the SAWIP committee and serves as our lawyer, assisting with the



*Cheri, Thami, Udo and Vuyo at Graduation setting up of a section 21 and any other legal matters that may arise.*

Mzimkulu Ceko, 2007, is currently in his final year at UCT law school as well as completing his masters in International Relations at the University of Stellenbosch.

Caroline Taylor, from 2007, is also completing her final year at UCT law school.

Olebile Gaobepe, 2007, completed his undergraduate degree in Political Science at the University of Cape Town.

Jean Scrimgeour, 2007, completed her post graduate degree in International Relations at the University of Cape Town and is currently working full time for SAWIP as Program Manager.

Vuyolwethu Goni, 2008, is in her final year of law at the University of Cape Town while still running various educational and tutoring programs in her home community.

Thulani Madinginye, 2008, has recently completed his post graduate degree in Economics.

Cheri-Leigh Erasmus, 2008, is finishing her masters in International Relations while working full time for the International Office at the University of Stellenbosch.

Thamsanqua Ledwaba, is currently in his first year of a masters in Public Policy and administration.

Udo Hellberg is completing his studies at the University of Stellenbosch.

Rosalind Elphick has held off her final year of law school at the University of Cape Town and is currently completing a masters in Peace and Conflict at the University of Sydney, Australia on a Rotary Ambassadorial scholarship

Christo van Wyk has completed his masters and is now working full time in the city of Cape Town.



The 2008 Team on the Memorial Tour (from left to right): Rosalind, Udo, Thami, Jean, Cheri, Thulani, Vuyo & Christo

## My Experience in DC

Though I do know that my blog entries better reflect my struggles, lessons and exciting moments while I was in DC, I will attempt to give a brief summary of it in this single page.

I did a lot of growing over the 6 weeks, experiencing what my dad calls growing pains, and at some point feeling close to defeated, but it was just one of the 7 times that I needed to fall in order for me to rise 8 times. It was from this fall that I found myself in the clearest of mind-sets with regards to what I want to do in 2009.

I think that I can safely say that the decision has now been made and I will just put what I need to put in place to ensure that it happens. For this reason alone, the 6 weeks in DC were the most important 6 weeks of 2008.

The host family that housed me was by far the best of all the host families and I think that all the other interns knew it too, whether they would admit it in public or not. Penny Mitchell and her son Ramsy were absolutely

wonderful, none, I dare say, could match them.

Working at the IFC was almost surreal. It is one thing to read about what happens in an institution, it's a whole other thing to actually experience it. My supervisor was great, allowing me the room to work and giving me responsibility over my important part of her work too. She guided me when I needed it and left me to work, always emphasizing keeping a record-of-course. Being an economics student, I don't think that there could have been a placement that would have done more for me than working at the IFC. Things are a little clearer now with regards to what I should do next with my interest in economics and how it can be used to better the country and continent of my birth.

Meeting and getting to know the Irish interns was a great part of the program, and special mention must go to Mary Munroe and Lauren Allison. They were absolutely amazing and I will be keeping in touch with them no doubt. Gary Simpson was by far the funniest member of the group, and I

loved every second I spent with him. Johnny boy was the coolest, my favourite quote of his was him saying, "No Vuyo (in a strong Irish accent), I can't be yours all the time. I'm only yours some of the time." Absolutely hilarious!

Meeting Mr. Vincent Mai, a South African working and living in New York was amazing and we learnt much from him, and I do hope to continue a relationship with him. The experience was simply phenomenal overall and I wouldn't have chosen to be anywhere else over the US summer of 2008.

*Thulani Madinginye*

## Community Service Project

Mvula is a vibrant Primary School lodged in the heart of Langa. 800 young students pass through the school's front gates every morning, many of them coming from extremely impoverished homes. Roughly 150 of these students have been identified by their teachers as being in need of special care. These receive daily meals from the school kitchen and health care and counseling in the after-school health centre.

The SAWIP 2008 team took on the task of contributing to the improvement of the lives of these students. We began with the vision of a vegetable garden that would supply the school kitchen and teach the children about gardening. To this end, with sponsorship from Rotary and various private donors, we installed a drip irrigation system and enlisted the help of Abalimi Bezekhaya, a local gardening organization, to set up the gardens. The school caretaker, Tshese, was sent on a training course with Abalimi to be sure that the garden, once established, would be sustained. Four separate gardening areas were cleared and set up with irrigation. The gardens are now flourishing with large cabbages, chives, beetroot, spinach, tomatoes and corn.

Having begun our involvement at the school with the garden, some SAWIPers became inspired to volunteer their time in other ways. Their involvement spread to creating a network of young people interested in volunteering and providing them with information on areas of need within the school, spending time playing with the children in the Healthcare centre, teaching chess, joining their soccer practices, dusting off and bringing out some of their sports equipment to play with in the afternoons, attending their graduation and joining in on their fun-run and sports day festivities.

One of the most valuable parts of the experience was getting to know the teachers and volunteers. Seeing their dedication to the education and upliftment of their students was an education in itself. I have learnt the massive power that people have to positively affect, and perhaps alter the course of the lives, of others. Furthermore, the spirit, talent and drive of the students have left a lasting impression on my heart.

A community service project begins with the volunteers hoping to 'give back', but I cannot help feeling that it is indeed us volunteers who have been inspired the most by our involvement at Mvula Primary. Our heartfelt thanks go to the sponsors, the school Headmistress, Cynthia, Rosemary, Tshese and Mr Ninzi for facilitating our involvement and for teaching us so many great lessons.



*Before and After a back breaking days work*

# Recruitment Drive 2009

*This year we decided that we needed to build upon the selection process of last year and institute some new processes to ensure that we get the best students for the program.*

Due to financial and administrative constraints we have focussed our recruitment drive in the Western Cape, starting with the University of Cape Town in 2006. In 2008 we expanded to the University of Stellenbosch with the 2008 Team comprising of 3 Students from that University.

This year we have gone one step further and incorporated the University of the Western Cape into the program. We have met with representatives from all the universities and all

are very keen to develop the relationships between themselves and SAWIP, fully understanding the importance of such a program to students and the country as a whole.

The application form has stayed very similar to that from last year and the format of the interviews will also remain the same. The big difference this year is the inclusion of a selection camp as well as orientation camp as part of the year's calendar.

We found that due to the short duration of the

program in Washington it was very difficult to achieve all that we wanted to. In addition, we also wanted to create a South African leadership component to the program and so the Selection camp will not only serve to elucidate more information about potential candidates for SAWIP but also serve as a leadership course in and of itself. We want each student to walk away from the camp having learnt something valuable whether they get on the program or not.

The Orientation Camp will serve to not only provide a platform to fully brief the students about the program and what to expect but also provide an opportunity for the students to get to know one another and build friendships prior to the commencement of the program

We expect to select a total of 10-12 students with one management team, thus increasing our numbers from last year where we took 7.

Although we are constantly learning we hope that the new processes that we have put in place this year will serve to improve on what we already have and ensure a stronger, more cohesive and prepared team.

## Our New Poster



Coming up with a 'look and feel' for SAWIP has proven to be a great deal easier said than done. However, we decided that we would search for a professional graphic designer who would help us come up with some ideas which we could use not only for this year but for the foreseeable future.

This is the design for the poster which has received good reviews from faculty staff and students. We decided to focus on leadership as a whole and not on Washington DC or South Africa experience only.

The new website and information pamphlet should be ready within the next couple of weeks thus ensuring that we will be ready for when we are in Washington, blogging and posting our activities.

## Friends of SAWIP

In an effort to continue to assist alumni with their future endeavors we have decided to create a 'Friends of SAWIP' link on our new website. We are looking for professionals that have reached the top of their field and who want to give back. As a Friend you will undertake to serve as a sort of mentor to SAWIP Alumni. You only need give as much time as you can afford but realize that professional and leadership development can only occur if young people have strong role- models to emulate.

For more information or to become a "Friend of SAWIP" please contact [admin@sawip.org](mailto:admin@sawip.org)

## Contact

Should you want to get hold of us please feel free to call Jean at 073 810 7226 or e-mail us at:

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