



YALE ALUMNI SERVICE CORPS  CAPE TOWN 2018

Newsletter No. 2
March 2018

Hello everyone,

Before we assign people to teams, I'd like to give you an update on the projects we've been working on. Some are still in the idea stage. Some are more defined.

Please read over this newsletter that describes the projects we are currently contemplating and then let me know via email if there is one that particularly interests you. Don't worry if it's on a team that you didn't list on the registration form—I'm going to do my best to get everyone working on their first choice of project.

We have the advantage on this trip of being able to work with Amandla Development. They are deeply embedded in the Philippi community and have ties to many local groups and officials. For example, they arranged for João and me to meet with the superintendent of schools for the Philippi district when we did our advance trip last fall. He seemed very enthusiastic about our trip and pledged to support our efforts in the schools. Since then Amandla has had follow-up meetings with him, and we have received some specific direction as to what he sees as the greatest areas of concern in his district and how we might best work on them.

In addition, we are going to be joined by Zach Porterfield from Yale's medical school. Zach's research has been focused in South Africa and he is helping us set up what I expect will be a robust and meaningful public health program for this trip.

For those of you who've been on past trips, you may detect a slight shift in approach, especially when it comes to our work in the schools. Rather than team members simply coming up with projects and lesson plans and running with them, we will be taking a much more "top-down" approach and will be quite focused on what the school district is telling us they want.

Here are the projects we are currently considering:

PUBLIC HEALTH

1. One of the areas Zach Porterfield has been working on in South Africa is children's health, specifically the problem of ear infections that go undetected and untreated and often result in complications like hearing loss, learning problems, and speech difficulties. Zach has engaged colleagues at both Yale and the University of Cape Town (UCT) to work with us to run a comprehensive screening program during the week we're in Philippi. Right now, we are contemplating screening every primary school child in the district (approximately 3,000 kids in 14 schools). There is also a possibility of us adding vision screening to the mix while we have access to all the students.

In addition to the valuable data that will be collected from this work, Zach is working to ensure that we will be able to refer children we screen for further treatment at the ENT, audiology, and speech clinics at UCT. We will train people who volunteer for this project to do the initial screenings. I'm also sure we will need people to help with check-in, paperwork, and generally keeping things organized and running smoothly. Screening three thousand kids is an ambitious undertaking, but I'm confident that our team will be able to make it happen! This will be our main public health project on this trip. If you're interested in it, email me indicating that you'd like to join the **Children's Health** project.

2. HIV is a big problem in the area. Educating young people about HIV is another area where we may be of service. The exact nature of the program we would run has not been firmed up yet, but we will likely partner with one or more existing local groups working in this space. If you're interested in this project, email me to be on the **HIV Education** project.

3. Another potential project concerns the health needs of older women, in this case specifically issues related to menopause. There is a women's shelter in Philippi and, if there is interest from members of our group, we may set up sessions with women there (and from the community in general) to educate about menopause. Email me to be on the **Women's Health** project.

BUSINESS CONSULTING

We will be partnering with a Philippi-based nonprofit group that provides advice to local entrepreneurs and business people. By linking with this existing group, we will be able to ensure that the work we do during the week continues long after we're gone. People in this group will probably work in teams of two advising one or more clients during the week. We are also optimistic that students from UCT's business school will join us so that each of our consulting teams will also include a business student. That would also open up the possibility of our team members mentoring the student on your consulting team as well. If you'd like to be on this project, please email me to join the **Business Consulting** team. *And I need you to do one more thing if you want to work on this project—include a resume, CV, or simply a paragraph*

describing your area(s) of business experience so that we can match you up with the client(s) who would most benefit from your expertise.

ATHLETICS

Because school will be in session, we will have to run our sports program after school. It's likely that we will go to one or more schools to organize baseball, softball, cricket (anyone out there know how to play cricket?!), and/or netball (a variation of basketball without a backboard) games.

In the mornings, we are looking into organizing soccer games for older kids who have dropped out of school and other young adults in the community. It is possible that we will partner with a local youth soccer league. These games will most likely be held on the field adjacent to where we are planning to set up our YASC "headquarters" for the week.

So far, we've only got a handful of people who have signed up for this team and we could definitely use a few more, so if you're interested, please let me know you'd like to be on the **Athletics** team. Keep in mind that unlike on prior trips, it won't be 90° out—more like in the 50's and 60's—so it should be fun out there on the fields!

CONSTRUCTION

Our construction project is likely to focus on one or more school libraries. We won't know the exact nature of the work to be done until we get a little closer to our visit, but it will probably involve painting, building bookshelves, and generally sprucing them up. We may do a mural as well.

Let me know that you'd like to be on the **Construction** team.

EDUCATION

The superintendent has expressed interest in us pursuing some specific projects in the following areas:

1. The first project will be to help create a peer-to-peer tutoring program whereby 10th graders will tutor 9th graders (in maths*), while at the same time training the 9th graders to take their place the next year running the program. People working on this project will work with a small group of students using methods developed by Ikamva Youth (<http://ikamvayouth.org>). Email me that you'd like to work on the **Youth Tutoring** project.

*they use the British term

2. Another project would be to help students develop a school newspaper. Are there any journalists (or former high school newspaper geeks*) among our group who

would like to take this one on? The newspaper would likely have to be an electronic, rather than printed, version, so if they're any Adobe InDesign (or other desktop publishing program) experts out there, this might be the project for you! Email me that you'd like to join the **Newspaper** project.

*an affectionate term I'm allowed to use because I was one

3. We almost definitely will be doing something involving coding. We can potentially develop some programs for students of varying age. For younger children, there are a number of educational products that are designed to teach basic coding skills, for example [this one](#). We are thinking of purchasing some of these products and locating them in a library. We may also draw on the resources of [code.org](#) for both younger and older students. In addition to working with kids to teach them these skills, there will likely be an opportunity to train teachers as well. Helping students to start a "coding club" is also a possibility. Email me to join the **Coding** project.

4. The organization [Worldreader](#) provides Kindle e-readers loaded with books in both English and local languages. These readers can become the basis for a lending program based in one of the school libraries. If we go this route, in addition to introducing kids to the readers, we will need to train teachers in how best to use them for instruction. This project may become part of a larger effort to develop a "21st Century Library" with more e-learning resources that could become a model for other schools in the district. One possible resource is [Khan Academy](#), which offers free, comprehensive on-line lessons in a full range of subjects from elementary through AP high school courses. Email me if you'd like to work on the **Library** project.

VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS

Because school will be in session, we will have less of an opportunity to simply go into classrooms to do fun visual art projects. We will need to justify the diversion from regular classroom instruction. A complementary teacher-training program that could run concurrently with a student-focused classroom project would be an ideal way to achieve this. The superintendent is also interested in the development of an after-school art program/art space. If you are interested in pursuing these ideas, email me to be on the **Visual Arts** project.

Amandla has helped develop a performing arts space in Philippi. We are exploring doing a dance project (perhaps continuing the efforts of a dance program currently happening there). Amandla has also helped construct a recording studio in the same space. If you are a dancer, musician, or know how to operate music editing software, email me to join the **Performing Arts** project. *Please also let me know what are your specific skills in this area so we have a better idea of what projects we can offer the community.*

EXTRA, EXTRA, READ ALL ABOUT IT!

Finally, in the area of “communications,” we could use someone to:

1. Take photos at all the project sites and prepare a slide show for the last night’s celebration.
2. Develop a daily news blast to go out to all participants via email each evening with tales of the day’s happenings.
3. Post on social media (Facebook, Instagram, etc.) about what we’re doing throughout the week.

This could be one incredibly multi-talented person or more than one person to work together as a team to keep our group and the larger audience out there informed of what we’re up to. It is possible that we may be able to involve some Philippi students in this work as well. If you’re interested in any or all of these, email me and tell me what you’d like to do.

That’s it. I’m sure some things will change between now and July, but this is where we are now. ***It is very important that you email right away to tell me which of these projects interests you the most.***

Rob Biniáz

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P.S. If you haven’t yet sent in your release forms or photo to João, please do that immediately!