



PROJECT ACTION

SOUNDS testimonials to RCPE

On 12 February, 2017 Robin Jones received a heart-warming letter from Shantia Garrett, a Peace Corps South Africa Volunteer (2015-2017). She was previously a City Year Corps Member (2014-2015) after completing her studies at Howard University in May 2014. As a Peace Corps Volunteer, Shantia was spending her time in South Africa as a teacher at Leokaneng Primary School. SOUNDS was introduced into Leokaneng Primary School in July 2016 shortly after Shantia Garrett was trained by Robin and Edie Jones on the use of the moulded letter sets.



Shantia writes to the club as follows to relate her experience with SOUNDS:

Dear Rotary Club of Pretoria East,

My staff at my school felt that it was important to use SOUNDS as a remedial tool for the learners who were behind in Grades 4 and 5 as well as for the Grade R learners. I partnered and trained the Grade R teacher, who was very excited about bringing the SOUNDS letters into the classroom as a new tool for teaching.

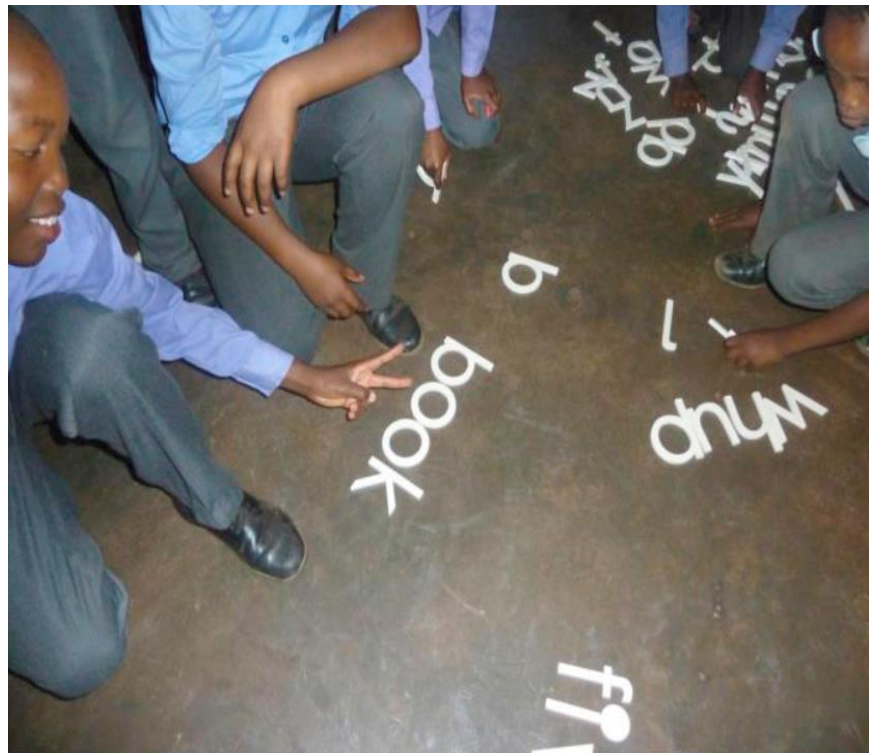
Every Tuesday and Thursday, we would work with SOUNDS in the afternoon. Since I am semi-fluent in Sepedi, there were times that I would work in small groups with the Grade R learners and wash the letters with them and they would guess which letter was which based on touch. With the Grades 4 and 5, the learners benefited from SOUNDS completely. They were able to phonetically sound out small words and eventually were also successful with longer words.

I worked with the Grade 4 and 5 learners three times a week and each time was intense because the learners really wanted to learn how to read! I left the kit at the school because the Grade R teacher used it almost every day even when I wasn't in the class. She appreciated that there was another tactile way of teaching the learners. This teacher is dedicated to still use the kit, even though I am no longer at the school.

Thank you for allowing me to see the changes that SOUNDS has brought about in my community.

Sincerely,

Shantia Garrett



Another testimonial, received from the well-known Pen Inner City Pre-school Forum, bears witness to the wonderful opportunity SOUNDS offers to further literacy in the very young as well.



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24 February 2017

RE: SOUNDS

The Inner City Pre-school Forum is part of PEN (Participate, Empower and Navigate), an NGO in the city of Pretoria. The forum is actively working in pre-schools, with the aim of ensuring school readiness for children at the age of six. Rotary introduced SOUNDS during 2011 as part of the daily program in schools.

From the start teachers experience the difference that SOUNDS makes, simply by teaching them in a fun way for 10 minutes per day. Before SOUNDS children were simply reciting the alphabet, while with discovering the exact sounds, they now start recognizing letters throughout the day; finding them in the names of colors, shapes, in books, on their theme tables, simply everywhere. Thus, integrated learning, and development of the love for language!

In schools where there is a little more space, SOUNDS is always available and children will spontaneously show their love for letters by endlessly packing and unpacking them. At age 4 - 5 we find that they are getting eager to start building words; especially starting with their names. Another benefit of SOUNDS is that parents also get caught up in the excitement of discovering letters, offering teachers the perfect starting point in creating opportunities for parent participation.

SOUNDS has become the backbone of our success in pre-schools. Since the start 32 schools have been set up with SOUNDS, with around 1,500 children per year benefiting.

Herewith a heartfelt thank you to Brenda Erickson, founder of the SOUNDS program, and Rotary Pretoria East, with especially Robin and Edie Jones for the countless hours of input into our schools. The spirit in which this has taken off and is continuing is truly heartwarming, and the results are life-changing.

Regards
Rieneke Schutte
PEN Inner City Pre-school Forum

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