



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA  
Faculty of Humanities

The objective of Mandela Day is to inspire individuals to take action to help change the world for the better and to empower communities. For Mandela Day 2013, the Faculty of Humanities contributed more than 67 minutes of service. Through a longstanding partnership between UP and Dr IM Monare Primary School, Dr Reineth Prinsloo, chair of the Community Engagement committee, facilitated a project to assist with reading and to establish a reading room. Dr Leti Kleyn contributed her expertise in establishing reading rooms.



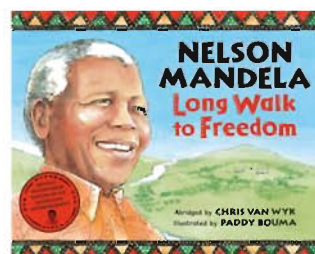
The faculty collected books in a strategically placed container in the HSB foyer. The first group of volunteers went to Dr IM Monare School on 1 June to prepare the venue. Prof Norman Duncan, Dean of the faculty, volunteered and assisted in dismantling unstable shelves and sorting books.



On 4 June 2013, in a small ceremony, Prof De la Rey, Vice Chancellor donated four of her favourite books from her childhood. Prof Norman Duncan, Prof Hennie Stander and the heads of departments in the Language cluster also donated books.



Chris van Wyk, well-known author and poet, inspired an audience in a Humanities public lecture in support of the project. With a topic of "Once upon a time there were three teachers ..." he emphasised that readers are leaders and donated two of his books, *Long walk to Freedom* and *Ouma Ruby's secret*.



The law firm Spoor & Fisher made a generous donation. The dental practice of Dr Ian Erasmus donated carpets for the venue. Faculty members donated more than 1400 books and the book publisher Pan Macmillan supported the project. Books not suitable for Grade R to Grade 4 readers were donated to the Mamelodi Public Library, Margaretha Ackerman Home for older persons, Deutsches Altersheim, SAVF preschool centres and a hospice in Lynnwood. Together with Gert and Reineth Prinsloo and Leti Kleyn, a group of more than 40 students in total volunteered their Saturday mornings to clean, paint and furnish the venue. Books were sorted and marked with coloured stickers to indicate age-appropriate reading sections.





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A reading room is an exciting, inviting and colourful space that entices learners to enter the world of books and open doors to magical places. The first endeavour to introduce the learners of Dr IM Monare to this world, took place on 29 August when a group of more than 20 students from different departments in the faculty prepared stories and read to the learners.



The highlight of the 6 month involvement with the school was the official opening ceremony on 4 October. The stakeholders in the project namely the Faculty of Humanities, sponsors, the school principal, Mr Elias Molopo, the teachers, learners of the school, parents and representatives from the Department of Education gathered for a morning of praise, song, dance and reading activities.

Dr Oswald Mtshali was the honoured guest at the opening ceremony. Oswald Mtshali, South African poet, was born in Vryheid, Natal in 1940. His poetry reflects his experiences under the apartheid regime and draws upon the immediate experience of life in the Johannesburg township of Soweto. Such a dignified and important figure, yet so humble that he paid individual attention to every Grade R learner in the newly opened reading room. He read two of his poems to the learners and lead them in a song "Jesus loves me, yes I know". The learners identified with the *Boy on a swing*.

*Slowly he moves  
To and fro, to and fro  
Then faster and faster  
He swishes up and down*



On behalf of the Faculty of Humanities, Dr Prinsloo officially handed over the reading room and the school became the proud owners.

Mr Elias Molopo, a principal with passion and a vision for the learners in his school proudly provides feedback that since the establishment of the reading room learners are motivated for reading and eager to participate. "Their eyes are filled with joy when they are in the reading room; they know how to read and listen for enjoyment".

I wish to thank every person that contributed to the successful establishment of this reading room and believing in rendering service to change the world.

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