



Holiday Camp Report: June 2018

Reporting Dates: 25 - 28 June 2018

United Through Sport
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Port Elizabeth
South Africa

June Holiday Camp at Erica Child and Youth Care Centre

We hosted a holiday camp for a period of four days at Erica Child and Youth Care Centre, which is situated in Hillside, Nelson Mandela Bay.

Background

Erica Child and Youth Care Centre is home to girls and boys, with ages ranging from babies to children of up to eighteen years old. Children live and go to school at the Centre for various reasons. Youths who are in conflict with the law, orphaned, abused or abandoned children find a haven at Erica Child and Youth Care Centre. United Through Sport South Africa has had a good working relationship with Erica Centre for several years - more recently with a swimming partnership coaching the Erica children in the essential life-skill of swimming. This year we were invited by the management of the Erica Centre to host a holiday camp at their premises. The Erica children are not allowed to go outside of the premises of the Centre unsupervised, as their school is also based inside of Centre's grounds.



Due to the small number of children at Erica Centre during the school holidays, we took the decision to invite children from other organisations to participate in the holiday camp. This was done in consultation with the management of Erica Centre, to reach a higher number of children and expose the Erica children to socialisation with other groups of children. Some of the invited organisations who sent children to the holiday camp included: Imveli Cycling Academy, SOS Children's Home and Hillside Karate Club. We also invited children from the surrounding neighbourhood of Hillside, as well as the community of Joe Slovo (who arrived by bus).

It is standard practice for United Through Sport to organise holiday programmes to minimise the idle time for children during school breaks. Particularly in under-resourced township areas there is a big need to keep the children busy and entertained in a safe environment during the school holidays. The holiday camp reduces the children's vulnerability of being at risk to various negative social factors in the township areas. Many of the youth who belong to the different organisations that were invited to the holiday camp have access to little resources, and the holiday programme not only entertained the children but also gave them the benefit of physical and mental stimulation – in a structured, safe environment.

Let the games begin

From 25 to 28 June 2018, United Through Sport hosted the four-day holiday programme at Erica Child and Youth Care Centre. The target number of participants was 150 children between the age of 4 to 18 years, and we successfully reached a maximum number of 147 children over the four days. There was a good mix of the different age groups, and a fair balance between boys and girls who participated in the programme. It is important to encourage girls' participation in sport, particularly in pre-adolescent and adolescent girls.

The children were divided into six groups - with each group representing a colour of the South African flag. The children participated in four sports (football, netball, basketball and hockey) as well as one Life Skills session every day. All children above the ages of 12 years



participated in structured Life Skills lessons, with the topics of “Abuse”, “Identity” and “Relationships”. Children younger than 12 years did team building games during their Life Skills sessions time-slots. Children aged between four and seven years were kept busy with Arts & Crafts lessons.

United Through Sport was responsible for the overall running of the camp, which took place from 10:00 to 15:00 daily. Eight staff members, two interns, five volunteers and five youth sports coaches were involved in the day-to-day logistics, coaching and management of the holiday camp. The children had an opportunity to rotate between all the different aspects of the programme and were given ample time to rest, which included a lunch-time break where they were served lunch, fruit and juice.

Results

Overall the holiday camp achieved positive results by encouraging a healthy lifestyle and improving the self-confidence levels of the participating children, and their awareness of the risks they could encounter in their environments.

We achieved our overall coaching goal that 90% of the children improved in their sporting skills and ability by the end of the camp. From a survey conducted with the children, the results showed that 96% of the participants felt healthier and 90% had more confidence as a result of the sporting activities of the camp.

Our goal that 85% of the participating children were more aware of the dangers and risks they faced, was exceeded. From a Life Skills Survey conducted with the children 12 years and older, the results showed that 92% were more aware of the risks in their environment; 80% of the children said they learnt new things from the Life Skills coaches; and 96% of the participants said they would remember the topics taught in the life skills sessions.



At a final prize-giving ceremony on the last day of the camp, the older children who participated in the Life Skills lessons received a Certificate of participation. Children who showed good sportsmanship and leadership during the holiday camp also received prizes - including medals, sports equipment, t-shirts and sweet treats.

Challenges

The number of children on the first day of the camp were lower than expected due to transportation and communication challenges with the invited partner organisations (outside of Erica Child and Youth Care Centre). The holiday camp coordinators reported that despite the low numbers, day one proved to be the best day of the camp for improving the life skills of the older children on a more personal, one-on-one basis.

After solutions were found for the transportation and communication challenges experienced on day one of the camp with the partner organisations, the number of children increased for the remaining days of the camp to the desired number of children. Even though this was not part of our original plan, United Through Sport had to provide transportation to some of the partner organisations' children. Being flexible and adaptable to these challenges proved to be a good learning curve for all involved.

Conclusion

The camp was well planned and executed by the energetic team. The fact that the children kept on coming back every day, was also proof that they enjoyed the sessions. The atmosphere was fun and playful during the holiday camp and it was clear that the children enjoyed participating in the sports and games with the United Through Sport team, as well as acquiring important Life Skills lessons to empower them to become young role models in their communities. New friendships were formed by many of the children and coaches, with fond goodbyes on the last day of the camp.

An Imveli Cycling Academy participant playing basketball:



Fun games during the younger children's Life Skills sessions:





Some of the boys bonding with their Life Skillsfacilitator:



One of the beautiful creations of the Arts and Crafts children:





Some of the girls who received Life Skills Certificates:



Some of the children & coaches gather for a group photo on the last day of the camp:

