



Issue 2  
April/May 2008

## Rotary Club

*Megan Reuvers*

Rotarians, Gary Galanos and Monique Labat of Umhlatuzana Rotary, dropped in to pay us a visit in late January.

Again, without fail, they did not arrive empty handed! Boxes upon boxes of exercise books were presented to us which will be of some value in terms of lesson resources.

Furthermore, the drinks break was a treat for everyone too – some goodies from Woolies went down pretty well!

Thank you, Umhlatuzana Rotary, for your continued interest and support.

Publication of  
Talk English

059-714-NPO

*Designed and compiled by  
Megan Reuvers*

# Newsletter



Talk English teachers and students

## We're official!

*Nicole Rimensberger*

2007 was the year when we applied for our NPO (Non-profit Organisation) number from the Department of Social Development. 2008 is off to a great start as our application was accepted and we now have our NPO certificate. This will have many benefits for Talk English, allowing us to pursue fundraising activities, make funding applications and become more established.

At the last Talk English meeting, members voted for a management committee to run the organisation and free up teachers to do what they do best. The following people were elected:

Coordinator: Nicole Rimensberger  
Resources: Sandra Smith  
Treasurer: Fundraiser: Kyla Calder

Shirley Taylor, our ex-administrator, recently moved to East London and Rosemary Gibson, our treasurer is about to leave us for England. We are urgently looking for a new administrator and treasurer. The administrator will be needed every Saturday morning in term-time, but if we can find two it will be every other Saturday, The treasurer should attend committee and Talk English staff meetings once or twice a month, so if anyone can help please contact Nicole or Julie..

## Thank you to our donors

Gail Theunissen and teachers from Addington Primary school. They allow us to use their classrooms and provide us with storage space.

International House for photocopying, resources and recommendation that their CELTA-trained teachers join Talk English as volunteers.

Thanks to Professor Charlotte Mbali, Dr Jane and Chris Skinner, Dennis and Marianne Claude for donating funds to Talk English

## Talk English on the go!

*Julie Douglas*

A committed group of volunteer teachers got Talk English off to a great start in 2008. Currently we teach well over 50 students each week. New ones arrive all the time, which interrupts continuity for teachers. However we decided to take new students into a reception group to teach them basic phonemics, vocabulary and conversation strategies, to play games, teach chants and provide a relaxed environment to build their confidence. It is easier, then, to separate false beginners from true ones, assess their English competence and place them in an appropriate group.

Last year a small group of isiZulu-speaking matric students from Ndwedwe joined our free Saturday classes. Since then we've had a steady addition of South Africans wanting to improve their spoken English. Refugees and South Africans learn together making a richer learning and social experience for all.

In 2007 Talk English was approached to teach a group of women refugees, mostly from DRC and Burundi. Nicole and Jenni designed a needs-based programme, and began teaching in early 2008. Talk English is also providing TEFL-informed teaching on an English language and academic literacy course for first year engineering students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Other projects include writing and communication skills courses to Information Technology honours students, and first and second year students at Vega advertising school. Our teachers have the expertise and experience to help students with English as a second or foreign language, and those disadvantaged by poor schooling.

Talk English teachers are also designing an English communication enhancement programme for township and rural primary school teachers, and a communication, report writing and presentation course for isiZulu-speaking government employees. Teachers are paid for this work and donate between five and ten per cent of their earnings to Talk English funds. As a result we have been able to buy English dictionaries for students, awarded after 5 weeks attendance, and keep stationary and refreshment costs at bay.

Talk English takes place every Saturday morning during the school term from 9 am to 12 am at Addington Primary School

## Resources

*Nicole Rimensberger*

In 2007 we bought Inside Out course books and CDs for Beginners, Elementary, Pre-Intermediate and Intermediate levels. Teachers now have wonderful material to use when planning lessons. Thanks to Cedric Sissing from Adams Campus bookshop for ordering these books and always being happy to discuss a discount!

## Pictures

Top Right: Talk English students at the Christmas party  
Below Right; Matilda receiving her Christmas hamper from Julie

## Christmas Party

*Nicole Rimensberger*

The last lesson for 2007 was our Christmas party for Talk English students and teachers. We held fun elections during the previous week's lesson for winners of categories such as "tallest", "shortest" and "most talkative" (and got everyone thinking about superlatives). "Best singer" was hotly contested on the day by five very talented students, singing in English, French and isiZulu. Kass won over the audience and had everyone singing along to his song.



More serious prizes of "most improved" went to Patrick Mulumba and "best speaker" to Axel. Four beautiful food hampers were also up for grabs in the Talk English lucky draw and delighted the four winners who took them home. After all the action everyone relaxed and got to practice their English over lunch. Students left the class smiling and looking forward to another year of Talk English.



## Student Profile

### *Sandra Smith*

Papy Bashombana Bisimwa has been a regular student at the Talk English Saturday classes since early 2007. He was very keen to be interviewed about his Talk English experience as he felt very positive about the program offered.

He started by saying that when he reached Durban he did not know how to speak English properly because he is from the Democratic Republic of Congo, and French is the spoken language of his country. He was not able to write or read English before coming to classes.

Right from his first lesson he was impressed by the way English was taught and after a few months he was able to communicate in basic English. He is now in his second year and in the most advanced group. Now Papy can read the newspaper and enjoy movies because he can follow the dialogue. He says that people ask him whether he was born in South Africa or Zimbabwe. Papy currently works as a security guard, but his goal is to study to a higher level of education.



## Our Students at Talk English

### *Shirley Taylor*

The majority of our students at Talk English come from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). They speak French as well as other African languages such as Swahili and Lingala. We also have students from Burundi and Rwanda as well as a growing number of Zulu speaking South Africans who wish to improve their English.

The average student is between 20 and 35 and 2007 saw an equal number of men and woman attending classes.

Many of our students have the equivalent of the high school Matric, many have professional diplomas and a few have university degrees. Some students from the DRC were studying in their home country but due to the political situation there, were unable to complete their diplomas and degrees.

As for work, many of our students had skilled jobs back home and worked as teachers, engineers, mechanics, nurses and doctors. Since coming to South Africa, around half of our students have managed to find jobs but mainly in the unskilled sector, and they work as security guards, car guards, cleaners or factory workers.

Many of our students live in Durban with their families or friends and in general they are happy to be living in South Africa. They say that they like the weather here, the fact that they have a job and that South Africa is a peaceful country.

## A Wedding

### *Julie Douglas*

Laurent Bululu, one of our first students, a qualified mechanical, electrical and refrigeration engineer could not practice his profession or study further because he could not speak English. Now he is in partnership with another qualified engineer. They bought a 1970 jalopy which they manage to keep on the road, and provide building, plumbing, electrical and renovation services. They won an ongoing contract to maintain several police stations

Laurent married Wivine in February and I was invited. It was a beautiful occasion. After the ceremony, as the procession entered the car park behind the church, several people began shouting and ululating from one of the overlooking blocks of flats. This rose to a deafening crescendo and continued for several minutes as residents, mostly refugees, in all the high rise blocks around came to their windows and joined the celebration. It was very moving. We wish Laurent and Wivine much happiness in their married life.



### *Talk English Contact Details:*

*Julie Douglas:* +27(0)31-2057753, [jdouglas@netactive.co.za](mailto:jdouglas@netactive.co.za)

*Nicole Rimensberger:* +27 82 696 7538 [nicole.rimensberger@gmail.com](mailto:nicole.rimensberger@gmail.com)