



**ROTARY INTERNATIONAL**

**Group Study Exchange**

**District 7230 (New York/Bermuda)**

**to**

**District 9250 (South Africa, Swaziland, Botswana and Mocambique)**

**May / June, 2003**

**July 21, 2003**

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## Summary

The mission was a big success! It was thoroughly enjoyed and appreciated by all team members and the team leader, and we appeared to be joyously received wherever we went!

Our hosts were hospitable, generous and gracious. They could not do enough for us. We enjoyed being with every one of them, and they appeared to enjoy our company!

Vocational visits were largely concentrated in Pretoria, the only large city in the District, and generally were of superlative quality, including contacts that could never be made in the normal course of travel.

Outside Pretoria we enjoyed exposure to mines deep underground, combine harvesters above ground, factories, schools, clinics, South Africa's unique game parks, and fascinating tribal events.

The team debriefing on the last day exposed a wide sensitivity by team members to the qualities, successes, challenges and paradoxes facing Southern Africa. In this debriefing, and in the subsequent written reports, members expressed their very high degree of satisfaction with several aspects of the mission.

## Committee

The Committee members responsible for this mission were:

District Governor	Bob Benson	
Chairman	Mats Ingemanson	
Secretary	Edgar Cornell	
Members	Wayne Dill	Paul Rothstein
	Chuck Katze	David Sullivan
	Don Lee	Neil O'Connell
	Greg Lynch	Ivan Vosloo
	Jim Romeo	
	Team Leader	Peter Grunthal

## Selection Process

New York applications were solicited from New York District clubs and reviewed by committee members. After consideration, many of the applicants were asked to attend interviews at the Siwanoy Country Club in Westchester County. Team leader applicants were also asked to attend interviews on that day.

Prospective team leaders were interviewed first. After the interviews a leader and an alternate were selected. These were announced, and the team leader and alternate were asked to remain with the Committee and interview the team applicants.

Applicants were interviewed in turn. Then the Committee met and decided which of the candidates should be selected for the team, and who should be alternates. The team finally comprised these individuals together with the Bermudian member, who was selected separately by the Bermudian clubs.

## **Team Members**

Team Leader: Peter F. Grunthal, Mount Kisco Rotary Club  
Alternate: Pauline Augustine, Upper Manhattan Rotary Club  
Members: Katherine Chung  
Ellen Jara  
Hadas Kushnir  
Lila Paul  
Kirk Williams

An original member dropped out, for health reasons, and the alternate joined the team that is listed. The alternate team leader, Pauline Augustine, supported the team in their preparation, but did not undertake the mission itself.

Some biographical details are included in Appendix I.

## **Training Process**

Training was held at the Siwanoy Country Club. It was attended by the team leader and alternate, and by three of the four New York team members. The other member was away by previous arrangement, and the member from Bermuda could not be included.

The District Governor, Bob Benson, gave a presentation on Rotary International, and the constitution and achievements of District 7230.

The South African Consul in New York, Consul Ivan Vosloo, gave an extended presentation on Southern Africa, its population, economy, government, and many of its customs, traditions, and cultural practices. As a Rotarian long involved in Youth Exchange, a past president of a host district Rotary Club, and a knowledgeable diplomat, he gave a large amount of valuable information and made many useful observations and suggestions.

The Committee Secretary, Edgar Cornell, listed several logistical details and requirements for traveling, and made several suggestions regarding travel on a GSE.

The Team Leader, Peter Grunthal, handed out and reviewed a package including logistics and cultural sensitivity notes.

## Coordination with Host District (9250)

The Committee Chairperson, Mats Ingemanson, and later the, Team Leader Peter Grunthal, had email contact with the District 9250 Governor, Doug Thistlewhite, GSE Chairman Andre Brandmuller, and GSE Chairperson-Elect Marj Tunmer, regarding vocational and other “wish list” items, and some other information.

### Itinerary

The itinerary included Pretoria and parts of South Africa, Swaziland and Botswana that fall in District 9250. It is attached in Appendix II.

### Coordinators and Hosts

Our coordinators and hosts all worked hard to provide an excellent experience. The team’s gratitude goes to the following individuals, and the many others who also assisted in making this a fine Exchange:

<b><u>Location</u></b>	<b><u>Coordinator</u></b>	<b><u>Hosts</u></b>
Overall	Doug Thistlewhite Andre Brandmuller Marj Tunmer	
Brits	Francois Pienaar	David and Louise Marshall Ian and Janet Weldhagen Frank and Morganna Seewald
Rustenberg	Cheryl Phillips	Cheryl and Richard Phillips Ronnie and Genny Schild Francois and Adele Pienaar John and Richelle Quinton Petru (and Niels) Botha
Pretoria	Bertie Le Roux	Bertie and Alita Le Roux Wim and Karin Louw Mike and Marie Vlok
Manzini, Swaziland	Kobla Quashie Mfomfo Nkhambule	Harry and Mary Nxumalo Leonard and Kozi Dlamini Sebolela and Dr. Tembo Masina Nomsa Mlangeni Martin Allison

Nelspruit	Joan Schormann	Joan Schormann Heila and Henk Jooste A.P. van Schalkwyk Peter Emery
Sabi Sands		Joan Griessel
Haenertsburg	Linda Holkum	Linda Holkum Andrew Brooke Smith
Pietersburg / Polokwane	Ian McGlashen	Ian and Blondie McGlashen Tini and Vida Eksteen Jimmy and Heather Kirk Eileen and Jack Schofield
Selebi-Phikwe, Botswana	Sandra Hughes	Rose and Danny Smith Phil and Tiny Kerswell Shashi Kumar Dr. Kate Matsepe and Peter Kaszay
Warmbaths / Bela Bela	Joan Griessel	
Middelburg	George Kalell	George and Charmaine Kalell Andre Brandmuller Johan and Adre Stronkhorst Pieter and Natasha Du Plessis

## **Log**

A log was maintained by Team Leader and reported back to New York at approximately weekly intervals. The four reports comprising this log are attached in Appendix III.

## **Post-GSE Reports from Team Members**

Team members were gratified with the generosity of our hosts. Hadas Kushnir said in her report, “ I truly felt like part of the family in each home I stayed and like a treasured friend to everyone we met. The generosity of people far exceeded my expectations. I watched as our hosts made special phone calls and arrangements for us for both vocational and personal reasons and as they put their lives on hold, missing work and time with there families, to spend time with us. I have never met such giving, open, and friendly people and I will carry the memory of this generosity with me all my life.”

Additionally, Hadas thought highly of Rotary members' efforts to help disadvantaged people in their communities. She said, "In each town we traveled to, we were shown schools, orphanages, and other Rotary projects that people had given their time, money, and lives to. I have never seen countries with people more in need of basic resources such as food, homes, and schools with adequate facilities and I have never seen such dedication to raising money for and providing these resources."

Hadas concluded with a comment on the value of the GSE exchange. She said, "It's hard to put down in words what such an experience means to me as an individual. I was given the opportunity to travel to three amazing countries, and to meet and interact with countless interesting and inspirational individuals. This was combined with seeing some of the worst poverty I have ever experienced, bringing me face to face with the realities of life for millions, if not billions, of people on this earth. I was changed forever by this trip, it has opened my eyes to different cultures, taught me about the problems so many people in this world endure, and given me the opportunity to meet and learn from professionals in my field, in a region of the world I hope to one day return and contribute to."

Team members commented on what they learned. Ellen Jara, speaking of human potential said in her report, "There were several important lessons to be learned in Southern Africa, namely that large scale change is possible, that human needs are the same all over the world, and that opening yourself to new ideas is the best way to learn about yourself. South Africa, in particular, has come a long way in reducing the inequalities that existed between whites and blacks..."

Ellen also added, "The second most notable lesson I learned concerns human values. On several occasions, I found myself in conversations with Rotarians that mirrored conversations I have at home. Discussions regarding children, the day to day activities on the job, leisure activities, all reinforced my belief that people hope for the same things in this world – for their families to be happy, their work to be fulfilling and the chance to enjoy the things they love to do."

She added, "... the need for a safe, secure environment was never more apparent. In a land of haves and have-nots, the need to protect personal property is taken to an extreme level in Southern Africa. The iron gates and security systems that exist in every household is a sad but true reflection of the disparity in wealth and the actions that some people will take to increase their material possessions. Again, this is a problem that we are not immune to here in America."

Ellen also explained how this mission was a growth experience for her. She said, "On a personal level, traveling to South Africa has strengthened my confidence in a number of ways. Firstly, my ability to be a spokesperson for the things I believe in was clear with every presentation I gave at the various Rotary meetings. Speaking knowledgeably about public health issues in America and fielding questions from my international audience proved that I can share information that is valuable and important to many other people. Conversely, being in situations that were unfamiliar forced me to move ahead to meet the

challenges head on, and gave me the confidence that I can handle things that may not seem comfortable at first... I am most proud of the way I handled myself as a Rotary GSE team member and as a representative of our country...opinions of Americans are often unflattering, and I hope that through meeting me, many viewpoints will have changed.”

Lila Paul spoke about her overall feelings as follows: “. The trip...left me with vivid impressions of the region that will stay with me forever. My eyes were opened to many of Southern Africa’s societal dilemmas, my short and long term professional views broadened by a newfound understanding of the region’s business setting, my sentiments heightened by the warmth of the people, and my respect for and interest in Rotary International enhanced by the wonderful experience the organization offered me.”

Additionally Lila commented on professional aspects, “In addition to developing a greater understanding of the issues plaguing Southern Africa, GSE made a lasting impact on both my current career as a brand and business strategy consultant and on my longer-term professional ambition to manage a fund that promotes emerging market development. Rotary gave me the opportunity to meet and learn from consultants, financiers, advertisers, and many local business and crafts people.”

Lila also added some warm comments about our hosts, “While all of these societal and vocational experiences in Southern Africa were amazing on their own, my impressions of the region would not be nearly as warm had it not been for the incredible Rotarians we met in each and every location. I was ceaselessly impressed by both their hospitality and the remarkable projects they do for Rotary. Never did I imagine making the friendships I did in Southern Africa. From the moment we entered South Africa we were greeted with open arms, and this enormous hospitality did not waver. Everyone we met went out of their way to show us amazing places, introduce us to people within our professions or interest areas, and make us comfortable in their homes.”

Kirk Williams wrote about the impact of the GSE experience on himself, “This past GSE program is one that I feel will have a tremendous impact on my understanding and awareness of the dynamics of societies and cultures different to that which I have become accustomed to, living in the Western/developed part of the world. I can certainly say that I have been truly enriched by my experience to Southern Africa.”

He commented on some deep impressions: “The real eye opener for me came when we were exposed to the community projects that Rotary Clubs are supporting in their local areas. The effort that has been demonstrated in building classrooms, supplying books and computers and providing meals for the students in rural schools was by far the most interesting aspect of the exchange. We had the opportunity to speak with administrative staff as well as teachers at these schools about the issues facing education in Southern African and they are working to resolve some of the problems. We were given time to interact with the students, which I must add, was great fun, and also participate in a few school projects. As education is key to the continued development and growth of any nation, I was impressed with what Rotary is doing in support of this.”

Kirk concluded his report with his post-mission experience: “By enhancing my awareness, GSE has placed me in a better position to increase others’ knowledge, understanding and awareness of the world outside of Bermuda. Since I have been back from the exchange, I have had the opportunity to speak to my sponsoring club about my experiences to Southern Africa. My “Powerpoint” presentation was acknowledged by all in attendance. Based on that presentation, I have been asked to speak at other Rotary clubs in the near future. In addition to the Rotary Clubs, I recently gave a similar presentation to the Islamic community here in Bermuda and will be giving another to colleagues at the Bank of Bermuda.”

Katherine Chung was gratified with her vocational and related experiences. She said, “The vocational visits helped me to see another side of the country, and truly understand how far it has developed. I learned about businesses in the mining, financial services and healthcare industries and was surprised at how sophisticated some of these operations were.”

Katherine also commented on the energy and effectiveness of the Rotary projects that she saw: “... of all my experiences in Africa, I believe my visits to the poorer, rural areas and the sites of a number of Rotary volunteer projects proved to be the most enlightening. Here I witnessed the best and worst of Africa side by side... I met volunteers who poured their hearts and spirits into improving these communities. I saw the results of these efforts in improved facilities and resources for numerous schools and shelters for orphans. I looked at the faces of the children they helped. I also had the privilege of speaking with teachers who worked alongside these volunteers and were equally determined to make a difference. I felt that the people I met simply felt there was no time to waste being discouraged by the problems, and instead focused all their energies on tackling and solving them.”

Katherine concluded, “I left feeling deeply grateful to the wonderful hosts who shared with me all the things both positive and negative about the country, allowing me to form a balanced and educated picture of South Africa. While I had seen much that was heartbreaking and frustrating, I had also seen many things that were hopeful and uplifting. I met people who were kind, enterprising and determined. I have vivid memories of the bright, eager faces of schoolchildren and their beautiful voices. I left South Africa feeling that it is a strong and vibrant country faced with many difficult challenges, but full of promise.”

The team members’ written reports are attached in Appendix IV.

## **APPENDIX I**

### **Biographies of Team Members**



## TEAM LEADER

### **Peter F. Grunthal**

Born in South Africa, married, 3 adult children, US Citizen, living in Mount Kisco. Adjunct Professor at Fordham University, in the

Department of Economics and Business. Member of Mount Kisco Rotary Club for 4 years, Club Treasurer and Board member for 3 years. He has lived in South Africa, England and the USA. Active member in Mount Kisco environmental issues and Flag Officer, Sheldrake Yacht Club.



### **Katherine Chung**

Born 1976 in the USA of Korean parents, Citizen of USA, living in Manhattan, single. Private Equity Associate at Capital Z

Partners in NY. Johns Hopkins University, 1994 - 1998, Bachelor of Arts in Economics with honors. Volunteer and civic team leader at New York Cares. Spoke on various career-related panels. Enjoys tennis, running, yoga, piano and reading.

*Sponsored by the Rotary club of Staten Island.*



### **Ellen Jara**

Born 1970 in USA, Citizen of USA, living in Brooklyn, NY. Single. Working at Memorial Sloan Kettering Hospital Cancer Center as Project

Coordinator, Breast Cancer Outcomes Project. Master of Public Health (MPH) at Columbia University. Bachelor of Arts Degree, Sociology, at Dickinson College.

*Sponsored by the Rotary Club of New York.*



### **Hadas Kushnir**

Born 1978 in Israel, Citizen of USA, living in Astoria, NY. Single. Working at the City of New York Parks and Recreation Natural Resources

Group as the Grants Coordinator and a Field Ecologist. BA Summa Cum Laude in Environmental Biology from Barnard College of Columbia University, School for Field Studies, Kenya 2000. Has traveled throughout Israel, Egypt, Kenya, Europe and North America. Enjoys photography, art and outdoor activities.

*Sponsored by the Quad Village Rotary Club.*



### **Lila R. Paul**

Born 1978 in USA, Citizen of USA, living in Manhattan, Single, Working at Mercer Management Consulting in Manhattan. Dartmouth

College, 1996 - 2000, BA with high honors in international relations, London School of Economics, England 1998, University de Belgrano, Argentina 1998, Summa Cum Laude, Phi Beta Kappa, Received various meritorious awards. Enjoys spending time with family and friends, travel and jogging.

*Sponsored by the Rotary Club of New York.*



### **Kirk J. Williams**

Born 1972 in Bermuda. Citizen of and living in Bermuda. Married, 2 children. Working at the Bank of Bermuda as Client Account

Supervisor. Studied at Howard University in Washington DC 1991 - 1995, BBA, Bermuda Government & International Companies Education Scholarships, Dean List Award, Graduated Cum Laude, Special Incentive Award. Director of Youth Tech - teaching youth robotics. Enjoys football and reading.

*Sponsored by the Rotary club of Sandy's Bermuda.*

## **APPENDIX II**

### **Itinerary**

# PROPOSED ITINERARY

## WELCOME TO THE GSE TEAM FROM ROTARY DISTRICT 7230 NEW YORK & BERMUDA

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Revised:

5/11/2003

Day	Date	Description	Time	Venue / Stay	Hosts / Contacts	Contact Tel / Cell
Monday	May-05	Team departs New York at	17h55			
Tuesday	May-06	<b>Team Arrives at Jhb International</b> Flight SA 204 <b>Welcome at the Airport</b>	16h15		<b>DG Doug Thistlewhite C</b> <b>GSE Chair</b> <b>Andre Brandmuller</b> & Rep RC Bits	Cell: 083 372 6800 <b>Cell: 082 566 1357</b>
		Depart Airport with Brits Hosts With Brits Hosts at leisure		Home hosting	<b>RC Brits</b> Marj Tunmer	Cell: 083 335 7309
Wednesday	May-07	<b>RC Brits</b> Sun City / Pilanesburg / Braai in evening Hosts to drop Team at Umfula garage to meet Marj et 07h00 for trip to Pilanesburg etc Fellowship & Braai at home of Club Pres with RC Brits Rotarians at	18h00 for 18h30	Home hosting	ditto	
Thursday	May-08	Hosts bring Team to Peter's home with all luggage	08h30		<b>RC Brits</b> Peter Talbot	Cell; 082 552 7840
		Visit RC Brits Projects on the way to meet Rustenburg Hosts RC Brits & RC Rustenburg meet at Magalies Port To be collected by Hosts at Golf club at <b>GSE Team Presentation at RC Rust Kloof</b>	14h00 16h00 18h30 for 19h00	Home hosting	<b>RC Rustenburg Kloof</b> Francois Pienaar	Cell: 082 481 5089

## PROPOSED ITINERARY

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### WELCOME TO THE GSE TEAM FROM ROTARY DISTRICT 7230 NEW YORK & BERMUDA

Day	Date	Description	Time	Venue / Stay	Hosts / Contacts	Contact:Tel/ Cell
Friday	May-09	<b>Rustenburg Clubs</b> Meet at Golf Club at	07h10	Home hosting		
		Morning: <b>Vocational visit to Impala mine at</b>	08h00		John Quinton	Tel; 014-533 2633
		To be collected from Mine at	14h00			
		Afternoon: <b>Vocational:</b>				
		<b>Visit Anglo Platinum Waterfall Smelter at</b>	15h00		Richard Phillips	Cell; 083 321 4204
		<b>Visit Lighthouse Children's Shelter at</b>	16h45		Cheryl Phillips	ditto
		Hosts meet Guests at Golf Club at	17h30			
		Fellowship at Cheryl at	18h30 for 19h00			
<b>Address:</b> 10 Vink Ave, Safari Gardens						
Saturday	May-10	<b>Rustenburg Clubs:</b>				
		Meet at Golf Club with all luggage	07h45			
		Sun City: Tour thro' Palace of the Lost City	10h00		Cheryl Phillips	Cell: 083 321 4204
		Brunch at Sun City			Francois Pienaar	Cell: 082 481 5089
				Home hosting		
		Meet Hosts at Pretoria Old Boys Club at	14h00-14h30		<b>RC Pretoria Hatfield</b>	
		Visit to Loftus Versveldt Stadium to see Rugby game	14h30		Bertie Le Roux	Cell: 082 443 0509
		Meet Hosts at Pretoria Old Boys Club at	17h15		Peter Freeman	Cell: 082 565 5630
			Hosts			
		Dinner & show at the Carousel Casino Complex	18h00		Terry Watkins	Cell: 082 824 9412
		<b>Vagas Revue</b>				
		Team returned to Hosts afterwards	24h00-24h30		Hosts	
Sunday	May-11			Home hosting	<b>RC Pretoria Hatfield</b>	
		Team dropped off at Menlyn Shopping Mall	10h00		Bertie le Roux	Cell; 082 443 0509
		Team collected from Shopping Mall at	13h00		Hosts	
		Braai with RC Pretoria Hatfield & DG Doug	13h00		Memos Kavallineas	Cell: 082 551 1525
		Returned to Hosts for evening at leisure	between 17h00 & 18h00		Hosts	

## PROPOSED ITINERARY

### WELCOME TO THE GSE TEAM FROM ROTARY DISTRICT 7230 NEW YORK & BERMUDA

Day	Date	Description	Time	Venue / Stay	Hosts / Contacts	Contact:Tel/Cell
Monday	May-12	Team meet at Pretoria Old Boys Club <b>Cultural / Historical Tour of Pretoria</b> Voortrekker Monument, Fort Klapperkop, Union Buildings, etc plus Tour through Johannesburg & Soweto Lunch Team returned to Hosts via POBC Evening at leisure with Hosts	08h00 Day 12h00 17h00	Home Hosting	<b>RC Pretoria Hatfield</b> Bertie le Roux Willemien Free  Memos Kavallineas Hosts	Cell: 083 459 2002
Tuesday	May-13	Team meet at Pretoria Old Boys Club Visit School Project: For a work day at the School Team returned to Hosts via POBC <b>GSE Team Presentation at RC Pretoria West 18h30 for 19h00</b> Team to Hosts via POBC	08h00 17h00 21h00	Home Hosting  Pretoria Old Boys Club	<b>RC Pretoria Hatfield</b> <b>RC Silverton</b> Chris Pretorius Hosts Hosts	Cell; 083 505 2016
Wednesday	May-14	Team meet at Pretoria Old Boys Club (time to be confirmed) <b>Vocational: GP Net Breakfast - Centurian - Presentation</b> <b>"Overview of Socio-Health Situation in South Africa"</b>		Home Hosting	<b>RC Pretoria Hatfield</b> Bertie le Roux Dr Johan van Zyl	Tel: 012-643 9800
		<b>Team split for Vocational Visits:</b>				
	a)	<b>Peter Grunthal</b> University of South Africa University of Pretoria	09h00 12h00		Carol Allias	Cell: 082 573 7493
		Prof Nieman Cell: 083 282 7456				

**PROPOSED ITINERARY**

**WELCOME TO THE GSE TEAM FROM ROTARY DISTRICT 7230 NEW YORK & BERMUDA**

Day	Date	Description	Time	Venue/Stay	Hosts / Contacts	Contact Tel / Cell
		<b>b) Ellen Jara</b>				
		1 Military hospital	Maj Carin Scholtz 012-314 0999 09h00		John Sunde	Cell: 082 459 4363
		Medical Mil HQ	Genl Rinus van Rensburg 10h00		ditto	
		Kalafong	11h00		ditto	
		Little Company of Mary	13h00		ditto	
		Social Workers	Tel; 012-452 9400		ditto	
		Dr Eek	14h30		ditto	
		<b>c) Hadas Kushnir</b>				
		Pretoria Zoo	Dr Schoeman Tel: 012-328 326 09h00		Willemien Free	Cell: 083 459 2002
		National Botannical Gardens				
		Me Tshidi Mamamela	Tel: 012-804 3200 14h00		ditto	
		Herbarium & Gardens				
		Iza Kgaugelo	Tel; 012-804 3200 15h00		ditto	
		<b>d) Katherine Chung</b>				
		<b>Kirk Williams</b>				
		<b>Lila Paul</b>				
		Consulting & Financial Services etc	09h00 to 17h00		P. J. Botha	Cell: 082 458 8800
		De Witt Morgan Financial Services	15h00		ditto	
		Team returned to Hosts via POBC	17h00		Hosts	
		<b>GSE Team Presentation at RC Waterkloof at 18h30 for 19h00</b>		St Albans School Cricket Pavillion, Clearwater Rd, Lynnwood Glen		
		Team to Hosts via St Albans	21h00		Hosts	



## PROPOSED ITINERARY

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### WELCOME TO THE GSE TEAM FROM ROTARY DISTRICT 7230 NEW YORK & BERMUDA

Day	Date	Description	Time	Venue / Stay	Hosts / Contacts	Contact: Tel / Cell
Monday	May-19	<b>Swaziland</b> Visit projects of the RC Manzini <b>GSE Team Presentation at RC Manzini</b>	16h45 to 20h00	Home hosting	<b>Swaziland RC Manzini</b>	
Tuesday	May-20	<b>Swaziland</b> Visit Projects of the RC Malkerns Valley <b>GSE Team Presentation at RC Malkerns Valley</b>	18h00 to 19h15	Home hosting	ditto	
Wednesday	May-21	Team departs for Nelspruit through Matsamo Border Gate <b>RC Nelspruit Rotarians to meet Team at the border</b> Time to be arranged		Home hosting	<b>RC Nelspruit</b> Joan Schormann Heila Jooste	Cell: 083 310 7273 cell: 083 628 6470
Thursday	May-22	<b>Nelspruit:</b> Morning: Visit School Project on Joan Schormann Farm  Afternoon; <b>Vocational:</b> Visit to Nelspruit Botannical Gardens Evening: <b>GSE Team Presentation at RC Nelspruit</b>		Home hosting	ditto	

## PROPOSED ITINERARY

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### WELCOME TO THE GSE TEAM FROM ROTARY DISTRICT 7230 NEW YORK & BERMUDA

Day	Date	Description	Time	Venue / Stay	Hosts / Contacts	Contact: Tel/Cell
Friday	May-23	Team to be collected from Nelspruit Hosts (Joan Schormann) for weekend on Game Farm in Sabi Sands area to arrive at Farm before dark			<b>DG Doug &amp; Jenny</b> <b>GSE Chair: Andre Paul van Jaarsveld</b> <b>Joan Griessel</b> Marj Tunmer	<b>Thistlewhite Brandmuller</b>
Saturday	May-24	<b>Game Farm- Sabi Sands-at leisure looking for the big 5</b>			<b>DG Doug &amp; Jenny</b> <b>GSE Chair: Andre Paul van Jaarsveld</b> Joan Griessel Marj Tunmer	
Sunday	May-25	<b>Game Farm-Sabi Sands</b>			ditto	
Monday	May-26	<b>Haenertsburg Hosts collect Team from Game Farm</b> Presentation at RC Haenertsburg		Home hosting	<b>RC Haenertsburg</b> Maurice Stander	Cell: 082 448 9198
Tuesday	May-27	Depart with Haenertsburg Hosts to meet Pietersburg Hosts <b>GSE Team Presentation at RC Capricorn</b> All Clubs invited to be arranged		Home hosting	<b>RC Pietersburg 100</b> Arthur van der Schyff <b>RC Capricorn</b> Ian Mcglashan	Cell; 082 965 6737 Cell: 082 448 9105
Wednesday	May-28	<b>Pietersburg Clubs</b> Day at leisure Evening: Function with Rotactors		Home hosting	ditto	
Thursday	May-29	Depart with Pietersburg Hosts to meet Selebi-Phikwe		Home hosting	<b>RC Selebi-Phikwe</b>	Tel: 261 3372 (o)

Hosts at border

Sandra Hughes

Cell: 72149769

## PROPOSED ITINERARY

### WELCOME TO THE GSE TEAM FROM ROTARY DISTRICT 7230 NEW YORK & BERMUDA

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Day	Date	Description	Time	Venue / Stay	Hosts / Contacts	Contact Tel/ Cell
Friday	May-30	<b>Selebi-Phikwe:</b> Morning: Visit Project School Afternoon: at leisure Evening: Attend joint Function of Selebi-Phikwe & Francistown Clubs		Home hosting	Ditto	
Saturday	May-31	<b>Selebi- Phikwe:</b> At leisure		Home hosting	Ditto	
Sunday	Jun-01	Depart with Selebi-Phikwe Hosts to meet Warmbaths Hosts		Aventura Resort ( mineral baths )	<b>RC Warmbaths</b> Joan Griessel	Cell: 082 875 5258
Monday	Jun-02	<b>Warmbaths</b> Morning: Visit School Project Afternoon: At leisure Evening: RC Warmbaths Induction Dinne <b>GSE Team Presentation</b>		Aventura Resort ( mineral baths)	ditto	
Tuesday	Jun-03	<b>Warmbaths;</b> At leisure		Aventura Resort	ditto	
Wednesday	Jun-04	Depart with Warmbaths Hosts to meet Middelburg Hosts		Home hosting	<b>RC Middelburg</b> Andre Brandmuller	Cell: 082 566 1357
Thursday	Jun-05	<b>Middelburg</b>		Home hosting	ditto	
Friday	Jun-06	<b>Middelburg Hosts take Team to Joh International</b> Team departs Jhb International SA flight 201 Farewell at Airport	20h05		<b>DG Doug</b> <b>GSE Chair</b>	<b>Andre</b> <b>Brandmuller</b>

Saturday Jun-07 Teams arrives New York

07h10

## **APPENDIX III**

### **Mission Log reported by Team Leader Peter Grunthal “en route”**

#### **Report for May 6 – May 11**

May 6.

The Team arrived at Johannesburg International Airport to a rousing welcome by Doug Thistlewhite, Andre Brandmuller, and our hosts. The first sight as we emerged from Customs was a banner – “Rotary in Action!” And this has been an action packed week.

It was the end of the day and we went to our hosts for the evening in the Brits area. A relaxed home-cooked meal and chat with our hosts.

May 7

Our hosts gave us the first day to recover from jet lag, by taking us through the Pilanesburg Game Reserve. This is a large reserve set among rolling hills in the “bushveld” of the Northwestern Province. We drove through this reserve in two vehicles, and were mesmerized by the many species of animal and birds that we passed. Lila was the first to spot some game, a Kudu grazing behind some brush near the side of the road. Perhaps the most awesome was the family of elephants across a pond from us, and the closest experience was with a lone bull elephant that demolished branches off a tree a few yards from our car. But this should not diminish the sight of the many birds at the “hide,” a structure built out on to a lake, and the zebras, giraffes and warthogs that came down to the water for a drink. Katherine hung out of the SUV window excitedly to catch our friendly elephant in full majesty. Doug Dudgeon and Steve Trollope were our guides. Marj Tunmer, the next GSE Chairperson, also accompanied us. Hadas and Steve, the two eco-lovers, chatted enthusiastically with each other throughout the day.

In the evening we experienced our first “braai” or barbeque as it is called in America, at the home of Brits club president Peter Talbot. Steaks and boerewors on the grill, a delicious mildly spiced sausage. Fun-loving and warm hosts and guests.

May 8.

We got to work, visiting four public schools in areas which are populated mainly by black Africans, consisting of the most basic of classroom facilities. A real problem for these schools is that they lack the most basic of facilities, usually having only one water faucet for the entire facility, and having unusable or non-existent toilet facilities. The Brits club is providing toilets to improve sanitation conditions and reduce health

problems. It has also provided upgrades to one of the school buildings, including bars on the windows and doors, so that when computers and other equipment are provided by Rotary, they will be secure. Theft is rampant in this area, because people will steal anything to sell and raise some money.

The pictures attached will show some of these projects, and compare them to a school in a “white” area, which started with the same publicly provided buildings for the bare classrooms, but has been enormously upgraded by parent and Rotary provided funds and manpower.

Transfer to Rustenburg Kloof Rotary Club, President Francois Pienaar presiding over dinner that evening, and the first 7230 presentation.

May 9

A day of remarkable learning and insight. The morning at Impala Platinum Mine, where we togged up in overalls, and descended with John Quinton, Mine Manager, to a depth of 380 meters underground. We encountered the rattling cage as it descended into the mine shaft, the enormity of the engineering effort to create the tunnels that pervade the ore reefs, the mined out stopes, and the penetration of the unmined rock face. As we approached the face we worked our way through ever narrowing tunnels, with only the lamps from the miners’ helmets lighting the way. We clambered over broken ore that had not yet been hauled to the surface, wading through collecting water from the water driven drills, and actually handling the drills themselves, that are used to make holes for explosives that then blast out the rock.

We also learned about mining operations, the history and scope of the exploitation of the platinum reefs in the entire area, and the human resource management issues, including the HIV-Aids education process. The business impact and element of human tragedy from Aids is a major driver of the health related projects. We also covered the extensive environmental protection and restoration efforts.

Ellen had the added bonus that the Mine’s Hospital Administrator joined us for lunch, and answered Ellen’s many questions.

We gained tremendous insight into the human effort involved in the extraction of minerals from mother earth.

In the afternoon we encountered an enormous feat of engineering and metallurgy. We were taken through the massive Anglo-Platinum smelter, the operation of extracting the platinum from the ore mined at Impala. Again the enormity and complexity of the enterprise impressed us as no text book can.

Then a stop at the Lighthouse project, a Rotary assisted orphanage for children of HIV-Aids infected mothers. Our team held the babies in their arms, a moving experience after which one’s feeling for this national tragedy can never be the same.

Dinner at the home of Cheryl and Richard Philips. Bobotie, melktert and koeksusters, national specialties, were on the menu. Hospitable and enjoyable company!

May 10

The team had a lazy day of the sheerest luxury, walking over and through Sun City and the Palace of the Lost City. This is the Las Vegas of South Africa, and they have done a very impressive job. Cheryl Philips took us around, and Francois accompanied us.

We transferred to Pretoria, with Bertie LeRoux of the Pretoria Hatfield Club picking up the next several days of coordination in Pretoria. He took us straight to a rugby game at the famous Loftus Versfeldt Rugby Stadium, where the local Blue Bulls put the Luiperds (Leopards from the Northwest District) to bed! A fast game with many exciting moments.

In the evening we were driven quite a long way to the Hammanskraal area, a former tribal “homeland,” where a casino and entertainment complex had been built. We were treated to dinner and a Las Vegas type revue. This was a music and dance variety show, with several Broadway and Country clips. We finished up in the huge games room with several entertaining moments. Kirk demonstrated his enormous skill on the racetrack simulators and air hockey table!

May 11

We had a briefing on the intensive vocational program that has been arranged for the upcoming week in Pretoria, and then surveyed the largest mall in the Southern Hemisphere – Menlyn Mall. This was followed by a braai at the home of long-time Rotarian Memos Kavallineas, where we enjoyed a variety of fish, including Snoek, the national fish, and two other tasty fish imported from Namibia. We returned for the evening with our hosts.

A sad moment of South African reality – as we returned to our host’s home we got a message that Peter Freeman, President of the Pretoria Hatfield Club, who had joined us for the rugby game, and for the braai, was held up by robbers as he entered his garage after the braai. He had both his cars stolen from him at gunpoint, and several items taken from him, his wife Diana, and their home. Fortunately they were not physically injured. We have been told by several of our hosts that theft is an ever present risk. Virtually all the “white” homes that we have driven by have walls and barbed wire or railings to keep intruders out.

Summary.

The team is well and having fun. We are absorbing large amounts of information, and seeing industrial, social and natural sights that are exceeding our expectations.

The hospitality is warm and generous. We are a happy troupe!

We send our best wishes to District 7230!

## **Report for May 12 - May 17**

May 12

Our host and Coordinator, Bertie le Roux, took us on a tour of Pretoria, South Africa's administrative capital. (The legislature, the country's parliament, is located in Cape Town.)

We started at the Voortrekker Monument, a huge, majestic monument to the Afrikaners, descendants of the Dutch settlers, who decided to leave the Cape after the British occupied it in the early 1800's. Just as the pioneers of America went west, moving the frontier, so too did the Afrikaners courageously move the frontiers North. They used wagons drawn by oxen, somebody always leading on the oxen, from whence came the name "Voortrekkers." Literally, "pulling from the front." The history is one of courage and determination, as they forged a new country out of the Wilderness. The museum inside has many scenes and artifacts of the Great Trek.

From there we went to some of the hills and forts that surround Pretoria, and guarded the city during the Boer War. Excellent views, including the University of South Africa Building, a building large beyond belief, that has 130,000 students on distance learning programs.

We had lunch with our host Memos Kavallineas, at a coffee shop which was much more than a coffee shop, and enjoyed his hospitality again. He joined us on several occasions during the week, partly as official photographer, and he represented the most warm and charming of South African hospitality. We all fell in love with him!

We drove through the attractive city center, through Church Square, with its Dutch Gabled buildings, and other fine architecture. From there to Johannesburg, where we drove along the main roads through the massive Soweto township, famous and infamous for so many reasons.

On the way back we stopped at South African mint's "Coin World," with its museum of coinage, Kruger-rands in abundance, and the opportunity to buy some gold jewelry. (I haven't seen any swinging from the necks of team members!)

That evening we enjoyed the hospitality of our host families, Katherine and Peter with Bertie and Alita le Roux, Hadas and Lila with Mike and Marie Vlok, and Kirk and Ellen with Wim and Karin Louw. We all enjoyed the company and hospitality of these hosts for almost a week, and it is my belief that lasting friendships were made.

May 13

We visited three schools, all of which are supported or will be supported by Rotary. Keith McCusker, veteran Rotarian and past District Governor, was our guide, together with Doug and Em Pretorius. First the Kutumala-Molefi School, where we were amazed at the heavy iron blinds attached to the windows to keep thieves out of the computer room our district helped to sponsor. Despite heavy security, thieves will make extraordinary attempts to steal anything that can be sold, and security has to be very secure. We were treated to some beautiful singing by the children, including a song of tribute to Keith, for all that he has done for the school.

The next stop was the Donkerhoek high school, where the principal, Lourenz van der Westhuizen is trying to improve the education and self esteem of black students. Highly informational, and another musical treat, including a “gum boot dance” traditionally danced by miners at the mine hostels.

The last school we saw was the Kungwini pre-school, where a dynamic and excellent director, Santi . . . . ., showed us over the school, Our team members painted a wall that had been especially prepared for the occasion, and together with some of the children put handprints on the walls together with “Rotary in Action.”

In the evening we met with the Pretoria West Club. I was grateful to Bertie and Albert for the loan of projectors.

May 14

An excellent presentation to start the day, from Dr. Johan van Zyl, on the health care status of South Africa. He dealt with the health status of the country and the several initiatives in place to improve it. It is as complex, but perhaps more difficult than the challenges we face in the US. Very insightful. Dr. van Zyl is the CEO of GPNet, a syndication of 2700 general practitioners.

The next stop was with General Rinus van Rensburg, the Chief Medical Officer of the South African Armed Forces. He is a warm, brilliant individual, who presented us with his view of the major health issues facing the armed forces and the whole country. His engaging manner, and articulate presentation made this an unforgettable experience.

After that the team split up, Hadas going to the Pretoria Zoo and National Botanical Gardens, Ellen going to Kalafong Hospice and Little Company of Mary Social Workers, Kirk, Lila and Katherine going to a meeting of business people, and Peter going to meet Prof. Gideon Niemans in the Department of Economics and Business at the University of Pretoria. We all came away well satisfied with our exposure to these individuals and institutions.

Then the team, with the exception of Hadas who was at the botanical gardens, met with traders at De Witt Morgan, an investment firm, where we saw the financial markets at work.

In the evening we met with the Pretoria Waterkloof Club for dinner, another pleasant experience. It was this group that met after our presentation to conclude arrangements for the District Annual Conference, for which they were responsible.

May 15

We went to the Union Buildings, the stately and beautiful buildings overlooking Pretoria, from which the President, Vice President and Foreign Office work. Thomas Cronje, who works in the Foreign Service, hosted us. We were honored to be taken into areas not open to the general public, including Room 159, where foreign delegations are invited to gather with the President.

After a unique lunch under the trees at Kringe in die Bos, we went to the South African Reserve Bank. We were met by Mr. Callie Hugo, who is responsible for the open market operations of the Bank (Seventy billion Rand per day of the sale and purchase of government fixed income securities). An excellent presentation on the goals of the Bank and how it operates to achieve those goals.

That ended our stay in Pretoria with another hour or so with our hosts.

In the evening we joined the District Conference with a “meet and greet” at the Rietvlei dam around a huge bonfire, with a circular thatched structure to give it great character. We met many of our former hosts, who greeted us warmly, and several other people who wanted to talk us. The openness and warmth of the South Africans is a great gift, and we are basking in it.

May 16

District Conference. Opening Ceremonies. Lunch with Keynote speaker Frank Collins, President’s representative, from the US. GSE Team presentations in the afternoon, where we met the 9250 team again. All went well. In the evening a cabaret singer and dancing, and we all had a lot of fun.

May 17

A day at “The Cradle of Mankind” at Plovers Lake, Kromdraai, in the Krugersdorp area. George Kalell took us to a cave site where numerous fossils and other materials from former eras are being dug. We were accompanied by all the youth exchange students who are currently in this district, 9 in all from various parts of the world.

Our guides were Greg Melville Smith, an actor and story teller of the highest caliber, who entertained us with a hair-raising story from the past, evoking the ancient man that lived

here. Then a paleologist, Christine Steininger, a doctorate student from the US, gave us many insights into the development of humankind, and the evidence found here and in other parts of Africa. The night ended with the gala ball, and night of food, wine, dancing and entertainment.

A great day!

And here ends this report.

The Team sends their best wishes to all the generous Rotarians in District 7230 who have made all of this possible.

### **Report for May 19 - May 27**

May 19

After traveling from Pretoria to Swaziland on May 18, we settled into the town of Manzini, where AG Kobla Quashie coordinated a full and rich programme for us, after sating our hunger with a plateful of King Prawns from Mocambique that would make a Maine lobster nervous, and several other delicacies!

Our hosts were all welcoming, warm and interesting. Peter had the pleasure of staying with Harry and Mary Nxumalo, and Harry opened his life, his and Mary's history, and his views to Peter. Leonard and Kezi Dlamini took care of Ellen, and her regret was that she could not spend more time with them. Kirk stayed with Sibolelo and (Dr.) Tembo Masina, and enjoyed his stay with this welcoming couple, Hadas stayed with Nomsa Mlangeni, a warm and talented person with whom Hadas really wanted to spend more time and Katherine and Lila stayed with Martin Allison, a bachelor who was delighted to have his guests in his home!

Manzini is settled in the hills of this "mountain Kingdom," with beautiful views of mountains and valleys wherever you go. We started in the American Embassy where the Public Relations officer gave us some insights into the challenges that this little Kingdom faces, and how the US is trying to give assistance. After that we spent time with Father Larry McDonnell, being shown the Manzini Rotary projects, which emphasize life skills and vocational skills development. This took in two sites, where we saw both the classroom and workshop environment. Most impressive. Then he took us to an open market where native crafts attracted our close attention and our money!

That evening we joined the Manzini Rotary Club, in the presence of the American deputy Ambassador and his wife, and the Mayor of Manzini. It was a grand evening, but I have to admit that the GSE team showed its weakness when we were asked to sing a national song, and we completely ruined "America the Beautiful" in the presence of His Excellency!

May 20

We were escorted by Representative Mfomfo Nkhambule, a King-appointed Member of Parliament, who was open, honest, amusing, controversial, and generous with his time. He took us to Parliament, where he escorted us to the chambers of the Assembly and the Senate, and explained the processes by which Swaziland is governed. From there he took us to a Rotary project, a pre-school, where it is planned to start educating children at a young age, so that will ultimately become contributing members of society. After an excellent lunch of traditional Swazi food at a modern restaurant in the mountains, we went to a massive dolomite rock, which I believe is known as a dolomite intrusion. This is the second largest of this type in the Southern Hemisphere, a massive mountain –like rock, and the team, full of energy after too long without exercise, went charging half-way up the rock, looking down on yet another beautiful view. Then we went to the “Swazi Candles” factory, where the most beautiful candles are manufactured and sold. And of course, we contributed to the Swazi GNP!

An excellent day!

May 21

We travelled to Nelspruit, where Joan Schormann took over coordination, very ably, and with a flexibility that we appreciated. First stop was a traditional indigenous tribal compound with several huts and local people dressed in traditional garb. We were shown over the whole place, and treated to a feast of ethnic singing and dancing. One dancing warrior noticeably had his eyes on Katherine, and I thought he would pick her up and carry her away. Ellen received two marriage proposals, and Hadas received one very shy one!

In Nelspruit Peter and Ellen stayed with Heila and Henk Jooste. A terrific match of common vocations, Kirk with A P van Schalkwyk, Lila with Peter Emery, and Katherine and Hadas with Joan herself, at her beautiful farm homestead in the most lush gardens.

May 22

We had an enjoyable and actually hard-working morning at the Duberine school at Joan’s farm, where we actually dug holes in the hard ground and planted goal posts for the soccer field. As Kirk and Peter swung the pick axe and shoveled away, I believe we inspired a couple of the school boys to join in with vigor and enthusiasm, because the dream of a soccer field was coming true. Meantime, Hadas joined the women stirring the porridge in the huge cauldron to feed the children, and she was so enthusiastic and effective that one of the women asked her if she would marry her son!

That evening we attended a joint meeting of several clubs in the area, Rotarians coming from miles around. We presented again, and it was a joyous event.

May 23-25

We traveled through large areas of former Bantustans, with their sprawling third world housing, to Sabie Sands. This is a collection of large private game farms immediately adjoining and combined with the Kruger National Park. We went to Arethusa Lodge, a farm that belongs to Joan Griessel, a Warmbaths Rotarian, who will be the next District Secretary, and a very generous hostess.

We stayed in the beautiful traditional bungalows at the lodge, and went out in the large Landrover for game drives for several hours each morning and each evening. We were accompanied by DG Doug Thistlewhite and his wife Jenny, GSE Chairman Andre Brandmuller and Sarah Jane, and incoming Chair Marj Tunmer. It was a happy group.

Joan's farm captured my richest expectations of Africa's glorious landscapes and animal life. Sitting on the verandah one surveys the Sand River, the bush on the opposite bank, and great specimen trees on the grassy plains.

Every so often a herd of elephants, a buffalo, a warthog, a family of giraffes, or a large stork comes to drink at the waterhole on the opposite bank.

Time stands still as elephants emerge slowly from the bush and march majestically to the waterhole. They splash around without hurry or concern, stopping only to chase away the nearby stork. It seems they have done this for time immemorial, and will continue to so forever.

I had heard of the "big five" but could not really comprehend that elephants and rhinos would pass within a few yards of our open Landrover. But they did. We encountered buffalo, lions, rhinos, leopards, and of course the elephants. The latter surrounded the car on three sides, with 15 yards of us, huge bulks, some curious, the mothers watchful. The buffalo strolled by without concern. The old male lion, eight to ten yards from the vehicle, glared at us and then ignored us. The rhinos, in the glare of a night-time spotlight, literally scampered around us, and perhaps the high point of many highlights was the close encounter with the mother leopard and playful cub.

Back at the lodge, around the campfire in the open "boma," we chatted about this visit of a lifetime, memories we will never forget. This was as good as it gets! Thank you, Joan!

May 26

Difficult as it may be to follow an act like that, Haenertsburg is such a beautiful spot in the mountains that we were thrilled to be there. We started at the Sapeko Tea Plantation with spectacular views over miles of tea bushes among the green mountains, lush with vegetation. Our hosts were Andrew Brooke Smith, who hosted Kirk and Peter in his house overlooking the entire estate, and Linda Holkum, who coordinated our visit and hosted Hadas, Katherine, Ellen and Lila.

That evening we joined a meeting of several clubs in the area, at a pub called the “Pot and Plow.’ It was an informal evening, and we all enjoyed many conversations with several Rotarians. We also learned about the “loopdop”, i.e., the drink for the road, the ABF – absolutely bloody final drink for the road, and so on for several versions which become unprintable!

Linda and gave us the run of her farm on May 27, and the team again worked off some energy on a long hike through tea plantations and tall forests. It was glorious.

From there we traveled to Pietersburg – Polokwane, where your team leader hopes to find an internet connection to get this report and all our best wishes to you!

### **Final Log – May 27 - June 6**

Note-taking was a little shaky at times. Therefore a few of the “facts” in this report may be a little wide of the mark, but the essence is the absolute truth.

May 27

After the sweeping mountains and valleys of Haenertsburg and Magoeba’s Kloof, we traveled to Pietersburg where we were met with warmth and hospitality at the beautiful Rotary Club facilities, where more Rotary Banners were flown than at any other place we visited, and where we were pleased to present our own Mount Kisco banner!

Our coordinator in Pietersburg was Ian McGlashen, who with his wife Blondie also hosted Peter. Tini Eksteen, a past GSE Team Leader, and his wife Vida, hosted Kirk, and two days later, with Norman Kirk, drove us all the way to Botswana.

May 28

We walked the Pietersburg Game Reserve. It is difficult to describe the tingling feeling when you walk within 75 yards of three rhinos, your guide testing the winds repeatedly with handfuls of powdery sand, to ensure that we were downwind of the huge wild beasts! Our walk lasted about 3 hours, examining the flora and fauna, exercising our muscles on an excellent hike, and taking in the African bushveld.

On the way back to our hosts we stopped at the Rotary Club – sponsored Riding School for Disabled Children and Adults, where physical exercise, the thrill of riding horses, and the return of self esteem are all accomplished.

This was followed by a pleasant evening with our hosts.

May 29

Norman and Tini drove us all the way on a long but pleasant drive to Selebi-Phikwe in Botswana, a mining town that appeared from the middle of the African bush after hours

of driving through natural country. It was very exciting crossing into Botswana – as Peter said to the joint meeting of the Selebi-Phikwe and Francistown Rotarians – many Americans don't know where Africa is, never mind Botswana – and we loved the T Shirts that Sandra Hughes presented to us – “Where on Earth is Selebi-Phikwe” – we will wear them with pride and the fondest of memories! This was truly deepest Africa for us.

But we arrived at an oasis in this desert, the home and well stocked, humorously decorated bar/family room of Bob and Chrisna Avenell, and a fun-loving group headed by Sandra, who coordinated an excellent two days for us.

Our hosts were Rose and Danny Smith (for Peter), Phil and Tiny Kerswell (Katherine), Shashi and Sindhu Kumar (Kirk), and Kate and Peter Matsape (Lila, Ellen, Hadas)

We visited the Tshipidi Mmadinare Pre-school, a Rotary funded project where the aged and devoted Mr. Ndlovu took us around, describing with great pride what had been built over several years. A most heartwarming sanctuary and school for the area's poorest young children, nearly half orphaned by HIV/aids taking their parents.

We were then honored to be presented to the tribal chief of Mmadinare, whom I expected to be wearing tribal dress and receive us in tribal tradition. But to my surprise he was a western dressed, bespectacled, academic looking man of great dignity and warmth, seated behind a western style desk complete with two telephones and all the accoutrements of a capitalist executive! We enjoyed our short visit!

Then we headed to some traditional tribal huts in the poorer part of town, where Sandra had us visit a family, totally on a “drop-in” basis, where no tourist had gone before. We stepped inside the huts used as kitchen, living quarters, etc. We were engulfed in the intimacy of unexpurgated views of this way of life.

May 30

We visited and descended into the BCL Industries copper and nickel mine at Selebi, a few k's outside the town, and the raison d'être for its existence. Sectional Engineer Kevin Jones took us down, and we were joined by three other miners and engineers for a truly fascinating tour in the bowels of the earth. First by cage down the main shaft to a depth of 250 meters, then down a steep walk and steps to a “subway train” to a level of 450 meters below ground level. We then walked down various tunnels for what seemed a long way past many mined out areas to a working surface at 650 meters (approximately 2000 feet below the surface.)

I was deeply impressed (no pun intended) by the magnitude of the machinery, the engineering, the cables and pipes to carry air, electricity, diesel fuel, communications, and god knows what else to the underground work areas, and the water back to the surface, the underground rock-crusher, the conveyor belt for ore, the dams for water containment, the underground garage and the huge haulage trucks, that all make up this mining miracle. I will never think the same way about copper wire again!

Our engineering and mining friends explained to us the intricacies of ore seams, how they run, and how one exploits them. An excellent learning experience, and a better ride than Disneyland!

The day ended on the east side of the Selebi-Phikwe dam, a huge hydro project, with drinks at sunset and the braai to beat all braais (sorry, South Africa). We were joined by all our hosts and many friends, including the Rotarians who came through for PETS and POETS training the next day. Nobody can imagine how beautiful a sunset it was, over the dam, the large islands silhouetted against the western sky.

It was reported to me that some of our team members and hosts were caught dancing in the bush after the braai ended, but details were never fully disclosed!

June 1 – 2

Bob and Molly Doeser and Sandra Hughes drove us all the way to Elisras, back in South Africa, where Graham Skiple and Pieter Marx picked us up for the journey to Warmbaths. Our host and coordinator here was our old friend Joan Griessel, who had so graciously hosted us at Sabi Sands.

We were booked into the Aventura Hot Mineral Springs resort, where we relaxed for a couple of days, enjoying the mineral pools. We went horseback riding into the Aventura Game Park, riding right by a huge python, two large rhinos, several antelopes, zebra, giraffes and warthogs. What a way to enjoy the animals (and a whiff of danger!)

We attended a black tie induction dinner, with several clubs in attendance, the mayor and his wife present, the new President Graham Shipley being inducted, MC Pieter telling us several “Blondie” jokes, and community service awards being made to about five people who had given of themselves to the community. A grand affair.

June 3

We visited the Spa Park Primary School, where Principal (and Rotarian) John Adams welcomed us. After a special assembly and introductions, our team went into classrooms where they taught for a few minutes and were then mobbed by the children with questions and enthusiasm! It was an excellent school experience for the team, because it involved participation and interaction.

We then visited Huis Talje – House of the Teardrop of God – an institution developed by Joan for severely physically and mentally handicapped children, abandoned by their parents and the world, found in the streets or even rubbish dumps, disabled, neglected, abused. Visiting with, talking to, and touching these unfortunate young children was a heartrending experience.

June 4

After a final luxurious morning at Aventura, we joined Joan at her home for lunch before departing. She has the most beautiful and comfortable home filled with fascinating African works of art, and surrounded by a garden filled with indigenous plants such as cycads and aloes, all in a landscape as beautiful as any botanical gardens, and a sight to behold!

And so, with George Kalell in the driver's seat, to our last stop, Middelburg.

June 5

At last we went to a "black township." This vast area adjoining the old "first world" Middelburg, with around 35,000 people, houses more than 200,000 black Africans, and is called Mhluzi. We visited every type of house, from the squalid, poverty stricken "informal" or squatter shack, with no electricity, water or toilets, to the "semi-formal" housing, not quite as rough, but no stars yet, but having electricity, an outside faucet, and one toilet for every four houses. Then to the formal housing, some smaller than others, with basic facilities provided. We took our time, were shown the houses on a "drop-in basis, unexpurgated, and we came to grips with the realities of third world housing in Southern Africa.

We also visited a "shebeen" or tavern, serving African Beer (bread, malt, sugar, water and some yeast), from a shack, within what I can only call an "informal" yard, and merrymaking was well under way by 11:00a.m. as the patrons attempted to drag our team into some dancing. This one was not for us.

We saw the fruit and vegetable "market" by the roadside, that was pitiful by comparison to the standards that we know, and a barber shop consisting of four poles, a cover, and battery driven hair-clippers!

We saw the shopping centre, a bakery where the baking was done, but not too many loaves around for 200,000 people, a butcher, again with only a limited supply.

Next visit was the highlight of our day, and ranks among the highlights of our entire visit, our mission to the Sangomas, or tribal herbalist, or perhaps, stated less kindly, the witchdoctor. We approached her reception room clapping and chanting rhythmically, to alert her to our arrival, and to call the spirits of our ancestors to be with us. Behind one of the "formal houses" were the two rooms, one where we called on the spirits, and the second a pharmacy filled with her herbal remedies. The first room is carpeted with traditional mat reeds, and the walls hung with African theme "rugs." The room is perhaps 12 feet by 10, and as we entered, the doctor was in full traditional dress, on her knees and bowed down in a position of respect and humility. Lined up in a straight line on her left, in similar dress and posture, were her three students, there to learn her craft and pharmacy.

In the middle of the floor, on the mat reeds, was a space for throwing “the bones” and around this space were a variety of herbs and roots. It was a most colourful affair, with the rich reds of the tribal dress mingling with all the natural colors of the artifacts and medicines.

We knelt down on the opposite side of the mat, and the doctor then called upon the spirits of the ancestors, I don’t know whether it was hers or ours. Then she had a team member throw the “bones” from a dried vegetable shell, and read the team’s future as told by the ancestors, a good and lucky future!

We were then free to ask questions, and learned about the herbs, roots, students, and so forth.

I gazed at this woman and liked what I saw. She has a warm, friendly, kindly motherly, gracious and beautiful face. In the absence of a western doctor I would have no trouble going to her for help. I had no doubt I would get it!

She then took us into her crowded little pharmacy, where she has an amazing collection of herbs collected from the veld and forests both near and far. And I believe they would help a large variety of ailments!

Next we went outside to watch some spiritual dancing to the rhythm of drums beating a persistent call for ancestors to join us and enter into the dancers. It was a truly captivating “happening.”

While we watched the dancing, our team members went into the Sangomas for a personal throwing of the bones and foretelling of the future, individually, privately, and intensely. But that’s another story!

We finished at “Something-from-Nothing,” an entrepreneurial project started by a black woman to create jobs in the township, and produce attractive artifacts from scrap material, anything that can be scrounged from the metal or other scraps that local industries would otherwise throw away. We all hoped this enterprise will bear fruit, and bought something to support it, and to take away.

We finished our day with our final team presentation at a delicious buffet/dinner of the four area Rotary Clubs, at the Middleburg Hoerskool, where our old friend and District 9250 GSE team member Johan Stronkhorst (“Stronkie”) rules. Our dinner was in the school training restaurant, where we were all well fed and well lubricated! Andre Brandmuller (GSE District Chairman) presided in his modest and dignified fashion, and George Kalell, 9250 Team Leader) made an excellent little presentation in support of the GSE program, of which he is a champion. We came away, happily bearing four more banners each!

June 6

The fun never ended! On this, our last day, George took us to the huge farm of Hennie Erichsen, where we rode the massive combine harvesters as they collected corn and processed the cobs at an astonishing rate. These massive machines waded through about 8 rows of corn at a time, picking the cobs off the stalks, removing the grains from the cobs, and delivering them into huge trucks at the rate of close on a hundred acres in a 10 hour day if I got that right! As we chatted after the ride with Hennie, his son Werner, and his nephew Olaf, the world grew smaller as we got to know Hennie. He, too, had been a GSE team member several years ago! I remember thinking, as we stood on 4500 acres of land, not a building between us and the horizon in any direction, the cold wind tugging at our jackets, the combines moving through the mealies, the conversation meaningful and bringing worlds together, that these men are the real men.

From there we went to see the Kalell Mills, learning the process by which the grain from the harvest is cleaned, milled and prepared for market. We came to understand the opportunities and pitfalls that the world commodities markets present to the agricultural community as grain prices change from hour to hour. We learned how the linkage of grain prices to the Chicago Commodities market makes the foreign exchange fluctuations an ever present opportunity and hazard for the farmers and the millers. It takes not only a lot of muscle, but a sound mind and a strong stomach!

Last stop, the Middelburg Rotary Project, an amazing 8 million Rand (US\$ 1 million) purchase of a facility which will house 240 orphans of all races, which means primarily black, large numbers orphaned by HIV/aids. This was funded, under Rotary initiative, by grants from local mining companies. Ongoing annual costs, will be covered to a large extent by government funding for the basics, and for all “extras” by Rotary contributions and other donations, We learned of “The Great Train Race,” an annual event by which the area Rotary Clubs raise large amounts of money for their projects. Competitors racing on foot against a steam train for 32K, from Witbank to Middelburg, and they tell me it’s a close race! A grand event! A colossal project!

We finished with a team debriefing around George’s dining room table, a fine “pootjie” lunch prepared for us by that fine chef and constant contributor Andre Brandmuller, and then sadly we drove away.

## **APPENDIX IV**

### **Reports / Essays submitted by Team Members after the Mission**

#### **1. Hadas Kushnir**

It's hard to say what I expected before embarking on the month-long Rotary International Group Study Exchange Program to District 9250 in Southern Africa. I knew the trip would be an amazing experience both culturally and vocationally, I knew I was traveling to a place like no other I had been to before, and traveling in a way I had never traveled before but nothing could have prepared me for the wonderful people I was about to meet and the incredible experiences I would have in only one short month.

When I look back on the experience, the one thing that strikes me the most is the incredible openness and generosity of our hosts. Not only were people letting us into their homes but they were also going out of their way to make us feel welcome. I truly felt like part of the family in each home I stayed and like a treasured friend to everyone we met. The generosity of people far exceeded my expectations. I watched as our hosts made special phone calls and arrangements for us for both vocational and personal reasons and as they put their lives on hold, missing work and time with their families, to spend time with us. I have never met such giving, open, and friendly people and I will carry the memory of this generosity with me all my life.

The generosity that our hosts showed extended far beyond simply their treatment of the other team members and I, but into many facets of their life including the dedication to helping those less fortunate than themselves. In each town we traveled to, we were shown schools, orphanages, and other Rotary projects that people had given their time, money, and lives to. I have never seen countries with people more in need of basic resources such as food, homes, and schools with adequate facilities and I have never seen such dedication to raising money for and providing these resources. Throughout the time we spent in South Africa, Botswana, and Swaziland, we visited numerous rural schools being helped by local Rotary Clubs. These schools were in need of things as basic as classrooms, bathrooms, and access to running water, to desks, chairs, books, supplies, and computers. The children's needs went beyond the needs of the schools themselves; many children often had little or no food at home and were living on the one meal a day they received in school through feeding schemes set up by local Rotarians. In addition to seeing schools, the team was also taken to two orphanages, one for AIDS orphans and one for severely disabled children, most of who had been abandoned by their parents. Without the dedication of the Rotarians and many other devoted individuals, these children would not be loved and cared for and possibly not even alive.

In regards to my interests and experience in the environmental field, I knew Southern Africa would have a lot to offer me. During the trip, I had the opportunity to

meet with numerous people from different disciplines within my field. Many of the events planned for the team such as going to Game Parks and botanical gardens, related to my career interests and helped to enhance my vocational experience as a whole. In addition, I found that so many people had a deep knowledge of the native habitat, plants, and animals, which was often unrelated to their chosen career, that speaking with almost anyone allowed me to learn about the ecosystems in Southern Africa. Other vocational experiences I had included meeting two nursery owners, a large mammal veterinarian, an environmental consultant and the Environmental Planner/Manager at Impala Platinum Mines. I spent a morning at the Pretoria Zoo, where I met with the Deputy Director of Projects in charge of exhibit design and construction as well as the zoos horticulture, the General Curator in charge of the animals, and the research scientist in charge of the zoo's database. I also had the opportunity to spend time at the National Botanical Garden where I received a tour of the grounds and the herbarium; being a New Yorker it was fascinating to see the unique plants that are indigenous to Southern Africa. In addition to these experiences, I met with the wildlife manager of the Pietersburg Game Reserve who lead the team on a hike through the reserve, explaining the challenges involved with managing both the plants and animals that inhabit the reserve. Lastly, I met with the Chief of the Middleburg Parks Department, who explained how the department operates and gave me a tour of various parks, both recreational and natural. These experiences allowed me to gain a better understanding of the opportunities available within the environmental field and helped me clarify the focus I will pursue in further education.

It's hard to put down in words what such an experience means to me as an individual. I was given the opportunity to travel to three amazing countries, and to meet and interact with countless interesting and inspirational individuals. This was combined with seeing some of the worst poverty I have ever experienced, bringing me face to face with the realities of life for millions, if not billions, of people on this earth. I was changed forever by this trip, it has opened my eyes to different cultures, taught me about the problems so many people in this world endure, and given me the opportunity to meet and learn from professionals in my field, in a region of the world I hope to one day return and contribute to. I can't thank Rotary International enough for creating and sponsoring the GSE program, District 7230 for selecting me to go on this trip, and District 9250 for the incredible hospitality they extended to me and the entire team.

## **2. Ellen Jara**

Remembering the mountains of Swaziland, the baobabs of Botswana, and the bushveld of Southern Africa brings to mind not only a land of great beauty, but also a country in the midst of change that was unthinkable as little as 15 years ago. There were several important lessons to be learned in Southern Africa, namely that large scale change is possible, that human needs are the same all over the world, and that opening yourself to new ideas is the best way to learn about yourself. South Africa, in particular, has come a long way in reducing the inequalities that existed between whites and blacks (I use the

terms “white” and “black” here to describe race as they do in South Africa) during the apartheid era. It has been 10 years since the repeal of apartheid, and although power shifts are occurring, most notably in the government positions that are now held by blacks, this has been at the loss of highly experienced, well qualified employees in the government sector and the private sector. Many of the young South Africans have gone to the UK and the US in order to find work. This has resulted in mismanagement and consequently, unhappiness among the South Africans that are living with the new government. There is hope, however, that with time, education and greater experience, things will improve.

Personally, one of the first things that struck me about Southern Africa is the struggle to change old habits and ways of thinking. It became clear very early in the trip that relationships between whites and blacks are still being reworked and re-evaluated by both parties. White people are dedicated to seeing the black people move ahead. There were numerous instances where Rotarians were helping their black workers open bank accounts. In addition, funding provided by Rotary is allowing rural schools to buy computers and create toilet facilities, advancing the level of education they can provide to their students. And, black people are looking for opportunities to advance. Principals look for innovative ways to find funding through the government. People are opening bank accounts, trying to save money for their loved ones that live far away. And the business-minded are expanding into new areas, selling products and services to a previously non-existent market.

The areas where the need for progress was most apparent was in the segregation of the races and personal relationships. Rarely did I see a black person shopping in a supermarket, living in an area with Rotarians, or simply mingling in areas where whites live and work. In terms of personal interactions, there is a codependency that exists between whites and blacks that is perpetuated by both parties. Although there is an awareness of it, change is difficult. For instance, black workers expect white people to take care of them (supply extra money for cigarettes, replace worn out shoes, provide birthday cakes) and white people take on that role, instead of insisting that people learn for themselves. It is a difficult situation that will only change once black people decide they want “to do it for themselves” and white people supply the capital (money through a minimum wage) for them to do so.

The second most notable lesson I learned concerns human values. On several occasions, I found myself in conversations with Rotarians that mirrored conversations I have at home. Discussions regarding children, the day to day activities on the job, leisure activities, all reinforced my belief that people hope for the same things in this world – for their families to be happy, their work to be fulfilling and the chance to enjoy the things they love to do. I found attitudes towards rules and regulations to be refreshing. South Africans seem less hindered by the legalese that surrounds Americans on any given day. Lastly, the need for a safe, secure environment was never more apparent. In a land of haves and have-nots, the need to protect personal property is taken to an extreme level in Southern Africa. The iron gates and security systems that exist in every household is a sad but true reflection of the disparity in wealth and the actions that some people will take

to increase their material possessions. Again, this is a problem that we are not immune to here in America.

On a personal level, traveling to South Africa has strengthened my confidence in a number of ways. Firstly, my ability to be a spokesperson for the things I believe in was clear with every presentation I gave at the various Rotary meetings. Speaking knowledgeably about public health issues in America and fielding questions from my international audience proved that I can share information that is valuable and important to many other people. Conversely, being in situations that were unfamiliar forced me to move ahead to meet the challenges head on, and gave me the confidence that I can handle things that may not seem comfortable at first. In addition, it has inspired me to look for more opportunities that may not be comfortable for me. It is the only way to grow, as this trip proved. Lastly, I think I am most proud of the way I handled myself as a Rotary GSE team member and as a representative of our country. I am a warm, outgoing person that welcomes interactions with others, welcomes the chance to learn new things and the opportunity to share ideas. Opinions of Americans are often unflattering, and I hope that through meeting me, many viewpoints will have changed.

### **3. Lila Paul**

The group study exchange to southern Africa was a wonderful experience that touched me on many dimensions. Before leaving, I did not know what to expect, as I had never been to the region and was unfamiliar with its peoples, cultures and complex societal issues. The trip, however, left me with vivid impressions of the region that will stay with me forever. My eyes were opened to many of southern Africa's societal dilemmas, my short and long term professional views broadened by a newfound understanding of the region's business setting, my sentiments heightened by the warmth of the people, and my respect for and interest in Rotary International enhanced by the wonderful experience the organization offered me.

The group study exchange introduced me to many of southern Africa's social, economic and political dilemmas and offered the perfect springboard from which I could develop my own perspectives on the issues. Personally, I was most struck by the aftermath of apartheid and transition towards equality and by the vastness of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. It remains difficult for me to imagine life under apartheid and hard for me to believe how recently it was a reality. As I traveled through the region, I was astounded by both the strides that have been made towards greater equality and the enormous feat ahead. Visiting a few mixed schools, experiencing everyday life as a mixed culture (i.e. going to mixed restaurants and bathroom facilities), and hearing about blacks excelling in university and professions makes me believe there is great hope for the country's future. At the same time, though, the difficulties ahead were made clear to me through the ever-present violence and lack of trust in the police and the continued division in many living quarters; the continued existence of Soweto and Mhluzi in Middleburg make me question when South African communities actually will become integrated and further illuminate the vast inequalities between the races.

HIV/AIDS is another heart-wrenching issue for the region. Even after being told how high the infection rate is numerous times, I still cannot fathom the vastness of the illness. It was fascinating to hear people's diverse views on how to deal with the epidemic; from the chief medical officer of South Africa's armed forces who believes efforts should focus on prevention over anti-retroviral treatment to people working in HIV/AIDS homes who treat those already infected and often try to educate and help the infected population.

In addition to developing a greater understanding of the issues plaguing southern Africa, GSE made a lasting impact on both my current career as a brand and business strategy consultant and on my longer-term professional ambition to manage a fund that promotes emerging market development. Rotary gave me the opportunity to meet and learn from consultants, financiers, advertisers, and many local business and crafts people. South Africa is an especially interesting country from an international business and branding perspective since so much change is occurring with the demise of apartheid. Simultaneously, we are seeing many international companies that were not allowed to enter during apartheid begin to establish themselves in the country and a number of South African brands that developed in isolation extend outside to new nations. McDonald's and Kodak for example, which are found all over the world, are just entering South Africa. At the same time South Africa's Steers (a fast food chain) is expanding to Australia, and South African Breweries is becoming a large-scale multinational company through recent purchases including Miller and Birra Peroni.

For my longer-term vocational ambition to develop a fund that invests in emerging markets, GSE informed me about key industries in the region and their political and economic environments and introduced me to many people who could become potential business affiliates. For example, I met people in the mining industry who showed me first hand what mining is all about, taught me where investment opportunities might reside, and educated me on industry regulations for safety, environmental emissions and mine rehabilitation. I also learned about the importance of the textile industry and the impact that the African Growth & Opportunity Act (AGOA), which encourages African countries to build free markets through low/no duty exports to America, has had on international trade. Additionally, I had the opportunity to meet people who make and manage a variety of crafts businesses and look forward to maintaining these relationships as I consider potential investments in the future.

While all of these societal and vocational experiences in southern Africa were amazing on their own, my impressions of the region would not be nearly as warm had it not been for the incredible Rotarians we met in each and every location. I was ceaselessly impressed by both their hospitality and the remarkable projects they do for Rotary. Never did I imagine making the friendships I did in southern Africa. From the moment we entered South Africa we were greeted with open arms, and this enormous hospitality did not waver. Everyone we met went out of their way to show us amazing places, introduce us to people within our professions or interest areas, and make us comfortable in their homes.

This same commitment towards us also was evident in the work they do for Rotary. For example, across the region Rotarians are performing great work at local schools, from setting up feeding schemes to building bathroom facilities and establishing pre-schools. I was particularly impressed with the vocational training programs that have been established in Swaziland, such as the auto repair shop, furniture business and jam factory. Similarly, the HIV/AIDS orphanages were notable, such as the Rustenburg home for babies or Middelburg's soon-to-be-opened facility for kids of all ages.

As I return to my daily life in NYC, I find my mind frequently wandering to memories of Africa and the friends I made there. I think about the vivid constellations in the sky, recall the peacefulness of being on safari in Sabi Sands, and can almost hear the school children singing. I am lucky though, because in addition to the friends I made in distant Africa, I have new friends from my own district with whom I can share these memories. Our team from District 7230 could not have been more impressive, and I am in touch with them almost daily. We reflect on activities we did, people we met, and the fun times we had. Already, we have a reunion scheduled. The group study exchange to southern Africa gave Rotary International a newfound meaning to me and I will forever associate it with wonderful people and projects and a true sense of global community. I am so grateful for the experience Rotary provided me and will carry my GSE memories and the friends I made in Districts 7230 & 9250 with me forever.

#### **4. Kirk Williams**

First and foremost I would like to say a word of thanks to the Rotary Foundation and Rotary International for making the Group Study Exchange Program possible. In addition, I'd like to express my gratitude to District 7230, my sponsoring club Sandys Rotary and the host District 9250. I have had a desire for quite a number of years to be able to travel across the Atlantic Ocean to what many call the Mother land and this GSE program has made that dream and reality.

Unfortunately, due to the fact that I reside in Bermuda and the rest of the team members, as well as the team leader reside in New York, I did not have the pleasure of meeting them until the day I arrive for the District 7230 Conference. The distance between locations also prevented me from participating in the formal orientation process. However, thanks to the power of the Internet, I was fully informed by our team leader, Peter Grunthal, of the series of topics and dialog that took place in my absence. Without actually being there, I was brought up to speed about the GSE Program and our role as a team member in addition to the cultural experience that we would likely encounter while being in the host country. Therefore, I felt very much orientated with out a physical presence. The team also collectively compiled a list of "Rules of Conduct" to be applied to ensure that we not only got along with one another, but also exemplified a positive image as ambassadors of goodwill and understanding for our countries and district.

With all the information that was giving to me prior to departure, there was nothing that could have fully prepared me for the wonderful experience I had during my

exchange to District 9250. We were initially meet by a number of Rotarians, including District Governor Doug Thistlewhite and GSE Chairman Andre Brandmuller, upon our arrival in South Africa. This warm greeting was just the beginning of the exceptional hospitality I received over the period of the exchange. To give us our first taste of Africa, our host opened up the exchange with a fascinating game drive (Safari) to Pilanesburg National Park. This was the first of many safaris. It was here that Peter Grunthal showed his leadership in sighting a leopard, which in contrast, turned out to be what the rest of the group called, a spotted rock. It was there that we given the opportunity to see first hand the South African wildlife in their natural habitat.

The real eye opener for me came when we were exposed to the community projects that Rotary Clubs are supporting in their local areas. The effort that has been demonstrated in building classrooms, supplying books and computers and providing meals for the students in rural schools was by far the most interesting aspect of the exchange. We had the opportunity to speak with administrative staff as well as teachers at these schools about the issues facing education in Southern African and they are working to resolve some of the problems. We were given time to interact with the students, which I must add, was great fun, and also participate in a few school projects. As education is key to the continued development and growth of any nation, I was impressed with what Rotary is doing in support of this.

In addition to the education initiatives taken on by the majority of Rotary Clubs visited, there were some clubs that were involved with disabled/handicapped organizations and foster homes for kids whose parents are infected with the HIV disease. With HIV one of the primary diseases attributed to the number of deaths in Southern Africa, I was intrigued that we were able to sit with the Chief Medical Officer of South Africa's Department of Defense to discuss this topic. Its not every day that one gets to meet and talk with people of his statue. The following is an excerpt taken from a pamphlet highlighting the sensitive of the Aids epidemic "The death and disease caused by HIV/AIDS will be part of our lives for many years to come. With no hope for a cure in sight, teaching our children to respect themselves and others they love, and by providing them with the knowledge and a means to protect them, they may be able to have a future without HIV/AIDS."

Although the cultural experience of this exchange is where my main interest was focused, I was exposed to varied vocational aspects during exchange. As a Fund Accountant working for a local bank in Bermuda, I wasn't expecting to find the exact line of work in Southern Africa. However, I did get the chance to visit an Investment bank and the South African Reserve Bank where we discussed monetary and interest rate factors that are crucial elements for South Africa economic climate. I also had lengthy dialogues with hosts who were in the Banking and Accounting fields in addition to other Rotarian businessmen and women about the economic environment for business in their area.

This past GSE program is one that I feel will have a tremendous impact on my understanding and awareness of the dynamics of societies and cultures different to that

which I have become accustomed to, living in the western/developed part of the world. I can certainly say that I have been truly enriched by my experience to Southern Africa. Through the numerous Rotary Club meetings and presentations, I feel that I have established and hope to maintain strong contact with the many people I have personally come into contact with during the five-week period.

By enhancing my awareness, GSE has placed me in a better position to increase others knowledge, understanding and awareness of the world outside of Bermuda. Since I have been back from the exchange, I have had the opportunity to speak to my sponsoring club about my experiences to Southern Africa. My power point presentation was acknowledged by all in attendance. Based on that presentation, I have been asked to speak at other Rotary clubs in the near future. In addition to the Rotary Clubs, I recently gave a similar presentation to the Islamic community here in Bermuda and will be given another to colleagues at the Bank of Bermuda. Once again, I thank Rotary for selecting me and placing me into a team that included a great group of people who I believe will cherish this experience forever.

## **5. Katherine Chung**

I was told that South Africa is far more developed than many people expect, so I was prepared to see the first-world aspects of the country. Still, I was somewhat surprised when I landed in Johannesburg and saw the buildings, highways and widespread use of the latest electronics and technologies. During the times we spent in the cities or larger towns, I wasn't even certain I had left the U.S.

I was intrigued at how in one country you could see such extremes: modern cities and awe-inspiring untouched natural environments that people travel the world over to see; a developed country and a country suffering from shocking levels of poverty and disease.

The GSE program gave me a unique opportunity to see a bit of each of these things. It enabled me to see South Africa through the eyes of a tourist, a businessperson and a volunteer.

The wonderful part about being a tourist is that you have the chance to see all the things that are most beautiful and wonderful about a country. Still, I never imagined how amazed I would be by the wildlife and nature. It is hard to explain the feeling of awe I felt watching animals in their natural habitats: a pride of lions resting after a kill, a leopard playing with her cub or a hyena cub curiously poking its nose around our vehicle. Because the environment is so different from that of the U.S., I was able to see landscapes that were unlike any I had ever seen.

There were rolling mountains that seemed to stretch endlessly and lush botanical gardens that housed a delightful array of trees and plants. I enjoyed bright stars glittering in a perfectly clear sky on a calm, quiet night. I also absorbed the richness of

the culture in visiting tribes and seeing their villages. Our hosts arranged activities which allowed us to speak with the people in the villages, go inside their homes and, in one case, even meet the chief! All of these experiences have contributed to the lasting memories I will have of the beauty and diversity of the country.

The vocational visits helped me to see another side of the country, and truly understand how far it has developed. I learned about businesses in the mining, financial services and healthcare industries and was surprised at how sophisticated some of these operations were. I also learned about the multitude of issues facing these companies. Some of their objectives were no different than that in any other business: Manage the bottom line and gain market share. However, others were completely different such as how companies should approach the problem of AIDS and educate employees. I gained a better understanding for the challenges of the many export-oriented businesses which are dependent on the economies of developed countries and impacted hugely by currency fluctuations. We were even given the opportunity to meet with a senior member of the Central Bank who provided wonderful insight into their monetary policies and economic objectives. As a result of my vocational experiences, I understood why South Africa is considered a first-world country in many respects, but could also see how the struggle with third-world problems impacts the business and overall economy.

However, of all my experiences in Africa, I believe my visits to the poorer, rural areas and the sites of a number of Rotary volunteer projects proved to be the most enlightening. Here I witnessed the best and worst of Africa side by side. It was heart-wrenching to see the extreme levels of poverty and the many children orphaned by HIV/AIDS. Education is obviously critical to alleviating the problems of poverty and disease, yet government funding for the schools is often pitiful. Very few schools have computers and those that do have difficulty protecting them from thieves. But at the same time, I met volunteers who poured their hearts and spirits into improving these communities. I saw the results of these efforts in improved facilities and resources for numerous schools and shelters for orphans. I looked at the faces of the children they helped. I also had the privilege of speaking with teachers who worked alongside these volunteers and were equally determined to make a difference. I felt that the people I met simply felt there was no time to waste being discouraged by the problems, and instead focused all their energies on tackling and solving them.

These experiences gave me the opportunity to truly appreciate the striking contrasts of the country. I was amazed at seeing a beautiful, rich and developing country still being ravaged by the effects of HIV/AIDS, poverty, illiteracy and apartheid. I saw the extreme dichotomy between the rich and the poor.

I left feeling deeply grateful to the wonderful hosts who shared with me all the things both positive and negative about the country, allowing me to form a balanced and educated picture of South Africa. While I had seen much that was heartbreaking and frustrating, I had also seen many things that were hopeful and uplifting. I met people who were kind, enterprising and determined. I have vivid memories of the bright, eager

faces of schoolchildren and their beautiful voices. I left South Africa feeling that it is a strong and vibrant country faced with many difficult challenges, but full of promise.