

A WORLD OF OPPORTUNITIES



Ayania Wellington '15 helps Lungelo Tyanese with his homework.

BY CHRISTINE YACKEL

When Ivy Green '14 signed up for a community health education class last spring, she had no idea it would lead to a life-altering journey to South Africa. The focus of the class was to develop a curriculum that would help educate communities about specific health problems and provide possible solutions. Green is interested in global health, so when Professor Mary Ann Middlemiss suggested



Professor Mary Ann Middlemiss (center) with Sinoxolo Duda, who is at the top of her class at Ntsika High School, and Nomthandazo Dude.

ed she work on an HIV/AIDS project for an educational and enhancement program called Inkululeko in Grahamstown, South Africa, she jumped at the chance. "As soon as we started collaborating with folks in South Africa by e-mail and Skype, I just knew I had to go there and work with them in person," says Green, a public health major in the David B. Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics who traveled to South Africa as part of a four-week SU Abroad summer program. "I was so excited—I bought my plane ticket in February."

Green is one of the many students who has

benefited from a robust partnership between Inkululeko and Syracuse University that began when Syracuse resident Jason Torreano set out to fulfill his dream of helping black South African youth overcome boundaries of race and class to reach their full potential. In 2006, Torreano volunteered at a school for street children while studying at Rhodes University in Grahamstown, where he soon came to realize that the legacy of apartheid still prevents a huge population of smart, motivated, and capable people from achieving success academically, socioeconomically, or in a whole host of other ways. "It had a profound impact on me," Torreano says. "My worldview completely and utterly changed because it made me acutely aware that my 'whiteness' is a passport to privilege."

CRITICAL CONNECTIONS

Torreano believes passionately that education is the key to upward mobility for black South African youth, so he set out to establish an educational and enhancement program for middle-school children in Grahamstown to help get them through high school and prepare them for the national matriculation exam that determines if they can go on to university. But it wasn't until he made a work-related move to Syracuse in 2010 that Inkululeko—which means "freedom" in the Xhosa language—began to take shape and transition from vision

FACING PAGE
(clockwise from top):

Grahamstown, South Africa

Selunathi Sandi is first in her class at Archie Mbolekwa High School.

Ivy Green '14 enjoys a moment with Inkululeko students (from left) Anesiphso Yako, Nomthandazo Dude, and Anelisa Ranzela.

Professor Timothy Eatman and Inkululeko student Masixole Sodladla.



Syracuse
University and a
South African
youth program
team up to provide
educational
and enrichment
initiatives on two
continents



to reality. Torreano started by accessing free legal services offered by the College of Law's Community Development Law Clinic to help him establish Inkululeko as a nongovernmental organization (NGO). "The students and staff at the law clinic helped me file all of my paperwork with the state and the IRS, and helped me write Inkululeko's bylaws," says Torreano, executive director of Inkululeko. "That alone saved me about \$8,000. They also wrote an employee manual for us and a photo release form."

It was pure happenstance that one day Torreano found himself visiting the Shaw Center for Public and Community Service on campus with his boss, who was looking for mentors for a program at the Center for Community Alternatives in Syracuse where Torreano then worked. With Inkululeko always bubbling in his brain, he contacted the Shaw Center for help, and everything snowballed from there. "When the Shaw Center was launched in 1993, one of our main goals was to serve as a resource for making critical connections between the campus and community," says Pamela Kirwin Heintz '91, G'08, associate vice president and director of the Shaw Center. "Jason Torreano is one of the best examples of a reciprocal relationship with the community that we have had in our 20-year history."

Liz Occhino, then associate director for service learning at the Shaw Center, connected Torreano with Newhouse graphic design professor Sherri Taylor. Students in her spring semester class designed all of Inkululeko's graphics, including letterhead, brochures, business cards, Facebook banners, posters, and invitations, and a Newhouse intern developed the Inkululeko web site as part of her capstone project. Through the Maxwell School, Torreano was matched with a student in a grants-writing course to help him apply for funding for Inkululeko, and public affairs students designed and analyzed surveys about the challenges of receiving an education in South Africa.

Inkululeko's mission is to provide a small group of South African township youth with the skills, support, and guidance they need to attend and succeed in university by challenging the bigotry of low expectations. Torreano and Matt Kellen, Inkululeko's deputy director and curriculum advisor, have designed a two-hour after-school program for 20 boys and girls who were chosen through a rigorous selection process to enroll the most highly motivated students, beginning in grade 8. Torreano wanted to incorporate a health perspective into the curriculum, so

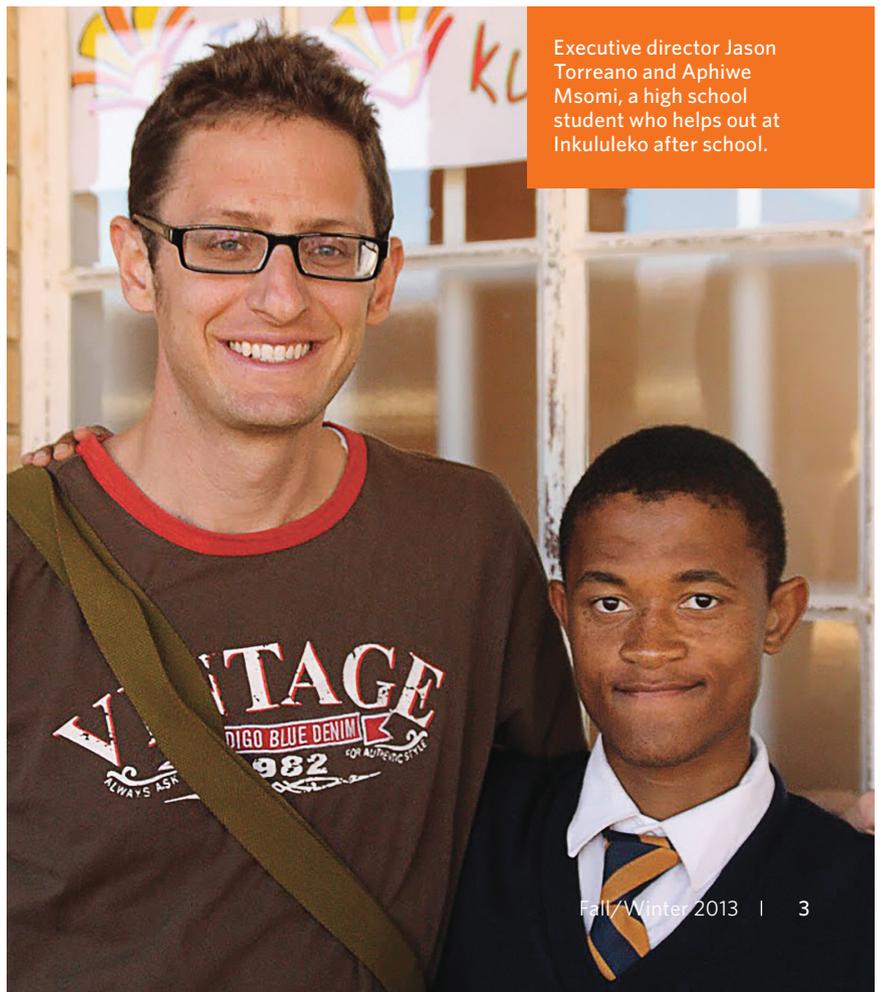


SU students (from left) Anqi Liu '16, Nicole Keler '15, Ayania Wellington '15, Aracely Hernandez G'13, and Ivy Green '14 take a break in the Inkululeko classroom.

Occhino connected him with Professor Middlemiss. "Jason told me he would really like to have a program on HIV/AIDS because it is so prevalent in the area, and all of these children had close family members with the disease," says Middlemiss, who joined the students in South Africa. "Throughout the semester, we commu-

nicated with Matt Kellen and Rhodes University students, and together we developed five lessons for the Inkululeko students on the causes, prevention, and treatment of HIV/AIDS."

Torreano wanted to find a way to engage Syracuse University in a mutually beneficial relationship with Inkululeko, so Occhino put him in touch with Professor G. Thomas Lumpkin in the entrepreneurship and emerging enterprises department at the Whitman School of Management to see if the students in his class could generate some entrepreneurial solutions for engagement opportunities. "They came up with the idea of having a study abroad program that takes SU students to South Africa to work with our Inkululeko students," Torreano says. "What started out as an idea conceived by students in Professor Lumpkin's class became a full-blown SU Abroad program last summer."



Executive director Jason Torreano and Aphwe Msomi, a high school student who helps out at Inkululeko after school.



GLOBAL REACH

Acting on a student's suggestion, Torreano tracked down Tim Eatman, professor of higher education in the School of Education and co-director of the national consortium Imagining America: Artists and Scholars in Public Life, based at SU, to ask if he would agree to be the faculty advisor for the South African study abroad summer program. "This felt to me like one of those exceptional opportunities to expose young people to critical issues, to broaden their

global scope, and to enhance their own personal and professional savvy around a whole set of questions regarding South Africa's pre- and post-apartheid educational system," Eatman says. "I could tell Jason was coming from a real authentic place. I could also tell he's a little bit crazy like me and doesn't take no for an answer."

Eatman signed on and, along with five SU Abroad students, traveled to Grahamstown in June. The students, enrolled in his Socioeconomic Enterprise in Post-Apartheid South Africa course, were required to develop a project that was mutually beneficial for both parties, such as Green's HIV/AIDS curriculum, which she had developed with eight other students in her spring 2013 public health class. School of Education graduate student Aracely Hernandez built her project around improving classroom strategies; two public policy students from the College of Arts and Sciences, Nicole Keler '15 and Anqi Liu '16, focused on gathering data from Inkululeko's applications and surveys to help refine the data collection instruments; and Newhouse student Ayania Wellington '15 interviewed the Inkululeko students and then taught them about storytelling and how to craft videos.

When it came time to implement the HIV/AIDS curriculum, Green knew she didn't have the cultural competency, language skills, or life experience to effectively communicate the lessons to eighth-grade students. "We had to be very sensitive when it came to the issue of sexual health, so after we got to South Africa, Professor Middlemiss and I, in collaboration with Rhodes University students and community facilitators, made changes to the curriculum to ensure the lessons were culturally correct

and age-appropriate," Green says. "In the end it was rewarding because one girl told me she was going to go home and tell her mother what she had learned—I was really proud of that because this kind of thing doesn't normally happen."

Hernandez focused on helping Kellen make the best use of the allotted time he had each afternoon to teach writing, grammar, punctuation, and critical thinking skills. She also did a classroom makeover, creating a more welcoming environment and giving students their own spaces and nameplates. "The time frame

was challenging because I wanted to do so much more," Hernandez says. "We spent all day working on our projects and then spent two hours with the kids in the afternoon. Then we would head back to the hotel and work until midnight, followed by a class discussion with Professor Eatman over a campfire at 2 a.m. But it was all worth it because the students were so appreciative of all we did for them. They wrote me the most amazing thank-you note before I left—it really boosted my confidence as a teacher."

The partnership between Syracuse University and Inkululeko offers students a real-world educational experience with a global reach. In fact, plans are under way for next summer's SU Abroad program with Inkululeko in South Africa.

Torreano says tapping into the University's resources and expertise has made a huge difference in Inkululeko's success. All told, SU has saved the NGO about \$60,000 in legal fees, web design and maintenance, marketing materials, and curriculum development. "There's no way Inkululeko would be this far along without the help of Syracuse University," he says. "Through the Shaw Center's connections to other University resources, we have been able to push initiatives forward in South Africa that would have been delayed because of limited funding. The center is the gateway to what we have found to be the almost limitless possibilities that exist within SU's schools and colleges. I had no affiliation with SU whatsoever, but now I feel a special bond with the University because the Shaw Center rolled out the red carpet for me. They have truly had a tremendous impact on the lives of people half a world away." <<

"What started out as an idea conceived by students in Professor Lumpkin's class became a full-blown study abroad program last summer. — Jason Torreano"

Top left photo: Aracely Hernandez G'13 works with Ayakuxola Silo (left) and Zolani Zweni on a geography lesson.

Top right photo: Nomthandazo Dude (left), Anelisa Ranzela, Anesipho Mantinisi, Anathi Ngesi, and Hoyi Andile in a classroom.