

# Streetscapes News

## *From Jesse...*



Welcome to this month's delightful journey into our very own "playground of the heart." As the year draws to a close and we all feel the weariness of the journey, we're happy to bring you a line-up to lift your spirits. In this issue, we're shining a spotlight on few of the sports, arts, and mindfulness initiatives that are integral to rehabilitation programme.

It's all about striking a balance between sweat and serenity, creativity and calm. Whether your play of choice involves dribbling, doodling or mindful meditation, here is an opportunity to celebrate the unique talents and passions that make Streetscapes extraordinary.

Play, create, and find your Zen - because after all, life is the most enjoyable game we'll ever play.

Jesse

## *Kick off, from the streets to the field*

Streetscapes has harnessed the incredible potential of sports to instill hope, purpose, and a sense of belonging in those who've experienced life on the streets. The team actively competes against Oasis and has even had the opportunity to participate in the Homeless World Cup.

Nozuko, a member of the Streetscapes community, eloquently encapsulates the organization's core vision: "Streetscapes' focus as an NGO is to give homeless people something important to feel a part of and to try to give them some hope, being recognized again in the community so that they can feel part of the community, also being independent again as individuals." This vision goes beyond providing shelter and support; it's about reinstating a sense of identity, pride, and the belief that individuals experiencing homelessness can once again be valued members of society.

This forward-thinking approach extends beyond soccer to a grand ambition: creating homeless leagues in the future through collaboration with other organizations dedicated to helping the homeless.





## *Sicelo Mraji - Peer Support Specialist*

Sicelo Mraji, a former Streetscapes client turned peer supporter, plays a pivotal role in the success of the soccer program. Their goal is to join an 11-a-side league, training for matches on Saturdays, offering a positive and productive way to fill the void experienced on weekends, especially for those engaged in the program.

The value of sports in this community reaches far beyond the soccer pitch. Sicelo emphasizes that soccer brings "dignity, purpose, and work." For many participants, it offers an opportunity to rediscover their talents and recapture the joy of their youth, reigniting belief in their capabilities and boosting confidence while serving as a powerful stress reliever.

Sports has a unifying effect, bringing individuals from diverse backgrounds together, fostering peace, and opening up dialogues, especially among different nationalities. It transcends divisions and reduces crime rates, particularly related to substance abuse, during the hours of play.

Sicelo, now a coach, describes the experience as "happy emotions," inspiring others to find hope and purpose. Streetscapes, through sports, continues to drive positive change, demonstrating that individuals can reclaim their place in society.

Sicelo succinctly sums up the value of sports to the Streetscapes community and the broader street community: "Dignity, purpose, and it brings work. It makes you realize, 'I'm still human, I'm still here. I'm still valuable. I can still be like everybody else.'"

## *A breath of fresh air*

Against the serene forest mural of the Virgin Active Wembley Square yoga studio, the Streetscapes community finds a rare opportunity to connect with their inner selves through the simple act of breathing. It's a setting that stands in stark contrast to the often unforgiving backdrop of life on Cape Town's streets, where survival takes precedence over self-care.

This distinction is more than just aesthetic; it's a poignant reminder to Streetscapes clients that they belong, that they, too, have the right to focus on themselves and to embrace life's gentler aspects. So it's apt that in the heart of this yoga studio, with Table Mountain as their silent witness, they can connect with a sense of belonging, a respite from life's relentless challenges, and nurture their well-being.

Yoga has emerged as one of the Streetscapes community's favorite activities, fostering both physical and emotional well-being. In partnership with the Obs Pasta Kitchen's "Working on Wellness" (WoW) program, these weekly sessions have left a meaningful impact over three years.



Martina, the lead facilitator, underscores their significance: "The purpose of these 1h30min sessions is to create a sense of belonging, to provide a space for deep rest, for beneficiaries to find calm and inner peace, and to offer them a commitment to their personal growth."

This comprehensive class incorporates diverse wellness techniques, such as breathwork, yoga, and meditation. While the yoga sessions have thrived at Virgin Active in Wembley Square for the past year, we're seeking a new venue due to scheduling conflicts, ensuring that this transformative experience continues.

These yoga sessions transcend the realm of physical exercise; they are a source of solace, growth, and renewal for those who partake. To catch a glimpse of the WoW gatherings, you can explore Obs Pasta Kitchen's [Instagram](#), where past activities, including Wednesday classes in Obs, are beautifully showcased.



## ***Support, Don't Punish***

Streetscapes understands the significance of offering clients diverse channels of communication and creative outlets. Partnering with Support Don't Punish proved invaluable as the project aimed to achieve several crucial objectives: sparking conversations, shedding light on the lived experiences of substance users, and promoting acceptance of harm reduction. The results were striking:

- **Art as a Language:** Clients, who often found it challenging to express emotions verbally, discovered the power of art as a medium to communicate their inner struggles effectively.
- **A Journey of Insight:** The creative process unearthed profound experiences from clients' past, facilitating personal growth and self-awareness.



- **Creating Community:** Art sessions unexpectedly fostered camaraderie and connections among clients, even breaking down barriers between those who rarely interacted.
- **An Act of Gratitude:** Clients took immense pride in their artwork and expressed their appreciation by sharing program items with those who supported them on their journey.

Yet, challenges, including budget constraints and an understanding of how to approach sessions with differing levels of artistic proficiency, illuminated potential improvements for future endeavors.

We were pleased to see that the Art Group Therapy Program demonstrated the immense potential of art as a tool for emotional expression and healing. It also emphasized the importance of providing diverse creative outlets. The experience reminded us of the therapeutic significance of art in mental health treatment.





## *Thembi's Gardening Tips*

It's time to take a break from our ever-busy daily lives and connect with nature – because nature isn't just a destination; it's our home. Gardening isn't just about staying physically active, whether you're tending to a vast lawn or nurturing a small herb garden. It also enhances fine motor skills, balance, and endurance. But the benefits go beyond the physical. Gardening's peaceful nature and the satisfaction of nurturing plant growth offer a calming mental escape.

So, why not gather your loved ones and embrace a little dirt therapy? Here are some enjoyable activities to share with friends and family:

- Give your patio or decking a facelift with our vibrant hanging baskets – available at Kuilsriver Farm and Roeland Garden.
- Revamp your flower beds by weeding and adding some leafy greens to enhance the beauty of your blooms. Find a variety of vegetables and herbs at Streetscape Gardens.
- Add character to your rockery garden with our diverse selection of succulents, including 'Blue Chalk Sticks,' 'Portulacaria Afra Aurea,' 'Zwartkop Aeonium,' 'Crassula,' and more.
- Sow wildflowers to entice bees and other pollinators to your garden.
- Clean and refill your bird feeder and bird bath to attract feathered friends.
- Collect interesting leaves and create a charming wall frame.
- Get the kids involved in a nature trail, where they can explore, find bugs, observe plants, and spot wildlife.
- Gather fresh flowers to bring a touch of the outdoors inside your home.



### *If you found this newsletter interesting...*

Please consider passing it on to anyone you think could appreciate gaining a greater insight into the plight of the homeless, and how everyone can become valued, productive members of society. Together, we definitely make a difference.

You can visit our website to be included in our mailing list at [streetscapes.org.za](http://streetscapes.org.za). Or you can email us at: [info@streetscapes.org.za](mailto:info@streetscapes.org.za), and we'll do the rest.

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