

Be-Leaf in Alex

18th July 2011.

Friday morning on the last day of school holidays, 100 schoolchildren from Alex had a Nelson Mandela Day preview, when they participated in the launch of the Be- leaf in Alex project, an initiative of MamaEarth Foundation.

Adele and Ruth arrived at Nobuhle hostel (one of the locations in the Bang Bang Club movie) with 7 young volunteers from the USA, after managing to get through a road block outside Alex, that almost saw the 7 visitors in jail.

The children packed into a double garage that has become the home of Sakhe isizwe Drop in Centre, our partner in Alex. After exchanging ideas about their favorite healthy foods, the origins of life, the nature of energy and the way to keep plants alive, they mimed the process of seeds growing into plants and were ready for action.

Divided into two groups, the younger ones spent an hour doing games and gym while the older ones set up a food garden. They rolled tyres into place, serenaded by the hostel goat herd, filled empty wheelie bins with donated compost, wheeled the bins through a narrow space in the fence into the encamped garden and scooped compost into the tyres. Then they planted 400 seedlings watered them, rinsed the mud from their hands and came back to the center to sing Nkosi Sikalele and eat handfuls of freshly cut up fruit and veges. Charles and Wiseman helped team the children together to tug, dig, shovel and scoop. The American visitors were enthralled with the friendly children and the children left smiling broadly. Now we need to keep the rats at bay and the energy flowing through the system as it did that happy, sunny day.

Many thanks to all who donated and participated, including Earth Worm who donated 10 cubic metres of rich organic compost; Sakata who donated seeds, and garages in Sandton who gave us their discard tyres.

Ruth Rabinowitz (Director of MamaEarth)