

# SUPPORT TO THE SA NAVY COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROGRAMME

During the May 2008 Rotary District conference at Paarl, one of the guest speakers was Rear Admiral Koos Louw, who spoke on the SA Navy Community Outreach Programmes. One of the programmes was a music/band related programme. I noticed from the talk, and talking to Rear Adm Louw after his talk, that there were no French Horns available in the band. I had previously done a French Horn conference and had a whole database of French Horn players internationally and saw this as a opportunity to use my experience and contacts to be able to assist. Rear Adm Louw said that they were desperate for French Horns and mouthpieces. I started by putting out an email to my contacts with the following pictures and a bit on the SA Navy Band project. Here is a piece written by Adm Louw and attached are some photos:

*“Izivunguvungu activities can be summarized as follows: It is a NGO that started in 2001 with objectives to develop children of financially disadvantaged communities in order for them to become role models in their societies. Sailing was originally used as a medium to develop champions – poor but respected for excellent results achieved, in 2007 members of Izivunguvungu were national champions in three different classes. In February 2005 a sub programme with music as the medium to give children in disadvantaged communities alternatives to gangs and drugs. Cdr (ret) Mike Oldham, retired Director of Music of the South African Navy Band, was appointed as programme leader. A humble start with 2 brass instruments expanded to include 100 learners making use of a number of brass instruments and drums donated from Europe. Cdr Oldham visits settlements like Masiphumalele, Red Hill and Ocean View on a daily bases. A band of ± 40 children is now a regular sight at Navy Festivals, Knysna Oyster Festival, Christmas Carol events and Community events throughout the Cape Peninsula.*

*A second music programme was started in Saldanha in May 2008, Mr Willem du Preez retired Head Master and a well known figure in youth brass bands in Cape Town is the programme leader with dramatic results after only two months. In Saldanha as well as Simon’s Town there is a great need for instruments. Saldanha has a special need for French Horns as a number of students have tested for the instruments. Double French Horns (2) will be highly appreciated. Other instruments that are hard to come by are Cornett’s, and Saxophones. Believe it or not Saldanha also needs 1 X Tenor Drum and 1 X Side Drum. Mouth pieces are also required as one instrument can be used by a number of students as long as each one has his own mouth piece.”*

You will notice in the photos there is not a picture of a French Horn in sight although I seem to remember Adm Louw telling me they had 1 between all their bands and teaching programmes. When I asked him what they really needed he said French Horns would be most welcome but they really needed mouth pieces for the children that would be taught to play the French Horn(s).

Something that I had never realised and made sense and has stuck in my memory is that there is a direct correlation between music and mathematics. Part of the music programme is a mathematics programme which is being taught to these children too.

I put this email out on 9 July 2008 and received donations of 4 French Horns (2 in USA 1 in the UK

and 1 in SA), nearly 40 mouth pieces, study notes and a bursary for a deserving child, which has been handed over. I have also set this project up in conjunction with the SA Horn Society. Each donation has been documented with photographs of the donor and their donation and a short story. These photographs have been put into a file for the SA Navy so that these children can appreciate where and who the donations come from. The following is what was handed over and will be built on over time.

I have since had another donation of instruments from the UK. Presently I am waiting to see what this consists of. I am also very proud that Newlands Rotary Club have approved a donation to make up 50 shirts for the band. They are presently being made up (photographs to follow).

My thanks to Robert van Zyl of the SA Horn Society for all his assistance on this project. The bursary is going to be dealt with outside of the SA Navy Outreach Project through the SA Horn Society. A suitable candidate has been identified by Robert van Zyl and being investigated and we will get the donor directly in touch with the candidate with Robert keeping an eye open at this end.

