

## Introduction

In this issue we profile the legal services provided to the residents of Orange Farm, with the assistance of a champion who is dedicated to increasing access to justice, Bricks Mokolo of the Orange Farm Advice Centre. We also profile 2 of our new and exciting projects: the recently launched One-Child-a-Year campaign and the Annual Pro Bono Awards Ceremony to be held in October 2014. Our upcoming legal education workshops are also listed. ●

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# Orange Farm

**O**range Farm is located approximately 45km south of Johannesburg, and was established in the 1980s. According to the official website of the City of Johannesburg, Orange Farm is the most populous informal settlement in the country, with a staggering 350 000 residents. The area lacks basic services in most areas and the roads are a minefield of potholes, with only a few arterial paved roads.

High levels of unemployment and poverty in the area mean that Orange Farm residents are not able to access legal services which are often located some distance away in Johannesburg and Pretoria. The lack of a court in the area also makes access to justice an impossibility for the overwhelming majority of residents.

Yet, through the despair and apparent hopelessness, there shines a beacon of hope. A passionate and committed resident who desires to see his community provided for and included in the many advancements witnessed in areas around them.

## Orange Farm Human Rights Advice Centre

**R**ichard "Bricks" Mokolo, a qualified paralegal and community activist, runs the Orange Farm Human Rights Advice Centre (established in 1996). The Advice Centre, which is partly funded by revenue received from recycling, provides legal services, access to information and rights-based education to the community. Apart from providing legal assistance, the Advice Centre also runs a recycling centre that employs many of the residents in the surrounding community while providing a source of income for community members. The Advice Centre runs a satellite office in Evaton, an area which experiences many of the same problems as Orange Farm.

The Advice Centre deals with matters ranging from matrimonial to property. A common problem experienced in the area is that people lack their basic identification documents. There are also numerous problems relating to the acquiring, registration and quality of RDP homes.

The Advice Centre has a long-standing relationship with ProBono.Org. We approach attorneys who wish to contribute their pro bono hours to assisting clients of the Advice Centre, then link the attorneys with the Advice Centre, thereby enabling clients to access the justice system and other services and departments.



The work being done by Bricks and his dedicated team is invaluable as he provides a much needed service. Their commitment in the face of funding issues and various other obstacles is to be commended and supported by the legal fraternity.

## Interview with Bricks Mokolo

### When did you start at the Advice Centre?

I became involved in about 2008.

### What is your role at the Advice Centre?

I'm a paralegal, providing general advice to Orange Farm and the surrounding communities. I also



facilitate workshops and seminars and actively participate in community radio shows. I am also the coordinator of the Association of Gauteng Advice Offices and I serve on the national executive of the Association of Community Advice Offices SA.

### What kind of work do you do?

My paralegal work mainly focuses on disadvantaged and vulnerable groups

within the community. I work hard at making people aware of their human and legal rights.

### Why do you do this kind of work?

People need advice on their constitutional rights and they have real problems relating to housing, water, sanitation, access to identity and other documents, like birth certificates.

### Tell us a little about yourself?

I see myself as a defender of human rights and I do this independently of any political party. I believe in good leaders who show solidarity but I see so few of them. I think a shepherd stays with his flock, regardless of politics, poverty or other challenges. I believe a good leader stays with his/her community throughout his/her life.

Bricks is a nickname that I got from my brother during my time as a professional soccer player. It means "strength". My wife, Gladys and I have two grown boys and 1 grandson.

### What are your future plans for the Advice Centre?

I would like to extend and grow the Centre and assist other communities in establishing Advice Centres in their areas. I want to provide access to justice by providing legal representation to community members. My focus will be on the promotion of equality, defending human rights and spreading the message that South Africa is not only for the rich. I see myself as a critical thinker who likes to challenge other people and their ideas. That is the reason I have workshops, to change people's pre-conceptions, to clear their heads and to bring them to new insights. If people are open, they will begin to think radically and equality will no longer be an ideal but a reality. ●

## ITSOSENK WOMEN'S PROJECT

**The Itsoseng Women's Project (IWP) was established by Zanele Gladys Mokolo (Bricks' wife) to assist unemployed women in Orange Farm by creating job opportunities through self-help programmes. It also empowers women by providing on-going education and training programmes. It actively strives to promote maximum participation of women in socio-economic programmes.**

IWP has for the past 20 years leased a stand in Orange Farm where it runs a recycling plant, a Day-Care Centre and the Advice Centre. IWP employs 18 members of the community and also provides destitute individuals with a source of income through the recycling activities. The stand does not have any permanent structures or service delivery points, so IWP (with the assistance of the Departments of Social Development and Agriculture and JAM South Africa) erected 3 refurbished containers on the property. Each programme is run and operated from a different container.

The IWP Day-Care Centre, like many other similar Day-Care Centres in Orange Farm, has 65 children (from 0 – 6 years old) in its care and employs 4 child minders, one cook and one gardener. The Department of Social Development is providing the day care programme with subsidised funding, but the small

amount provided only buys food for 36 children and barely covers the salaries of the child minders. The Centre does not get any funding from other sources and most of the parents in the community cannot afford to pay fees.

The IWP Day-Care Centre approached ProBono.Org for assistance and advice on the new lease renewal process implemented by the City of Joburg. The Jhb Property Company (JPC) is a subsidiary of the City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality and is tasked with the management and development of the City's property portfolio. All Day-Care Centres in Orange Farm who have leased property from the JPC on a 5-year lease basis, now need to apply for a renewal of their leases with cumbersome conditions attached, such as a high application fee, various registration forms, increased rentals, and moreover no assurance of renewal.

Sushila Dhever and Neil McKenzie of Fasken Martineau have agreed to assist the IWP Day-Care Centre on a pro bono basis. A meeting has been scheduled with JPC. The aim is to simplify the lease renewal process towards achieving long-term security of tenure for the Centres. This will set a legal precedent for resolving the lease renewal for many other Centres (over 50) and will have a positive impact of the lives and education of over 2 500 children. ●

# ONE-CHILD-A-YEAR CAMPAIGN LAUNCH

**P**roBono.Org has as its mission the provision of free legal services to those members of society that cannot afford private legal fees. Children are one group that particularly need protection, support and proper care, but often face abuse, neglect or maltreatment. They are the members of our society that most frequently have no voice within the legal system.

Over the past year we have become aware of the huge need to provide direct legal assistance and/or representation to children in the courts. As many as 15 cases per day are being dealt with in most Children's Courts. The cases range from abuse, abandonment and trafficking, to the removal of children from unsafe or violent conflict situations. In one instance it was said that two minors were locked in a house for about two weeks without any proper care or access to food. In another matter, a mother was said to have been sexually advertising her minor children online. We have heard reports of social workers selling babies, children being placed back in very abusive or violent situations, children being repeatedly raped or sexually exploited and abused (due to a lack of prosecution) and abandoned to fend for themselves without any proper support or alternative placement. Sometimes the places of safety where children should be protected, are places filled with neglect and danger.

On becoming aware of the enormities of the crisis, ProBono.Org has launched the One-Child-a-Year-Campaign. The aim of the campaign is to find legal representation for children in need by securing the commitment of attorneys and/or advocates to oversee and monitor the entire legal process, thereby ensuring the child's wellbeing. Lawyers need to remain involved for as long as it takes. This means that the lawyer must ensure that if there is a court case, he or she represents the child and the case is properly finalised



in the interests of the child. This could take at least a year, if not longer. The lawyer should monitor the non-legal players who are tasked by law to watch over children, such as social workers, psychologists and family members.

**Lawyers can apply to become pro bono curators (at the High Court) when children are orphaned or for various other reasons have no one to look after their financial, educational and social interests.**

Mediators can ensure that children have their own representatives, so that their voices are heard in family conflict situations. In all circumstances where children are involved in legal proceedings they should be able to have their own independent legal representatives.

To launch the campaign, Pro Bono. Org held a well-attended information-sharing seminar launch on 18 June 2014 to spark interest among attorneys and advocates. A panel of excellent specialist speakers including a Children's Court Magistrate, Michal Johnson (Hogan Lovells SA), Carina du Toit (Centre for Child Law) and Luke Lamprecht (Jhb Child Advocacy Forum); all gave insightful and compelling presentations into the circumstances when legal representation is crucial to ensure that children's rights are protected. The presentations are available on our



website: [www.probono.org.za](http://www.probono.org.za).

ProBono.Org is recruiting attorneys and advocates to commit to taking on these matters. We undertake to secure cases for attorneys and advocates through our close association with the children's courts, NGOs (particularly those that work with children) social workers, health care practitioners and family members. Our task will be to obtain proper instructions, background information and supporting documents to ensure these cases that have merit, and where children are in need of legal support, are taken up by our pro bono lawyers.

We will produce a booklet at the end of every year, highlighting the cases dealt with, the outcomes (or interim outcomes) of the cases, profiling the attorneys and advocates that have represented children and the impact that the campaign is having. In this way, we hope to grow the project into one where thousands of lawyers assist thousands of children to be properly protected and enabled to have their constitutional right to safety and dignity realised. ●

## **Sign up to the One-Child-A-Year Campaign**

Contact Annelie du Plessis  
email: [annelie@probono.org.za](mailto:annelie@probono.org.za)  
tel: 011 339 6080

# ANNUAL PROBONO AWARDS CEREMONY INAUGURAL EVENT

**7 OCTOBER 2014**

**P**roBono.Org will be holding the inaugural Pro Bono Awards Ceremony on 7 October 2014 at the stylish Katy's Palace Bar, Kramerville. The ceremony will pay public tribute to the attorneys, advocates and media who have contributed their time and provided outstanding pro bono work over the past year (2013).

This is the first year we are holding this exciting event, and we intend for it to become an annual opportunity for the legal profession to celebrate their dedication and commitment to pro bono work, and also to encourage greater participation in pro bono work. It is this contribution that promotes the right contained in our Constitution: affording representation to everyone. Poor and marginalised people are able to access justice through the remarkable and committed work of the private legal profession.

Nomination forms, outlining award categories, will be sent out in July 2014 and we would like to encourage all attorneys, advocates and journalists to send in nomination forms.

**PLEASE SAVE THE DATE!!  
7 OCTOBER 2014**

**More details outlining keynote speaker and special guests will be sent out in due course. ●**

# UPCOMING WORKSHOPS

**3 JULY 2014**

**New Rules for Court-Annexed Mediation - Jhb**

The purpose, application and implementation of the new rules for Court-Annexed Mediation, as recently gazetted.

**Presenter:** accredited mediator, Laurie Greyvenstein (Family Justice).

**Thursday 3 July 2014  
17h30 – 19h30**

Light refreshments will be served  
DLA Cliffe Dekker Hofmeyr  
1 Protea Place, cnr Fredman Drive, Sandton  
**RSVP:** Charlene@probono.org.za

**15 JULY 2014**

**Mediation Seminar - Germiston**

An introductory discussion on the role and benefits of using mediation as the first step in conflict management.

**Presenter:** accredited mediator, Advocate Mabel Slabbert

**Tuesday 15 July 2014  
09h30 – 16h00**

Louis Texeria Inc  
1 Jane Lane, Klippoortjie  
Germiston  
**RSVP:** Charlene@probono.org.za

**22 JULY 2014**

**General Law Community Workshop**

Community Outreach Centre, St Mary's, Marianhill  
**Presenter:** ProBono.Org  
**RSVP:** philiswa@probono.org.za



**21 - 25 JULY 2014**

**Seminar for SAPS officers on Sexual Offences Act**

SAPS Training Centre

**Presenter:** Romy Croxford (Barkers Attorneys)

**29 JULY 2014**

**Mediation Seminar – Vaal Triangle**

Seminar for attorneys in the Vaal Triangle

**Presenter:** Advocate Mabel Slabbert  
**RSVP:** Charlene@probono.org.za

**1 AUGUST 2014**

**Labour Law Community workshop**

Community Outreach Centre, St Mary's, Marianhill

**Presenter:** Sanelisiwe Nyasulu (Garlicke & Bousfield)  
**RSVP:** philisiwa@probono.org.za

**13 AUGUST 2014**

**Annual Women's Day event - Jhb**

09h00 – 16h00  
Constitution Hill

**Guest speakers and further details to be advised.**