

FIELD BAND FOUNDATION

By Ziyanda Gysman , programme officer and Portia B. Swartbooi, Dance Tutor

THE BACKGROUND OF THE FIELD BAND FOUNDATION (FBF)

The Field Band Foundation is registered as a Section 21 company (not for gain). It was established in 1997 through a realization that through participation in band activities, disadvantaged young people who might otherwise have little opportunity for constructive recreational activity are taught the advantages of competitiveness, teamwork, discipline and timekeeping. In so doing, the advantages of heightened self-esteem and associated self-confidence are inculcated.

While training in musical instrument playing, movement and dance form the core of the Foundation's activities, band members also receive HIV and Aids peer education, general education in social development, and specific life skills training. Interaction between children from differing racial, linguistic and ethnic groups is facilitated through the holding of national Foundation gatherings and competitions.

By networking with other not-for-profit organisations and learning institutions, the FBF strives to create opportunities that will enrich the experience of its members, broadening their horizons through exchange programs and study grants. The main purpose of the FBF is to offer young people an activity which stimulates their creative abilities and develops these abilities into a positive lifestyle and eventually will allow them access to employment.

The FBF programmes are run at all 24 field band projects in the nine provinces of South Africa and the Grahamstown band has been an avid partaker.



PPC GRAHAMSTOWN FIELD BAND

This band was launched with a bang at the National Arts Festival in 2012 and has enjoyed success since then. The strong leadership team and great support from the sponsors have been vital to the success of the field band. Some highlights for the band in the past year have been an invitation to perform at the Makana Freedom Festival, The President's Award Bronze and Silver Awards ceremonies in Grahamstown and six shows featured in the National Arts Festival Programme 2013

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

The National Championships, which is an annual event, plays an essential role in motivating each of the FBF communities to do its best. Its

main purpose is to introduce a healthy competitive spirit that, in the long term, will raise the standard of the bands and enable them to perform at a high level. The levels attained will go a long way towards sustaining the project with performance fees. The event sets a goal for the regions and serves as an evaluation process for the progress of the various regions and the national body itself. Ultimately, we might even be able to compete internationally.

The event also provides the FBF with an opportunity to invite its sponsors and other supporters to view the past year's work in the various regions. It also gives the Board a chance to assess the progress achieved and to interact with the members of the FBF.

The rules of the Championships are based on Drum Corps International rules. Each band presents an 8 to 10 minute programme which has been given a title, with suitable music and movement appropriate to the theme. The titles and composers of songs to be used must be supplied to the FBF Head Office no later than the end of July. This is to facilitate the obtaining of SAMRO music rights and to have the Cham-

pionships registered in accordance with copyright law. The area used for the presentation must measure 30 metres by 40 metres. All participants in the performance must be 21 years old or younger.

Both South African and international judges are used in the judging system. Scores are totaled to determine the winner at the end of the Championships. In the spirit of the FBF Values, bands will be gracious in victory and graceful in defeat. Project staff will of course set the necessary example.

When the PPC Grahamstown Field Band took part in the National Championships held at the Bidvest Wanderers Stadium, Johannesburg on 27 & 28 September 2013, 85 youth members of the PPC Grahamstown Field Band were selected to attend the National Championships and were accompanied by 7 members of staff and 12 Chaperones. Accommodation and transport costs for all bands attending this event was kindly donated by the Department of Arts and Culture.

The PPC Grahamstown Field Band won 5 trophies in total, and was the first runner up in





the 1st Division (Bands younger than 3 years). A 1st place trophy was won by the percussion section with 2nd place trophies in the brass, pit percussion and colour guard sections.

PORTIA B. SWAARTBOOI

Portia started dancing in Fikizolo Primary School in Grahamstown where she joined the group Amaphiko Township Dancers and was Ballet Dancing and dancing Traditional Dance. Portia then moved on to Nathaniel Nyaluza High School where she started teaching dance to the younger members of the Amaphiko Township Dancers. This also afforded her the opportunity to work with Ubom Theatre Company as a dancer, after which she then joined

First Physical Theatre Company for a period of one year.

In June 2012, when the Grahamstown Field Band was launched, Portia was recruited as a Dance Tutor for the Field Band Foundation.

In June 2014, she was chosen to travel with the Field Band Foundation National Ensemble on a tour of Belgium and Norway for a period of one month. This was a good opportunity for Portia as she had never travelled abroad. She gained a lot of experience working with different people from different areas in South Africa and then presenting the work in overseas. The highlight of the trip for Portia was the Norwegian Tattoo.