

Streetscapes News

From Jesse...



Dear Readers,

Welcome to a special edition of the Streetscapes newsletter! While we often showcase our development programmes, this issue takes a bold step forward, focusing on what's next, and the need to think of sustainable livelihoods for our service clients.

We don't just want to provide a temporary fix; we aim to be a true springboard into opportunity. Our mission is to help clients build work readiness and secure meaningful employment.

We've had to be inventive in a city like Cape Town, where jobs are scarce. From launching creative social enterprises to forging partnerships with big and small businesses and resident associations, we are doing all we can to generate work opportunities.

In this issue, you'll discover how these efforts are opening doors and learn about the amazing partners who walk this journey with us.

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who shares in our vision and supports our clients' growth and success.

Jesse

Waste not: Restaurant scraps become jobs and compost

Streetscapes' composting venture addresses two critical issues: the environmental impact of food waste and the need for meaningful employment for clients transitioning out of homelessness.

The process is straightforward yet effective. Participating restaurants like New York Bagel and Nourished separate their organic waste, which Streetscapes collects for composting. The result is high-quality compost used for growing vegetables and sold to local gardeners and businesses.

Harold Tessendorf, a professor at Mercer University who brings students annually for the Mercer on Mission programme, was impressed by the initiative during his recent visit.



"It's wonderful to see the circular economy in process at the local level," he noted. "I'm looking forward to seeing their progress when we visit again in 2025."

Recognising the project's potential, Harold suggested an additional revenue stream: selling the compost at Streetscapes' market. "The quality of this compost is excellent," he observed. "There's a real opportunity here to expand the project's impact and sustainability."

This suggestion from Harold has opened up new possibilities for the project. Not only does it provide another avenue for income, but it also connects the composting initiative directly with local gardeners and community members who visit the Streetscapes market.

The environmental impact is significant. In just a few months, the project has diverted nearly five tons of organic waste from landfills. But the benefits extend beyond waste reduction. Alfonso, who oversees the composting process, explains: "Different waste types like coffee grounds or citrus peels break down differently, but the mix we've developed is incredibly potent. We're creating a valuable product that helps grow more food."

The project aligns perfectly with Streetscapes' "Pathways to Work" programme, offering valuable, long-term opportunities for clients. As Wilma points out, "It's one thing to learn a skill, but another to work in a professional environment."

Looking ahead, the team is excited about the growth potential. "My dream is to do this so successfully that other restaurants in the city will want to join in," Wilma enthuses. With support from partners like Mercer, who suggested building capacity into next year, the project is poised for sustainable expansion.

As the composting project continues to flourish, it stands as a testament to what's possible when social enterprise meets environmental stewardship. It's not just about reducing waste or creating jobs—it's about nurturing a more sustainable and inclusive community.



Alfonzo Peterson: A Journey with Streetscapes

Authored by:
Abenathi Mabhexa & Lerato Mndela

Alfonzo Peterson, a 39-year-old male, has been on a transformative journey with Streetscapes since August 2023.

His narrative of perseverance and resilience began with a challenging upbringing. After the early loss of his mother, he was raised by his beloved grandmother, who frequently warned him that life would become more difficult in her absence—a sentiment that proved to be all too accurate following her passing.

After his grandmother's death, Alfonzo lived with his uncle, aunt, and their children. Despite being employed, the family dynamics made it increasingly challenging for him to remain there.

Subsequently, he found himself homeless, spending time on the streets, before attempting to reconnect with his uncle, who lived in Woodstock. However, the situation there was also strained.

Facing significant adversities, Alfonzo relocated to Salt River, where he found employment with a cleaning company servicing various locations, including markets and supermarkets. During this period, he also took on additional work at Essential.

Following a time of instability, Alfonzo secured a shack in Walmer Estate, Woodstock, located directly opposite the mountains. However, when his cleaning contract ended, he found himself searching for new opportunities once again.

This search led Alfonzo to West Street, where he attended a job interview and was fortunate to receive a one-year contract. During this pivotal moment, he was introduced to Streetscapes, which provided him with essential housing support. Recognizing a valuable opportunity for a fresh start, Alfonzo committed to saving his earnings at Streetscapes to eventually secure a place of his own.



Demonstrating remarkable dedication, Alfonzo worked consistently, engaging actively in various programs offered in Streetscapes, including recovery groups, men's groups, counselling, gender-based violence (GBV) groups, social development workshops, etc.

His commitment to personal growth and self-improvement did not go unnoticed; within a few months, he was promoted to Assistant Supervisor at the Vredehoek site due to his consistent attendance and exemplary behaviour.

By late 2023, Alfonzo was transferred to the Trafalgar site, where he continues to work diligently. His passion for gardening, instilled in him by his grandparents during his childhood, has remained a cornerstone of his life. Reflecting on his journey, Alfonzo expresses immense pride in his progress and transformation.

Today, Alfonzo successfully rents his home in Delft, feeling a profound sense of gratitude toward Streetscapes for significantly improving his life. Earlier this year, he proposed an innovative idea to develop compost within Streetscapes, which has since become a cornerstone of a new social enterprise initiative.

By sourcing food waste from New York Bagel and Nourish'd restaurant, Alfonzo has transformed potential waste into rich compost, ensuring that food waste does not end up in landfills.

This initiative not only assists these restaurants in managing their waste but also generates income for Streetscapes. The compost is sold to those needing it for planting, further supporting local gardening efforts and enhancing community sustainability, while also helping to cover staffing costs and further the organization's mission.

Alfonzo's role as the master compost maker exemplifies his dedication to sustainability and community growth. His work contributes not only to environmental sustainability but also to Streetscapes' "Pathways to Job Creation" initiative. Through special support partners, Streetscapes has been creating much-needed job opportunities and job readiness programs, effectively transitioning clients from homelessness to independent living.



Clean Streets: Public Toilets Project Expands

Project growth and impact:

The project has seen significant expansion since its inception:

- Started with 2 sites in June 2022
- Now operates 5 sites across Cape Town
- 3 sites open 365 days a year, 7am to 11pm
- 2 sites operate Monday to Friday, 7am to 5pm

This growth has created employment opportunities for 19 Streetscapes programme graduates, providing them with valuable work experience and skills training.

Kally Benito emphasises, "The public toilet project has become a vital part of our urban management efforts. Our partnership with Streetscapes has been instrumental in ensuring these facilities are run efficiently while also creating meaningful work opportunities for individuals from marginalized communities."

More than just toilets:

The project's impact extends beyond providing clean facilities. It's become a cornerstone of urban management and social upliftment in Cape Town:

- Meeting critical needs: Provides clean, accessible sanitation in high-traffic areas
- Job creation: Offers employment to individuals recovering from homelessness and substance abuse
- Skill development: Provides work experience and training for programme participants
- Community integration: Helps marginalised individuals reintegrate into the workforce

"We are proud of how this project has evolved, thanks to Streetscapes' dedication to integrating social upliftment into urban management," Kally adds.



Leadership and management:

Rhameez Jansen, a graduate of the Streetscapes programme, oversees the day-to-day operations. As Area Supervisor, Rhameez manages all five sites, ensuring they're well-maintained and properly staffed.

Rhameez has been promoted from programme participant to project leader since his involvement. His role includes coordinating with CCID-Sanitech for regular cleaning and maintenance, managing supplies, and supervising staff across all locations.

The success of this initiative has caught the attention of city officials. With potential funding from the Mayoral office on the horizon, there's hope for further expansion and improvement of these vital services.

Kally concludes, "This project has not only met the critical need for clean and accessible sanitation facilities in the CBD but has also created a lasting impact on our community. We look forward to its continued growth and success."



Revolutionising Laundry! Clean Clothes, Clean planet

Streetscapes' Eco Laundry is a shining example of sustainable practices and social empowerment. The facility uses an innovative rainwater collection and purification system, ensuring water efficiency in a drought-prone region.

Key features:

- Rainwater collection and purification system
- Daily water quality checks
- Services for both homeless clients and walk-in customers
- Affordable rates: R20 per kilogram of laundry
- Hot showers are available for homeless individuals



Recent improvements:

- The addition of energy-efficient tumble dryers
- Introduction of steam ironing services
- Revised pricing structure
- Expanded operating hours: 7:30 AM to 3:30 PM daily

The project's growth has been guided by valuable input from partners. Mercer University's Harold Tessendorf and Stephanie Morris, along with students from the Georgia-based university, recently visited to review and analyze Streetscapes' social enterprise initiatives. Their recommendations have been instrumental in pushing the Eco Laundry towards financial sustainability.

Creating Opportunities:

The Eco Laundry is a cornerstone of Streetscapes' "Pathways to Job Creation" programme. It provides essential job readiness skills and work experience for individuals transitioning from homelessness to independent living.

Tarren Faro's success in managing the laundry demonstrates the project's impact. Her story of personal growth and professional development exemplifies the transformative power of such initiatives.

Looking ahead, Streetscapes plans to expand the Eco Laundry to a new site in Vredehoek, further increasing its capacity to serve the community and create job opportunities.

As Stephanie notes, "Tarren's success in operating the laundry service is inspiring! Well done Tarren! I am honoured that I had the opportunity to see the incredible work of Streetscapes in person."

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A Journey of Resilience: Tarren Faro's Transformation through Streetscapes

Authored by:

Abenathi Mabhexa & Lerato Mndela

Meet Tarren Faro, a 36-year-old mother of four whose life story is a testament to resilience and hope. Tarren faced unimaginable challenges from a young age.

At just 16, she married and soon became a devoted mother. Tragically, her husband passed away when he was only 23 years old, leaving her to navigate the complexities of grief and financial instability. After his death, Tarren experienced painful conflicts over his estate, ultimately being forced from their home.

During this overwhelming time, Tarren met Ester, a kind-hearted woman who offered her and her children a place to stay.

Although this support was invaluable, it was temporary, and soon Tarren found herself living on the streets, searching for shelter wherever she could often outside police stations or anywhere safe. In her vulnerability, she became involved with a refugee who, unfortunately, only added to her struggles through abuse.



Tarren's journey with Streetscapes began when she met a lady named Khosi, who referred her to the organization.

Upon arriving, the staff were surprised by her vitality and resilience, despite her difficult circumstances. They welcomed her into their community and offered her an opportunity to work in their garden.

However, the physical toll of the work was exhausting, and she soon transitioned to their laundry service on Roeland Street, where she has been employed for the past year.

At Streetscapes, Tarren has found mentors who have guided her journey, including Mamzoli, who has provided motherly support, and social worker Anitta, who has been instrumental in her progress. Tarren is dedicated to reclaiming her role as a mother, working diligently to reunite with her children, who are currently under the care of social services.

Over her two-year journey with Streetscapes, Tarren has participated in valuable programs, including counselling and support groups, although managing the laundry's demands has limited her attendance. Nevertheless, her passion lies in food services; she speaks fondly of kitchens as her pride and joy.

Streetscapes provides laundry services to the homeless community, utilizing a sustainable water purification process. Rainwater is collected, and when it becomes dirty, it is directed back into a tank, where it undergoes purification before being reused. Staff diligently checks the water quality daily, ensuring cleanliness.

The facility not only offers laundry services for R20 per kilogram but also provides showers equipped with hot water for the homeless, utilizing the same rainwater system. This year, they even upgraded their operations by purchasing a tumble dryer to enhance their services.



Now, residing in Delft, Tarren's life has transformed. Streetscapes initially provided her housing in Observatory for six months when she was a newcomer at Streetscapes, after which she secured her residence.

The laundry operates daily from 7:30 AM to 3:30 PM, serving both homeless clients and walk-in customers. With plans for future expansion to a new site in Vredehoek, Streetscapes continues to evolve and provide critical services.

Tarren emphasizes the importance of social enterprise initiatives that support not only paying customers but also those experiencing homelessness.

She is profoundly grateful to Streetscapes for changing her life for the better. Through their Pathways to Job Creation program, Tarren has developed job readiness skills that have empowered her transition from homelessness to independent living.

With an undeniable passion for life and gratitude for her experiences, Tarren Faro's journey illustrates the incredible impact of Streetscapes and their commitment to creating needed job opportunities and fostering a sense of community among those in transition.

Her story is a powerful reminder of the strength of the human spirit and the profound difference that support and guidance can make.



Fresh Opportunities at Fresh Solutions

Jenine's partnership with Streetscapes began unexpectedly. "It was during a day outing with my brother, Gerhard Le Roux, who's the founder of #SummitForStreetscapes," she recalls. "He spoke passionately about the incredible work that Streetscapes does, which inspired me to reach out and explore how we could collaborate."

As a key figure at Fresh Solutions, a company that packages fresh produce for leading retailers, Jenine saw an opportunity to make a difference. "The initial thought was to replace our reliance on labour brokers by employing Streetscapes agents as casual workers in our pack house facility," she explains.

The impact of this decision went beyond just providing jobs. Jenine was particularly moved by one Streetscapes client's story. "In conversations with Andrew, I was also introduced to Fiona's story.

Her resilience deeply moved me, and I immediately felt she could serve as an incredible role model for our team," Jenine shares. "Many of our blue-collar workers face similar challenges with living conditions, and some struggle with alcohol addiction or the pressures of gang influence. I truly believe that Fiona's motivational talks, if delivered regularly, would inspire them to strive for better futures for themselves and their families."

he partnership continues to evolve, with new opportunities on the horizon. "Currently, we are in discussions about offering training for Streetscapes agents by allowing them to shadow forklift drivers, which would give them practical experience and a pathway to permanent employment,"

Jenine explains "Additionally, we are considering launching a fully operational canteen and laundry service run by Streetscapes agents, providing both an extra source of income for the initiative and stable jobs in the hospitality sector."



Looking to the future, Jenine sees long-term potential in this collaboration. "We are committed to recruiting Streetscapes agents for any future permanent positions that open up in our facility," she states.

For Jenine, this partnership goes beyond business. "I believe there is so much potential for us to make a meaningful impact through this collaboration. By supporting this incredible initiative, we can help individuals reclaim their dignity and rebuild their lives," she says passionately.

This collaboration not only provides job opportunities but also offers a supportive environment for Streetscapes clients to develop skills, gain confidence, and build a path towards long-term employment. It stands as a testament to the power of innovative partnerships in creating sustainable solutions for those transitioning from homelessness to stable work.



If you found this newsletter interesting...

Dear reader,

If you found our newsletter interesting and entertaining, please consider passing it on to people you know who would appreciate gaining a greater insight into the plight of the homeless, and the positive change that Streetscapes, as well as other organisations, are making to transform the unhomed into 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, or email us at: info@streetscapes.org.za, and we'll do the rest!

Yours,

The Streetscapes Newsletter Team