

# The Story of the Humble Heart



*8-year-old Linam Mhanga from Versatile Dance in Gugulethu*

*This letter to myself, and whoever is willing to read it, is a deeply personal and sincere expression of what is in my heart. It is also a call for help to realize a really beautiful and pure intention to bring joy, love, peace, kindness and compassion into the world, by spreading beautiful illuminating hearts.*

*It is a big idea, but surely at this time of deep trouble, violence and fear in the world, we must consider all options to spread a consciousness of peace, unity and love.*

*There are a few people in particular to thank most sincerely for helping to launch “The Heart of Cape Town” project and flood Cape Town with hearts: Lydia van der Merwe, Sacha and Khaoua Grassi, Pierre Toich, Rabson Chipelesa, Roberto and Naomi Stemmet, and my partner, Collin Titus.*

*We only kicked off this project in the middle of December 2023 and already it has gained significant traction.*

*This is the first installment of a letter to myself.*



Heart of Cape Town

[www.theheartofcapetown.org](http://www.theheartofcapetown.org)



Dear James and Friends

The last few months of 2023 were extremely challenging for me and many people in the world. Humanity bore witness to extreme levels of violence and suffering, both in South Africa and in various parts of the world. In Cape Town gang violence is ravaging communities on the Cape Flats, and it has become so normalized that it does not even make the news anymore. I was really traumatized by the kind of violence that we were witnessing daily in the last quarter of 2023.

On Thursday, the 7th of December, we were having dinner in Kalk Bay, Cape Town, and purchased a beautiful illuminating blue heart from a Zimbabwean artist named Jonah. Hanging the blue heart up in our garden, I had the most profound spiritual experience of my life. It was an overwhelming sensation of peace, kindness and love in my spirit. It was also a message from higher realms of consciousness to share the message of the heart as far and wide as possible.



The next day I returned to Kalk Bay to find Jonah and order more hearts to give away as gifts and tokens of appreciation to people for their beautiful hearts, their kindness and generosity to me and Uthando over the years. Without fail everyone who received a heart just loved it.



Within days of purchasing the heart, I also found an outlet for the trauma that I was experiencing watching the daily violence.

We registered a website called [www.theheartofcapetown.org](http://www.theheartofcapetown.org), which reflects a heartfelt desire for peace, love, kindness and compassion in the world.

*Priscilla Plummer,  
Founder of Global Sojourns Giving Circle*

[www.theheartofcapetown.org](http://www.theheartofcapetown.org)







With the help of a very kind and generous donor, Uthando was able to undertake the project of flooding Cape Town with hearts. The recipients are hard-working, passionate and dedicated community activists or friends and donors to Uthando. All people with truly the biggest and kindest hearts. The photographs of the people with their hearts are just so beautiful and magical.



***The Tjommies from Hanover Park at the Kaapse Klopse Choir Competition***



***11-year old Ajay Pienaar from Hanover Park singing at the Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC) for Tjommies Youth Development and Sporting Club last Sunday at the "Keep the Dream Malay Choral Competition.***

The illuminating hearts were also at the heart of a beautiful and healing evening held at the Cape Town Castle on the 14th of February as part of the V-Day South Africa *Rise for Freedom* event hosted by Philisa Abafazi Bethu "Heal our Women" SA.

The hearts were thoroughly enjoyed by the beautiful women and people who work so tirelessly and selflessly building their communities right across the City of Cape Town.

It was an evening of heart-centred poetry, music, friendship and healing deep generational individual and collective wounds. The formidable founder of Philisa Abafazi Bethu, Lucinda Evans, has the biggest heart.



***Lucinda Evans surrounded by beautiful hearts***







In a very short period of time, and as the project gathered momentum, so the humble heart found its way into the hands and hearts of some high profile and prominent leaders and activists, including Kevin Chaplin, CEO of Amy Foundation and UBUNTU Foundation, Danny Diliberto and the team from Ladles of Love, and Dr Imtiaz Sooliman from Gift of the Givers.



**Ladles of Love**

On the 3rd of February, the hearts formed part of the performance by the Ashwin Willemse Orient Community Development and Tjommies Youth Development and Sporting Club at the Kaapse Klopse Competition 2024, watched by 30000 people at the Athlone Stadium.



**Kevin Chaplin, CEO of Amy Foundation and UBUNTU Foundation, and Dr Imtiaz Sooliman from Gift of the Givers, two beloved South Africans.**







It has just been such a joy to see people having so much fun with the hearts, lifting their spirits, smiling and opening their hearts to peace and love.



**Mdzananda Animal Clinic in Khayelitsha**



**Versatile Dance Group**



**The Young Guiding Stars Sacred String Band**

Part of the profound message of the spirit in December was to flood the world with hearts. This seemed like a crazy, mad idea at the time. How could we possibly do this....?

Well, Uthando means Love. And Love comes from the Heart.

Uthando was formed in 2008, and not only has deep and sincere relationships with local community projects and activists, but also importantly, Uthando enjoys excellent and long-standing relationships with tour operators and tourism organisations all over the world.

[www.theheartofcapetown.org](http://www.theheartofcapetown.org)







In April and May 2024, Uthando is the community development partner to all three major travel trade shows in Cape Town:

We Are Africa	<a href="http://www.weareafricatravel.com">www.weareafricatravel.com</a>
World Travel Market	<a href="http://www.wtm.com">www.wtm.com</a>
ILTM	<a href="http://www.iltm.com">www.iltm.com</a>

The world is coming to us. We literally have an opportunity to flood the world with hearts through these trade shows which can be superspreader events of peace, love and kindness.

Since 2008, Uthando has won numerous top local and international awards. In 2024, I have been nominated as a “Hero of the Decade” at World Travel Market. Whilst we appreciate receiving these awards, nothing comes close to the heartfelt emotions that we feel when facilitating interactions between our community development partners and our visitors from all parts of the world. We just want to share these emotions, and the hearts are our way of doing it.

There is no better feeling in the world than seeing people being joyful, having fun and doing well.

With 579 Reviews on Trip Advisor, Uthando is listed number 10 out of 1046 Tours & Activities in Cape Town Central. Our Philanthropic Excursions have been a way to tell the stories of the community projects to the world, in a joyful and heartfelt way.

Find our reviews here:

[http://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction\\_Review-g312659-d2194811-Reviews-Uthando\\_Private\\_Tours-Cape\\_Town\\_Western\\_Cape.html](http://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction_Review-g312659-d2194811-Reviews-Uthando_Private_Tours-Cape_Town_Western_Cape.html)

What use are these awards and this recognition, if we cannot leverage them to propagate and expand our vision and our programme of action.

I find it interesting that the logo for Cape Town Tourism includes a HEART. Well, now we have an actual heart, a bright beautiful illuminating heart that can truly capture the imagination of visitors to South Africa.



*Cape Town Tourism logo*



*Visitors at Kirstenbosch Garden Summer Concert having fun with the hearts*

[www.theheartofcapetown.org](http://www.theheartofcapetown.org)







Visitors at the Victoria & Alfred Waterfront having fun with the hearts

[www.theheartofcapetown.org](http://www.theheartofcapetown.org)







There are 900 people attending We Are Africa in May; this includes tourism companies from all over Africa and the world, as well as high profile journalists.

With a small investment of R297 000.00 (R330.00 per heart), each and every person can receive a beautifully hand-crafted heart which illuminates beautifully at night. If the heart is too big to take home, people can gift the heart.

There are 160 people in total attending ILTM in April. The cost for this show would be R52 800.00

WTM is a massive show, so not everyone would be able to receive a heart, but certainly high-profile people in the global tourism industry could do so. So, if WTM handed out 200 hearts, the cost would be R66 000.00.

So, for a total of R415 800.00, we can literally flood the world with hand-crafted, beautiful illuminating hearts. With the production of gift boxes or packets and the message from South Africa, the total cost would be around R450 000.00 maximum.



***The We Are Africa Team holding their hearts***

Each heart can be accompanied with a beautifully written note about peace, love, kindness, compassion and the lessons that South Africa learned from being a pariah in the world to becoming a democracy.

Surely, South Africa has very important lessons to teach this very divided and violent world. South Africa is by no means perfect, but look how far we have come.

***The illuminated hearts at night are pure magic***



**[www.theheartofcapetown.org](http://www.theheartofcapetown.org)**







The production of the hearts is also good for the local economy, creating employment for the incredible artists who are creating them.



**Heart crafters, Morris, above and Laston on the left**



Over the course of the next few weeks there are a few very interesting initiatives involving the hearts:

On Sunday, the 25th of February, Zama Dance School in Gugulethu are performing a specially choreographed dance piece involving the hearts for Harry Belafonte's memorial service being held in March. Harry's daughter, Adrienne, fell in love with Zama Dance School in June 2023 when visiting several community projects together with Uthando. The performance will be professionally documented.



**Adrienne Biesemeyer Belafonte at Zama Dance School in 2023**







*Njabulo, (above) Zama Dance School*

*Zama Dance School in Gugulethu*

On Sunday, 3 March, the Uthando team and donors will be spending the day with The Tjommies from Hanover Park. Thanks to Springbok Atlas for sponsoring the bus for the group who will be exploring the Cape Peninsula. Most of them have never visited Cape Town despite having lived in Cape Town all of their lives.

French Filmmaker and photographer, Eric Gauss and Odette van Rensburg, will document the day and film the songs of peace and love sung by The Tjommies at places like Hout Bay Beach and Cape Point.

Capturing this day with the hearts will be bringing together the good hearts of the beautiful Tjommies group and combining it with the breathtaking geography of Cape Town. Beautiful hearts meet spectacular South African landscapes.



*The Tjommies*







The Isibane Se Afrika “The Light of Africa” and Khayelitsha Youth Choir will sing songs of peace and love holding their illuminated beautiful hearts on top of Table Mountain.



*The Khayelitsha Youth Choir holding their heart*

Christel House School, a remarkable non-profit school, is providing world class holistic education to almost 1000 children. Key aspects of the school’s holistic model, besides quality education, include daily transport to school and back, nutritious meals, professional healthcare, career planning and much more. The 1000 children and teachers at Christel House are going to sing a beautiful song involving the hearts. This song will be filmed and shared with the other Christel House Schools around the world.



*A table tennis table will be installed at Christel House School with the theme of the hearts. Renowned artist Ras Silas Motse will paint the table.*



*Children at Christel House School South Africa children’s choir in November 2022 holding heart signs. For the upcoming event the children will be holding the beautiful hand-crafted illuminated wire hearts.*







Philisa Abafazi Bethu “Heal our Women” One Billion Rising Event to be held on the 8th of March. 50 hearts will be distributed to community activists from across the Western Cape.



All of these events are heartfelt and also very photogenic.

Eric and Odette will be putting together a beautiful short film on “The Heart of Cape Town”. The video will reflect on the courageous people of South Africa, their determination, passion, resilience, innovation, inspiration and, of course, their beautiful hearts.

This video can be shown at all 3 trade shows, closing the circle and spreading the universal and global message of peace, love, kindness and compassion.

I see a longer-term vision for these beautiful hearts, a job creation social business that not only creates jobs, but also cements Cape Town’s reputation as the city in the world with the biggest heart. It also can support many community development initiatives such as building Early Childhood Development Centres like Ulwazi Educare all over the country.



*Ulwazi “Knowledge” Educare built from tyres and plastic bottles*

But that is a letter for another time ....

***With a little effort  
and a relatively  
small investment,  
we literally can flood  
the world with  
hearts.***





## UTHANDO (LOVE) SOUTH AFRICA



Uthando Social Development Projects, South Africa

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Uthando (Love) South Africa is committed to the principles and philosophy of Fair Trade Tourism and at all times ensures that Responsible Tourism best practices are applied and integrated into our organization and Philanthropic Educational Excursions. Our excursions bring significant benefit to local communities by providing income and other forms of assistance, while cultural exchanges are conducted in a sensitive, respectful and mutually beneficial manner.

2023 Responsible Tourism Awards, Global Winner – Best for Meaningful Connections

2020 WTM World Responsible Tourism Awards. Highly Commended

2020 Trip Advisor Travelers Choice Award

2020 Winner : Africa Responsible Tourism Awards, Caterogy : Benefitting Local People

2019 Certificate of Excellence – Trip Advisor

2018 Award Winner : Cape Town Tourism Future Forward Thinking for Community Benefit

2018 Certificate of Excellence – Trip Advisor

2017 An Ashley Award :Recognizes,celebrates,creates & guides people to perform deeds to help communities

2017 Certificate of Excellence – Trip Advisor

2017 We Are Africa Innovation Awards – Joint Winner in category Engage Africa

2017 African Responsible Tourism Awards - Winner Best Tour Operator for Impact in Urban Areas

2016 National Winner, Lilizela Tourism Awards, Best Cultural Tour Guide in South Africa

2016 Western Cape Winner, Lilizela Tourism Awards, Best Cultural Tour Guide

2016 Certificate of Excellence – Trip Advisor

2015 Certificate of Excellence – Trip Advisor

2015 Best Charitable Organisation in Africa – The Good Safari Guide 2015

2014 Best Charitable Organisation in Africa – The Good Safari Guide 2014

2014 Certificate of Excellence – Trip Advisor

2013 Winner - Cape Town Tourism Responsible Tourism Award

2013 James Fernie Finalist on the “Who’s Who” in African Diaspora World Tourism Awards

2013 Certificate of Excellence - Trip Advisor

2012 Winner - Skal International Sustainable Development in Tourism Award – Category Cities-Villages

2012 Certificate of Excellence - Trip Advisor



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Heart of Cape Town