Masikhule lives up to its name

SANDY IMMELMAN

Masikhule means “we are growing” and we are pleased to say that with the support of a number of wonderful donors, we are indeed continuing to grow.

Masikhule already offers a basic early childhood development (ECD) training course, and an advanced ECD course, a business management course, teacher enrichment workshops (TEW) and first 1000 days training.

In January Masikhule kicked off with a new course we introduced to address a need we identified in our strategy session last year, a basic-intermediate course, and in March we will introduce our first best nutrition workshop.

Even more exciting, is the news Masikhule recently received that the application made by Helderberg Sunrise Rotary for a global grant for Masikhule was successful.

We are very grateful to everyone involved in getting this funding and look forward to sharing the results with you over the year.

Masikhule founder, Léanne Keet, had this to say: “Masikhule is the privileged recipient of the Rotary International Global Grant, in partnership with Helderberg Sunrise Rotary Club.

“In 2015 Masikhule launched a programme to assess, identify and design a training programme to rectify and remediate barriers to learning, experienced by young children from our disadvantaged ECD centres.

“What started out as an ambitious dream has resulted in a promising reality. The global grant has made it possible for the Masikhule team to offer teachers from community ECD centres monthly teaching enrichment workshops, aimed specifically at how to recognise, assess and address the most common barriers to learning in order to ensure all children receive quality, inclusive and sensitive teaching and play opportunities. The global grant will also make it possible for us to expand the resources these teachers have access to, through our early learning Resource library, (ELRL) further ensuring that teaching and learning is fun, varied and relevant.

“The ELRL is also being upgraded to include a computer centre where teachers will have further access to teaching and play ideas.”

Our occupational therapists’ screening assessments and general visits to the ECD centres we mentor, found that many young children had poor pencil grip and control.

We know that these children, when entering formal schooling, struggle with handwriting tasks causing unnecessary physical and psychological stress.

Therefore, the first TEW this year dealt with the mechanics, the assessment and the treatment of pencil grip.

This included how pencil grip develops, what is essential to ensure a good pencil grip and control in young children, and how to address the underlying developmental needs to ensure good pencil grip and control.

Pencil grip – and writing skills – depends on good posture and balance, fine motor coordination and eye-hand coordination, among others.

The group of 26 teachers learnt and practiced a variety of exercises and activities to improve these skills.

On follow-up visits to these centres, we hope to see children who have improved pencil grip and control, are sitting better, moving in a more coordinated way and using their hands to complete a variety of skilled tasks.

To find out more about Masikhule, you can follow our progress on Twitter (@MasikhuleChild), Facebook or our website: www.masikhule.org

We hope to continue to get the support which will enable us to carry on making a difference to our community.