Joining a Community for Humanity
Ikamva Labantu--Cape Town, South Africa

Project Goals
◆ To help redress the devastating economic consequences of apartheid for the poor black communities of Cape Town
◆ To be part of South Africa’s transition to democracy and its citizens’ transition towards economic independence
◆ To gain experience working with a non-governmental organization (NGO)

Activities
◆ Assisted in the establishment of a take-out restaurant at a homeless shelter, Ikhaya Labantu, in order to create jobs for shelter residents and generate profit to help with shelter running costs
◆ Gave English lessons to Angolan refugees
◆ Assisted shelter residents with resumes, job searches, job references, and enrollment in educational institutions

Personal Goals
◆ To be involved in grassroots coexistence work at an exciting and critical time for South Africa
◆ To meet people different from me in every conceivable way, and to experience the culture, politics, and history of an area of the world I knew nothing about

Key Dilemmas
◆ The overwhelming unemployment, lack of financial opportunities, and lack of educational/employment histories for poor black South Africans
◆ The xenophobia that exists between South Africans and the refugees that are pouring into the country, largely due to the perception that refugees are taking already-scarce jobs and resources, as well as a lack of mutual cultural awareness
◆ The difficulties of running an NGO (lack of funding, inefficient structure and allocation of resources, intraorganizational personal and political struggles)
Lessons Learned

- South Africa has tremendous difficulties to overcome, such as its unemployment, poverty, crime, AIDS epidemic, and xenophobia.
- Efforts like that of Ikamva Labantu, which provides solutions to immediate problems at an interpersonal, individual, grassroots level, are important to accompany the maddeningly incremental actions of government.
- Progress in coexistence work can be frustratingly slow, but it is important to remain focused and motivated.

Page 6, left: Zach knew this friend only as ‘Bhuti’ which is Xhosa for ‘brother.’
Right: A simple beaded pin with a ribbon motif signifying AIDS awareness; South Africa is gripped by an AIDS crisis. Page 7, above: Zach’s internship involved plenty of office work including phone calls, typing and planning. He is shown here with one of his office friends. Right: Outside the homeless shelter with Aidah, a Kenyan refugee. Below: An animal pin made by a township resident is attached to a greeting card, making these cards brings in a few rands a week to the artists.