

FUN WITH CHARLIE

CHARLIE, the black puppet, his friend, Archie Naartjie, and Nunky the Monkey are all set for this afternoon's feast of fun and laughter at the Noxolo Primary School hall at Crossroads.

The man behind the effort to bring a bit of sunshine and laughter to the children and their parents of the Crossroads squatter camp is 22-year-old Gary Friedman, a self-taught puppeteer and ventriloquist. The show starts at 3pm and is free.

"I'm doing it for the love of it and I hope the children of Crossroads will enjoy it. If it could bring a little sunshine and laughter into their lives, then I'll be happy," says Gary.

10-year-old puppeteer

Gary's interest in puppets stems back to when he was in nursery school. By the time he was ten years old, he was giving puppet shows at children's parties and formed his own company, the Royal Puppet Company.

He is a self-taught ventriloquist and each one of his puppets

has its own particular voice and character.

"Their characters jump right out at me everytime I unpack them. To me," says Gary, "they're not puppets, they're my friends!"

He has also devised a series of educational programmes using his puppets to entertain and educate primary and pre-school children.

He writes short scripts and uses the puppets to spell out the alphabet and teach the children words and phrases.

Purely fun

"This afternoon's show will be purely entertainment and fun. Not only will there be Archie Naartjie (who has a somewhat close resemblance to the children's favourite Tommy of TV fame), but also Monkey Nunky with his tricks and, of course, the star of the afternoon, Charlie — Archie's and Nunky's black friend," says Gary.

Schools and others interested in Gary and his puppets should phone 45 4480.



All set for an afternoon of fun and laughter this afternoon at Crossroads are Gary Friedman and his friends, Archie Naartjie (on the left) and his buddy, Charlie, the black puppet.