

*Authentic.
Reliable.
Genuine.
Realistic.*



TOUCHING LIVES



2017



FEBRUARY 2018

Compiled and Produced In-House by N3TC



Authentic stewardship in touching lives with meaning, integrity and significance across all sectors of society and landscapes while providing sincere hope and promise for the future.

Contributors – Touching Lives:

Each and every person who has contributed in any way towards the Touching Lives programme is acknowledged with profound admiration and respect.

The N3 Corridor is a better place because of you.

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YEAR IN REVIEW

Authentic ... of undisputed origin, genuine

When looking at the scope of a company you are met with its products, services, figures and people; all of which represent the company and its vision. What may not be seen, however, is the social ethos intrinsic to the fabric of the company, and the organisations that receive far more than a financial hand-out through which lives are touched.

This is N3TC's approach to socio-economic development, it is not a carbon copy of any other philanthropic programme, rather an authentic reflection of the unique Corridor in which we operate and of which we are exceptionally proud.

Looking back on 2017 with its fast-paced endeavours, exceptional highlights and tremendous successes; we celebrate the extensive diversity of the projects that comprise our Touching Lives Programme. It is with confidence that we can report that N3TC's continued support and consistent approach to investing in centres of excellence and high calibre project's along the N3 Corridor is proving beneficial to communities and will have far-reaching effect for generations to come.

This edition of Touching Lives captures the essence of the heart and soul of the N3TC Touching Lives Programme. From humble beginnings, the Programme has matured into a significant community-centric programme, which is a credit to N3TC's Management and Board for their vision to secure community and economic upliftment along the N3 Corridor.

At the centre of the Programme is a commitment to touching lives meaningfully and sustainably, coupled with the non-negotiable conviction that education is of pre-eminent importance in addressing the needs of the Corridor. Education is the platform from which mass socio-economic upliftment can function and the lack of access to good quality education potentially condemns millions of children and future generations to a life without meaning or purpose. For this reason, N3TC has placed a high-level of importance on education projects that stimulate learning and opportunities for learners and students to access quality education and essential life skills.

The Touching Lives Programme reaches the expanse of society within the communities along the Corridor, from the overlooked toddler to the struggling teenager, the unemployed parent; and the gentle 'Gogo'.

To achieve the objective of touching lives meaningfully, N3TC's investment in the projects making up the Touching Lives Programme requires ongoing monitoring, evaluation, support and encouragement, a job that N3TC's Commercial Department relishes and embraces with enthusiasm and passion.

It is impossible for N3TC to help everyone, but everyone can help someone and this is the foundation upon which the Touching Lives Programme rests. The only way ordinary South Africans from typically marginalised communities can embrace the opportunities of living in a vast and promising country is to take kindness and pass it on.

Our hope for this edition of Touching Lives is to bring 'behind the scenes' heroes into your living room; to recognise those who give generously of their time selflessly and with dignity. We celebrate the successes of all the projects that N3TC supported in 2017, we acknowledge every community 'hero' that has worked relentlessly to bring hope to the hopeless; wept for the suffering they encounter; and given of their time and resources unconditionally. To operate in areas of dire poverty requires incredible strength to bring joy and hope back into the hearts and minds of the 'unseen'.

May your life be touched as you read the stories and reports in this edition of Touching Lives.



*“The point of kindness is not to pay it back,
but to pass it on.”*
Julia Alvarez



*“There is no trust more sacred than the one the world holds
with children. There is no duty more important than
ensuring that their rights are respected, that their welfare is
protected, that their lives are free from fear and want and
that they can grow up in peace.”*

Kofi Annan





CATEGORY

EDUCATION



MIDLANDS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

**PROJECT CHAMPION:
MARGARET JOHNSON**

**YEARS FUNDED:
FIVE**

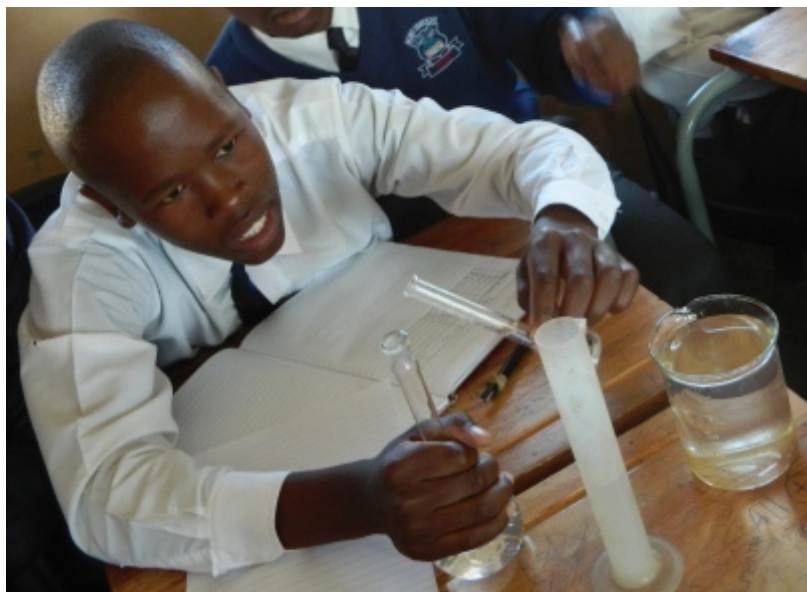
**PROVINCES:
KWAZULU-NATAL**

The Midlands Community College (MCC) Mobile Science Laboratory provides under-resourced schools with much-needed support and resources aligned to the practical component of the Physical Science school curriculum.

During the time spent at schools in the Midlands and beyond, it has become evident that the Mobile Laboratory has become a catalyst for students to enroll in the College's one-year residential Grade 12 Mathematics, Science and Technology Upgrade Programme. In 2017, 30 of the 120 students who enrolled to upgrade their Grade 12 results at the College came from schools that are part of, or have been exposed to, the Mobile Science Laboratory Project. During the last school visit for the year, the Grade 12 students are asked to complete contact information cards, so that the College can keep in touch with them after they have completed their Grade 12 examinations. This gives the College a good understanding of the learners' achievements and needs; and provides an opportunity to engage with those who wish to improve their matric results through the Upgrade Programme.



*“The Mobile Laboratory has become
a catalyst for students to enroll...”*



“The long waiting list is testimony to the benefit of the practical demonstrations that the Mobile Science Laboratory provides.”



The Laboratory has, in addition to registered project schools, visited a further nineteen schools. These schools range in distance from Durban to Weenen, making the extent of the Project's reach vast and impactful. The technicians have taken the Laboratory to various school career days, which contributed to increased demand from schools for assistance with practical demonstrations. The long waiting list is testimony to the benefit of the practical demonstrations that the Mobile Science Laboratory provides.

The impact and popularity of the Project and the interest it generates provides funders with an opportunity to contribute towards the expansion of the project to increase reach and benefit more learners attending under-resourced schools. In 2017, this happened in two ways: firstly, with the extension of the project into an additional 16 schools in outlying areas around Pietermaritzburg, funded by the Vulindlela Development Association; and, secondly, the winter and spring sessions facilitated in five schools in the Umlazi District, made possible through funding from the South African Institute of Civil Engineers.

By way of example, over a three-month period, the Project reaches 7200 students, all of whom have been present for practical sessions. In cases of 'non-events' where there is a test or exam taking place, a catch-up session is arranged with those schools or the particular grade for a later stage. The catch-up sessions are scheduled to ensure that all the schools receive the same number of practical sessions and that they are keeping up with the requirements of the Curriculum. These catch-up sessions are usually scheduled according to the schools' next available slot.

Educator Workshops form another essential component of this Project to ensure that education in the classroom outside of practical sessions provided through the Laboratory is at a uniform standard. The College has seen an improvement in attendance of educators, by running more workshops at venues closer to the location of

the schools. On educator workshop days, MCC Physical Science Educator, Jeanne Phillips, and the technicians split into groups to make sure that they are able to provide the necessary training appropriately and effectively. The team ran five workshops over two days. In total, 37 educators attended the workshops representing 35 schools.





PROJECT CHAMPION:
JESSICA GIRD

YEARS FUNDED:
TWELVE

PROVINCES:
KWAZULU-NATAL

From years of experience, the Midlands Meander Education Project (MMEP) has developed a series of lessons, games, activities and methodologies that stimulate learners and assist teachers with educational content relevant to local context.

The MMEP-developed lessons encourage self-discovery, hands-on practical experience, independent thinking, creativity and so much more.

The MMEP draws on a variety of educational methodologies (for example: Waldorf, Reggio, Montessori and mainstream) for inspiration, which makes lessons practical, and enables learners to reflect and implement what they have learnt. The MMEP curriculum focuses on practical skills' education to build confidence and teach skills that can be applied throughout learners' lives.

MMEP Education Facilitators continue to visit schools and conduct a variety of entertaining educational lessons, which continue to make a valuable impact on education in the Midlands.

While education is the core focus area for the MMEP, the facilitators continue to make invaluable contributions to local projects and initiatives. Two of these are highlighted below:

- The MMEP facilitators assisted the Dargle Conservancy to host the annual Trashion Show, making trendy, fashionable items from 'trash', which has become a firm favorite in the community and drew a crowd of almost 200 people to the 'fashion show'.
- The MMEP has been working with three ladies who sew fabric menstrual pads and ten agents who will be selling these along with moon cups and biodegradable sanitary pads as part of the PINK business, a local business development initiative. Through this project, the MMEP is succeeding in creating jobs, improving women's understanding of menstruation; making a variety of earth friendly products available at an affordable price and impacting the lives of young girls who can now maintain their dignity, make a choice about their personal hygiene and reduce absenteeism. The team working on this project is proud of its achievements and speaks openly about menstruation. Discussions are in progress with local business woman, Simphiwe Mntambo, who will be taking over this business.





A teacher from
Bruntville commented:

*“Schools may
be lacking in
funds but it is
still possible to
make learning
apparatus by
using recycled
material and
ideas from the
Bugs.”*



Participative Teachers Workshop

The annual MMEP Teachers Workshop remains a highlight on the calendar for the MMEP Education Facilitators, fondly referred to as the 'Bugs', as well as teachers from the local schools that the MMEP supports. It gives the 'Bugs' an opportunity to share their 'secrets' to success and valuable insights with the educators.

The Workshop included discussions on how to plan for, and conduct, effective lessons, games and activities; the selection of methodologies to use in different scenarios; how to make lessons practical; and to explore ways of working together more closely.



Antonia Mkhabela of Shea O' Connor Primary School, and former recipient of funding from N3TC to complete her Master's Degree in Environmental Education, was one of the guest speakers at the Workshop and her introductory speech about making learning fun was well received. She praised the Bugs for their enthusiasm, and methods of teaching. She mentioned how education and educating had changed since many of the educators had attended college or university; and that there is a need to use different methods to educate, not just the 'chalk and talk' method.

Impendle Schools Project

The Impendle Schools project, reported on as an independent project in 2016, has been incorporated into the MMEP and funding channelled accordingly to support the facilitator, Zandile Sikhakhane, and the five schools that make up this component of the Project.

Zandile works alone in these schools despite a number of challenging circumstances. She has made progress in developing and strengthening teacher and learner relationships, which is vital to the success of her work. Teachers are beginning to see the value she adds and are now co-planning and requesting specific lessons from Zandile. Zandile has successfully raised funds for seedlings and taken them, along with mulching materials, to the schools as they do not have access to these basic, fundamental requirements for successful gardening.

Impendle is 50kms from Howick and although it is a high-density settlement area, sadly there is little in the way of infrastructure. Zandile sources all her supplies from Howick and has to get them to the different schools by local taxi. This sometimes creates logistical nightmares, for example: collecting worm farms and delivering them to the schools. Despite these challenges, Zandile is committed to making a difference and receives invaluable support from the MMEP.



HERO PROFILE

by Nikki Brighton



ANTONIA MKHABELA

N3TC Bursary Student



Educators passionate about environmental issues are not that common in our schools today. This is a pity, because a healthy environment is essential for a healthy community, and if nothing else, our teachers are responsible for building citizens capable of contributing to future society.

“Understanding basic ecology and how the earth works is most important and helps learners to understand so many other things - the basic values of life.” says Antonia Mkhabela. Since 1991 she has been a teacher at Shea O'Connor School, for the past 15 years filling the role of vice principal – and environmental champion.

Inspired by examiners' reports on poor performance

among learners in environmental studies, Antonia set out to explore the challenges in the environmental learning process. Recently, she completed her Masters Degree in Education at Rhodes University, where she focussed on the sustainability competencies in the CAPS Life Science Curriculum and investigated teaching methods and assessment practices. Her work was informed by the concepts of justice, equality, responsibility, and a deep love of nature.

Antonia feels fortunate to have grown up on a Midlands farm with plenty of opportunity for exploring – weaving fragrant gum leaves into skipping ropes, nibbling resin instead of sweets, collecting interesting stones and splashing in the stream. *“We played outdoors, walked to school across fields and picked pomegranates, nuts and other fruit freely. We did not realise that this was healthy living. We were not afraid of snakes because we learnt naturally that they are not harmful if you leave them alone.”*

Over the years, Antonia has observed that some teachers are not





confident about teaching environmental subjects and few have been able to integrate the learning into their lives and classrooms. *“Mostly, we focus on theory too much. There is a need to involve outdoor activities and to use local environmental issues to enable learners to understand their environmental context. Learners do not want to be spoon-fed. They love doing their own research. It is easier than many teachers believe, and really important that children fiddle and experience theoretical concepts, practically. The school yard provides many learning opportunities.”*

While the lessons that form part of the curriculum are important, learners' outcomes are not assessed in a single year, but over a period of time. *“In our school, I can clearly observe the changed attitudes learners have to environmental issues. This year, our Enviro Club has almost 100 members!”* Clearly, Antonia is an inspiring teacher.

Learners call her subject 'Makoya' meaning 'the real subject'! She is also delighted to report how parents are getting involved when the children share their ideas at home. *“Especially creating outfits from*



recycled materials for the Trashion Show, organised by the Dargle Conservancy. Parents are so thrilled to be working with their excited and capable children. Many report that they have improved communication now and, of course, better understanding of the problems of waste.”

Determined to help those keen to improve their environmental content, Antonia plans to use her new knowledge to motivate other educators – sharing methods, ideas and assessment techniques at the Department of Basic Education, Life Science Cluster Meetings, and to assist youth groups to address local environmental concerns. A keen hiker herself, Antonia dreams of being able to take all the nature lovers and environmental activists she works with to visit wild places.

Antonia received a bursary from N3 Toll Concession to complete her Masters and we are so proud of her achievements. *“Antonia is a remarkable person and such an inspiration. She overcame so much and dug so deep, just for the sake of the children she teaches,”* Con Roux.

“There is a need to involve outdoor activities and to use local environmental issues...”

TOPSY EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

**PROJECT CHAMPION:
SARAH DU TOIT**

**YEARS FUNDED:
THREE**

**PROVINCES:
MPUMALANGA**

The people of the Dipaleseng District that Topsy assists can be described as stemming from one of the most marginalised population groups in South Africa, characterised with high levels of unemployment, low education and skills levels, below average incomes; and large extended families.

The unemployment rate in Dipaleseng is 37.2%. Youth unemployment is 45.2% and 12% of the population over 20 years of age has had no schooling with merely 43.4% having completed some primary school level.

A significant number of young children who live in this high-risk poverty environment are faced with a significant reduction in their chances to realise their full potential. Service provision and support to the poorest and most vulnerable young children is fragmented, has limited reach, and is often of insufficient quality.

Poverty and related problems such as poor health and nutrition, deficient care, and limited stimulation – particularly when they act together – have negative effects on early development. These factors can contribute to a trajectory of poor health and schooling outcomes that perpetuate the cycle of poverty. However, protective influences

such as good nutrition, healthcare, supportive parenting and opportunities for early learning can nurture positive development – including good health and academic outcomes, economic productivity, responsible citizenship and effective parenting of the next generation. All these factors supported Topsy's vision to support Early Childhood Development (ECD) in the Dipaleseng District.

The Topsy ECD Programme was launched in 2014 and started with a Play and Learn Centre located at the Topsy facility in Grootvlei that served 1300 children a year. At the same time, Topsy



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established partnerships with 24 ECD centres in the District that were incorporated into the fledgling programme to receive ECD support from the Centre. Very soon, word about the Topsy Programme and its impact spread amongst other District schools; and Topsy proudly reports that in 2017, the programme has grown to include 30 ECD centres and reaches 1924 children a month.

Training of ECD Centre principals is central to the programme. Topsy assisted 16 principals from the District's schools to attend training during 2017 funded by The ASHA Trust.

In an effort to gain further support for the Programme, Topsy has submitted profiles of all the centres included in its Programme to



Breadline Africa. Breadline Africa is one of the biggest suppliers of converted shipping containers for poverty relief in South Africa and has delivered more than 350 containers to poverty-stricken communities across the country. This focus is clustered in three main areas – Early Childhood Development (ECD), libraries and a range of similar container projects to uplift communities.

Breadline Africa has commenced with the assessment of all 30 ECD centres to ascertain if they qualify for infrastructural improvements and/or a container. The outcome of this assessment will further benefit the District and contribute towards Topsy's educational and upliftment vision for Dipaleseng.





HERO PROFILE

by Nikki Brighton



NOSISA SOSIBO

Vula Maths and
Science Programme



Nosisa Sosibo was born with Mathematics in her bones.

"It must be genetic because I have loved numbers as long as I can remember," she asserts. Enrolling for Grade One at a deep rural uMzimkhulu school with the ability to count and add certainly surprised her teachers! As is common for children who grow up in traditional areas, she had to use her imagination to invent games and toys - stones, tin cans and sticks to draw in the dust, all became useful props in make-believe schools where Nosisa was often the 'teacher'.

Although her Maths teachers were not always the best, her natural excitement

and personal motivation meant that she did well. *"If you really want to do something, then you can do it."*

After Matric, financial constraints prevented her from studying further, but even while doing household chores and helping in the fields, her dreams did not perish. *"I knew that one day I would be able to do what I wanted. I was not crushed by circumstance."* After three years, an opportunity arose to pursue her dream to study Chemical Engineering. Despite the very real challenges of living in a tiny back room far from home, without enough money to buy food, she passed the first two years. Back in the 90's it was not easy to find a place to do the practical component (third year) of her Diploma. *"There was no internet to search for opportunities, no email, no SMS," she recalls, "just making copies of documents and going to the post office to post letters would take a whole day of travelling. It was so costly."*

She heard of an opportunity to teach Maths at a nearby school and grabbed the chance to do something useful and earn money. She loved it. *"The best thing about Maths is that it is not like history where*



you need to remember when van Riebeeck was born and do all that memorising. It is just fun, like a game or puzzle."

She was thrilled to receive a bursary to do her Bachelor of Education. However, after starting her studies the bursary failed to provide all that was promised, and she decided to go back to teaching. Despite Nosisa's lack of formal qualifications, her reputation was spreading and before long she was asked to teach at a high school in Donnybrook. *"I had no idea where that was, and I just arrived with my bag on the first day. The teachers laughed and asked if I was going to sleep in that bag?"* It was here that she completed her National Diploma in Education (NPDE) and met Vula Outreach. The Vula Programme (Hilton College's outreach initiative) is a targeted intervention which provides development opportunities and educational support for township and rural schools in the KwaZulu Natal Midlands. Through the Vula Programme Nosisa learned new methodologies, was exposed to novel experiences and challenged to use technology as a teaching aid. *"Vula helped grow my confidence and made me love Maths even more. The more you know, the better motivated you become and now I am able to share my skills with others."*

Last year, she was appointed as HOD of Maths and Science at Sonyongwana School near Creighton. Clearly, she is well loved by her fellow teachers and the principal, Mr Xulu, is full of praise. *"Our Matric results went from 70% pass in 2016 to 91% in 2017 with the improvement in Maths marks, and Physics also doubled to 87% pass! I am certain it is due to Nosisa's influence and that we will have a 100% pass rate in 2018."*

Nosisa believes that a positive leader encourages everyone and helps them to thrive. While she could have lived in town and commuted daily to school, she chose to live right in the community where she is able to walk to work. *"It is important to build relationships and understand the learners' backgrounds if you want to get the best from them."* The impact of Nosisa's commitment is obvious. *"I want to help the kids to not be afraid of Maths, but just to have fun and enjoy the ride."*

"A positive leader encourages everyone and helps them to thrive..."



*“Education is the most powerful weapon which
you can use to change the world.”*

Nelson Mandela





TOP-UP BURSARIES

N3TC's Top-Up Bursary Category has contributed to 85 learners lives in 2017. Through these bursaries learners are given the opportunity to attend school and participate in a fully-fledged school life without the burden of financial worries that are typically placed on their parents, families or guardians. It is an essential category in the Touching Lives Programme as it lays a solid educational foundation in the lives of young children that, with a good education, will contribute meaningfully to society in the future.

N3TC applauds each child, along with their educators for their commitment and dedication to giving of their best and grasping the opportunity to learn without boundaries.

DRAKENSBERG BOYS CHOIR SCHOOL

**PROJECT CHAMPION:
BRAD GLASSPOOLE**

**YEARS FUNDED:
SEVEN**

**PROVINCES:
KWAZULU-NATAL**



Worldwide there are many schools with boys' choirs, but the Drakensberg Boys Choir is unique and one of only a few of its kind, globally: a boarding school using choral music as a significant vehicle for holistic education.

The mission of the Drakensberg Boys Choir School is to prepare boys for life and leadership through excellence in music, academics, physical development and social enrichment, in a Christian environment.

Acceptance at the school hinges on musical talent and the boys undergo stringent auditioning before final enrolment takes place. Sadly, many talented young boys do not necessarily stem from wealthy families and the school is dependent on funding from various corporate entities to provide boys showing promise, potential and talent with the opportunity to be part of the school without the added financial pressure that could be placed on their parents.

N3TC is exceptionally proud to be able to assist these deserving young 'Drakies' to fulfil their dreams and attend one of South Africa's most sought-after schools.

N3TC's bursary funding awarded to Drakensberg Boys Choir School has assisted 15 young boys from Grade Six to

Nine to complete their respective years' of schooling.

Below are a few excerpts from the individual reports received from the school.

**Caleb Saks
Grade 6**

Choir Master's Comment: Caleb makes an invaluable contribution to the choir. He tackles new ideas and concepts with vigour and always has an innovative response to it. His energy and presence on stage is commendable and will develop even further throughout this year. We can only predict a very bright future for him in the choir. It is a pleasure to have him on our team.


Headmaster's Comment: Caleb has had a good start to the year. I remain very pleased with his progress and positive attitude at school.

**Ndalo Gumede
Grade 7**

Choir Master's Comment: Ndalo has good aural perception and pays close attention to singing the correct vocal part in the choir. His voice is still settling after recently breaking, which can take anything from a few weeks to many months before he is fully comfortable as a singer. He should not lose patience and embrace this period of transition and growth in his body.

Headmaster's Comment: Ndalo has had a quiet term by his standards, but nonetheless produced some good results - particularly in Zulu. I hope to see him really try and give of his best, as the year progresses.




*“N3TC is
 exceptionally
 proud to be
 able to assist
 these
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 dreams.”*



*Left to right: Sean
 Morrick, Odirile
 Mokoma, Ndalo
 Gumedede,
 Caleb Saks, Anthony
 Ncube and Joshua
 Naidoo*



Sean Morrick
Grade 8

Choirmaster's Comment: Sean is definitely improving as a chorister. He has settled well into the Tenor section, and he is becoming more attentive during rehearsals. He takes music seriously and wants to develop his technique and range. One area that Sean could work on, is his facial expression and animation during performances.

Headmaster's Comment: A very important part of the academic year has come to an end. In light of this, I hope Sean will continue to focus his efforts on this important aspect of his high school education. Although he has done exceptionally well I hope he maintains this throughout the year.

Joshua Naidoo
Grade 8

Choirmaster's Comment: Joshua is well on his way to becoming a well-rounded member of the choir. He has a truly wonderful singing voice and is making steady progress with the Training Status Programme. He can focus on improving his stage presence - he should enjoy every performance, and show it.

Headmaster's Comment: While understanding the needs of the choir, it is essential that Josh keeps his academic results at the forefront of his endeavours.

Odirile Mokoma
Grade 9

Choirmaster's Comment: Odirile is a dependable singer and percussionist who takes pride in the duties and responsibilities assigned to him. He has recently been promoted to becoming a passer in the choir - a position which demands severe commitment, ethics and fairness. I am eager to see how Odirile engages with this challenge

Headmaster's Comment: Odirile must work hard, attend support lessons and be mature enough to ensure that his work is up to date and accurate when it comes to assessments.

Anthony Ncube
Grade 9

Choirmaster's Comment: Anthony plays a significant role in the choir and he has taken his leadership role to heart this year. His energy and presence on stage is inimitable and genuine, and he is constantly improving his skills as a chorister. It is a pleasure to have Anthony on our team.

Headmaster's Comment: Anthony must work hard, attend support lessons where necessary, and be mature enough to ensure that his work is always up to date and accurate when it comes to assessments. English, Afrikaans, Mathematics and Science require hard work.



PROJECT CHAMPION:
MEGAN BEDINGHAM

YEARS FUNDED:
FIVE

PROVINCES:
KWAZULU-NATAL

Royal Drak is a small, independent primary school situated in the Northern Drakensberg, and was founded by local families in 2007.

The school has grown considerably over the five years since N3TC first added the school to its Touching Lives Programme; and believe that the 80 children, who mostly stem from the impoverished Amazizi area, are extremely fortunate to attend this exceptional school that provides outstanding education. It is a very special 'gem' in the Berg. The school was founded in an effort to redress concerns of poor educational standards in the Northern Drakensberg area. The aim of the school is to create opportunities for every child to reach their potential and equip them to act on it. In the classroom and outdoors, the children are nurtured and encouraged to be their best.

The school is privately funded through school fees and fund raising projects. Most of the children who attend the school receive financial assistance, where the parents pay a portion of the fees, and outside funding is obtained to pay the balance. N3TC is a proud contributor to these fund raising initiatives.

N3TC's financial contribution to Royal Drak Primary covers the part-funding of fees for eight deserving young learners. Their reports always make for an interesting read and an enlightening insight into each child's world. We have selected excerpts from their report to share in this edition of *Touching Lives*.




*"We have read
 The Twits and
 Fantastic Mr
 Fox by Roald
 Dahl. We have
 also started
 learning about
 collective
 nouns and
 some are really
 funny."*



Asiphe Radebe

Teacher's comment: It has been such a pleasure to teach Asiphe. He has been an enthusiastic learner who is always willing to put in his best effort. Although he does occasionally take extra time to grasp a concept, he always perseveres to complete the task at hand. Asiphe is a good friend to others and his manners are improving. Asiphe is well behaved which is pleasing. He is able to complete tasks on time and works well independently. Asiphe tries hard to listen attentively to instructions.

Asiphe says... I have really enjoyed school. I have played lots of soccer with my friends and I was able to score goals! I love to write stories in English and I'm starting to improve in my writing abilities. I enjoy Maths too; I have loved learning about time and fractions. I like to play games with my friends at break time.

Ayanda Dlamini

Teacher's comment: Ayanda is a quiet boy in class who works well in his studies and his homework is always completed. He has been reading well during our sessions and has progressed significantly. Ayanda has tried hard at soccer; his enthusiasm is a great asset for the team. He has interacted well in class discussions and debates. He has researched his orals very well and is making good strides in his presentations.

Ayanda says... I have really enjoyed my English lessons this term because of the stories that we are learning about. We have read The Twits and Fantastic Mr Fox by Roald Dahl. We have also started learning about collective nouns and some are really funny. I enjoyed the birding day when we learnt about different birds and got to touch



their feathers which are so soft. The colours on the birds were amazing.

Sizwe Khumalo

Teacher's comment: Sizwe has been a pleasure to teach and he has grown in confidence. Sizwe has worked well academically and is constantly improving his understanding of the English language. He has made good progress in reading and learning his times table. He has a fantastic imagination which he uses to entertain his peers. Sizwe is a diligent young man.

Sizwe says... Soccer has been the best, I love playing it with my friends. I have learnt how to strike at goal as well as become a better goal keeper. I have looked forward to our class discussions as we have covered a wide range of topics from volcanoes to tectonic plates and how gravity works. I really enjoyed our birding day where we caught and placed rings on the birds. I think my teachers are happy with me as I have improved my spelling this term.



ASIPHE RADEBE



AYANDA DLAMINI



SIZWE KHUMALO



“Commitment is an act, not a word.”

Jean-Paul Sartre





CATEGORY

ROAD SAFETY

COMMUNITY MEDICAL SERVICES

**PROJECT CHAMPION:
PHILIP HULL**

**YEARS FUNDED:
THIRTEEN**

**PROVINCES:
FREE STATE AND
KWAZULU-NATAL**





Community Medical Services (CMS) provides a crucial service to N3 Toll Route customers and plays an integral role in N3TC's road safety imperatives, particularly over peak traffic periods such as Easter, Christmas and long weekends; and in the event of anticipated road safety concerns such as snowfall in the Van Reenen's Pass area.



The CMS team works alongside the N3TC Route Patrol teams, BMW Road Service, Provincial Emergency Services as well as the relevant Police and Traffic Authorities. Consisting of a dedicated group of highly skilled, qualified and experienced Paramedic and Emergency Services personnel, the members of the CMS team volunteer their time and spend many days and considerable hours patrolling the N3 between Harrismith and Ladysmith with a specific focus on Van Reenen's Pass. Working from the basic facilities provided at the Van Reenen Help Centre the team leaves their families and home comforts to assist N3TC's customers travelling to holiday destinations over key holiday periods with the primary objective of saving lives!

Reports from CMS demonstrate the team's dedication and commitment to supporting N3TC's vision of providing the safest toll route in South Africa. It is almost impossible to share all their experiences as their time spent on the N3 Toll Route is always filled with adrenaline-pumping action coupled with human emotions that cannot be put into words. Below are some excerpts from their 2017 reports that shed some light on the incredible work this team does.

Collectively, the CMS team spent 17 days at the Van Reenen Help Centre between May and August 2017. Four accidents, seventeen


*“Reports from
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 safest toll route
 in South
 Africa.”*




obstructions and a medical emergency relating to a bus passenger at the Van Reenen Caltex were attended to.

Two 4x4 vehicles were mobilised to the area in August in response to forecasts of possible snowfall in the area. Fortunately, apart from being bitterly cold and experiencing a light flurry of sleet, there was little for the team to do except patrol and keep warm. Generally, and thankfully, a relatively quiet period!

Four CMS crews spent the Heritage Day long weekend in September at Van Reenen's, and again reported a relatively quiet weekend with lower than expected traffic volumes. The team responded to five accidents and eleven obstructions.

The anticipated busy Festive Season was as expected and sadly started off with a multiple vehicle accident on the Pass, resulting in three fatalities and full road closure for several hours. Wet conditions for almost all of the first two weeks resulted in numerous accidents with vehicles sliding off the road. A hail storm near Estcourt, resulted in five light vehicles sliding off the road (all separate accidents) and one heavy vehicle lost control on the northbound lanes and came to a stop about 30 metres off the road on the southbound side. Fortunately the southbound lanes were clear as the truck slid across these lanes!

On reflection, Philip Hull commented that motorists often do not adjust their speed and driving technique to cater for inclement conditions such as rain or, in this case, hail. *“One of the drivers that we assisted*

*told us he had reduced his speed to 60km/h and kept his cruise control on to maintain that speed. Golden rule # 1 when it comes to the operation of a cruise control – **NEVER ACTIVATE CRUISE CONTROL IN WET OR SLIPPERY CONDITIONS!!** I guess there is still a lot of driver education required!”*

The team's home away from home was the humble Help Centre at Van Reenen Caltex, which has been their base of operations for 25 years; but the lease for the Centre came to an end on 31 December 2017. It is not surprising that Philip Hull was somewhat emotional when sharing this news: *“On a somewhat bittersweet note, we have moved out of our Help Centre. The memories of the various team members, the tragedies, successes, camaraderie and challenges will all remain, but even so, it was difficult locking the gate for the last time!”*

The team is looking forward to moving into its new Help Centre on the other side of the N3 near the Little Church, a beautiful location that Philip hopes will take the team through the next 25 years.

The piece of land opposite the Little Church has been made available to CMS by Mr Rory Dyer, son of the late Ian Dyer, who was a long-time friend of CMS. The Little Church Committee generously sponsored the repair to the borehole on the property and CMS is hopeful that funding for the balance of the development of the property for a two bedroom 'Park Home' facility will be raised through corporate funding streams and sponsorships. However, the vision is to have a base of operation for Easter 2018, which will coincide with CMS' 35th Anniversary celebrations.



HERO PROFILE

by Nikki Brighton



LIPHINA ZONDI

Care Bears Project



A little house on the edge of Lidgetton Village is abuzz with happiness. It's the day the Care Bears will be collected.



A beaming Liphina Zondi has put out tables and chairs for friends and neighbours who arrive with bulging bags stuffed with colourful bears. There is much laughter as they admire one another's work – particularly the new patterns that emerge as their confidence grows.

Liphina was the first knitter in The Care Bears Project, started by Rebecca and Sam Pinnell. The Care Bear Project aims to uplift rural communities, by providing employment and much-needed income. Then using the product -

the knitted bears - to bring joy to the children in these communities, many of whom have never received a new toy in their lives.

"I learnt to knit when I was very young, my older sister taught me," Liphina recalls, *"the first thing I made was leg warmers."* Her daughter still has some of the things she knitted for her family over the years (a great skill to have in the chilly Midlands winters). Liphina was happy to retire from her job as a domestic worker a few years ago to spend more time with her family, but living on a small pension has its challenges.

The Care Bears fame has grown since she first gathered a community of knitters in Lidgetton and trained everyone how to make them. Liphina always feels pleased when people want to participate and come to her to learn how to knit and follow the pattern. She particularly loves the days when they go to donate knitted bears to the children who attend the local creches, *"It makes me so happy to see the kids so happy."*



The N3TC Duduza 'We Care' initiative, through its efforts to support local enterprises, discovered Care Bears. As a result, N3TC placed a significant order for bears from Care Bears for the Duduza Initiative as well as for the N3TC Route Patrol vehicles that carry bears in the event of an accident involving children, which helps to bring comfort at a time of trauma. This order secured the employment of 20 knitters.

One knitting kit consists of the supplies to produce six bears and costs R400, of which R300 is paid directly to the knitter, the balance is used to cover the cost of the supplies. The R600 paid to each knitter on delivery of the bears means being able to pay school fees, put food on the table, and even purchase a little more electricity – things many take for granted! By way of example in terms of the reach this project achieves, in one month earlier this year Care Bears collected 64 bears from its group in Lidgetton, which translated into R3 200 paid directly into this community. A meaningful difference to touching lives in communities.



With the money she earns from this project, Liphina dreams of saving enough to build a veranda on the front of her house. The back yard is crammed with veggies – spinach, beans and potatoes. Her other love is gardening, and she enjoys cooking for her family too.

While Liphina is grateful to be able to work in the comfort of her home surrounded by her grandchildren, she can no longer knit all day like she used to. *"My arms are not so strong anymore."* In the evenings, she settles down to watch her favourite programme, Generations, with a cup of Five Roses tea and her needles in hand. *"Sometimes, I fall*



asleep when I am knitting." she laughs. Clearly, this is relaxing and satisfying work.

Sam concludes *"Without Liphina, we doubt if The Care Bears Project would exist. From knitting the prototype, to translating and simplifying the pattern so that the rural ladies can understand it, she has also helped train the heads of the groups in Sweetwaters, Mpophomeni and Pietermaritzburg South. We are indebted to her for her time and patience. She is our champion knitter!"*



"She particularly loves the days when they go to donate knitted bears to the children."



*“Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot,
nothing is going to get better, it’s not.”*

Dr Seuss





CATEGORY

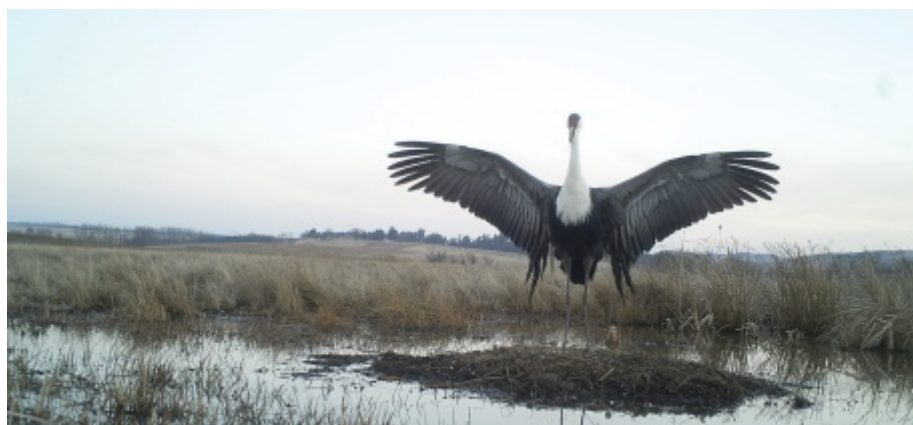
CONSERVATION



PROJECT CHAMPION:
TANYA SMITH

YEARS FUNDED:
TWO

PROVINCES:
KWAZULU-NATAL



Cranes form a vital part of the natural environment as they fill the role of indicator, umbrella and flagship species.

As flagship species they are iconic, easily identifiable and capture the hearts of those that get to see and live in proximity to them. Umbrella species means that by protecting them and their habitat, we save an endangered species and many other species that are equally dependent on the habitat. Lastly, being an indicator species they reflect the conditions of the surrounding environment being the 'flagships' of a healthy and properly functioning ecosystem.

Wattled Cranes are one of the more sensitive cranes species and rely heavily on their habitat for breeding, raising chicks, roosting and foraging. These habitats include permanent wetlands, open water and natural grasslands. These habitat areas, as well as the Wattled Crane, Blue and Grey Crowned Cranes, are largely found in the KwaZulu-Natal Drakensberg and Midlands, boasting approximately 90% of South Africa's Wattled Crane Population.

The need for conserving the cranes' habitat is twofold. Firstly, it ensures the longevity of the cranes species; and, secondly, the conservation of natural resources. The most important of these resources is water as these areas fall within one of South Africa's strategic water source areas, where 8% of the land provides 50% of the country's natural water resources.

The project is dependent on establishing relationships with landowners, the custodians of the cranes and their habitats; and the objectives of the programme are outlined below:

Objective 1:
Secure and improve the ecological integrity of the Hlatikulu catchment of the KwaZulu-Natal Drakensberg.

The Project's primary focus is the Hlatikulu Catchment, where the EWT team has been working with the farmers of the Hlatikulu Collaborative



Management Area (HCMA) to promote a balance between farming and conservation. Collectively, they are working towards securing as much of the Hlatikulu catchment as possible using the Biodiversity Stewardship Programme in KZN.

Objectives 2 & 6:
Monitoring and Education

The project team implemented the Ecosystems Goods and Services (EGS) monitoring toolkit for landowners, communities and management authorities to monitor the effects of different land use activities on the surrounding environment. The toolkit looks at vegetation and water characteristics using citizen science-based monitoring. Trials are underway on three farms in the Southern Drakensberg and on the Bill Barnes Crane and Oribi Nature Reserve, owned and managed by the KZN Crane Foundation.

“As flagship species they are iconic, easily identifiable and capture the hearts of those that get to see and live in proximity to them.”



Objective 3:

Expand the habitat available for Wattled Cranes to breed

As part of the Springrove dam offset, funds are available to initiate rehabilitation within the Hlatikulu Catchment. The rehabilitation is aimed at restoring grasslands, wetlands and riparian areas within the catchment, a prime habitat for Wattled Crane breeding, roosting and foraging. The rehabilitation is a positive step towards securing the habitat that Wattled Cranes depend on. Some highlights are detailed below:

- **Grafton Farm** was covered in timber and bordered a wetland and breeding site for Wattled Cranes. The new owners removed the timber and de-stumped the entire farm and returned it to maize and pasture rotations. After consulting with the project team on the impact of the agricultural changes on the Wattled Cranes, the owners created a buffer zone along the wetland that will be maintained as grassland. There was much excitement as a Wattled Crane pair used the nest site in 2017 and successfully hatched a chick.
- **Southdowns Farm** converted grasslands to pastures for dairy and included the rehabilitation of a large floodplain wetland on the property to provide environmental buffers for Wattled Cranes. This is a great accomplishment as it demonstrates that conservation and development can work in tandem and there are benefits for conservation from minor and low impact developments.

Objective 4:

Increase the population of the three crane species

Due to the consistency of the work conducted by the team over the last few decades there has been a positive increase in crane species numbers. South Africa has recorded the only increasing Grey Crowned Crane population in the world.

Objective 5:

Develop and initiate an incentive mechanism/process

The team spent the first six months of 2017 training local landowners on the incentives available for farmers and communities involved in a stewardship programme, in both the pre-declaration and post-declaration periods. There is a tangible tax benefit for farmers and landowners and a lot of time has been invested in conveying this information to landowners who are interested in the stewardship process.

Objective 7:

Conduct site-specific analyses of communities to guide community and livelihood project development

The team has identified Ntsonga, Impendle and Lotheni as the communities to benefit from this project. The team is working with community members to determine their respective needs and guide future socio-economic development projects.

Objective 8:

Integrate socio-economic interventions/benefits to support the conservation of cranes and their ecosystems in the Drakensberg

The team made significant progress with the establishment of the 'honey project', which is an alternative livelihoods project in the region.

The project's EcoRangers have received training and mentorship in the field of beekeeping; and new beekeeping equipment has been provided to further support the sustainability of the project. The project started in Lotheni and has since extended to the Ongeluksnek area in the Eastern Cape.



PROJECT CHAMPION:
RYNE FERGUSON

YEARS FUNDED:
SIX

PROVINCES:
KWAZULU-NATAL



Daniel Dolpire

Following the extensive and harsh drought in 2016, the KZN Crane Foundation spent a considerable part of 2017 on getting the Wattled Crane Rearing and Research Programme back on track.

The Foundation employs two Aviculturists, Ryne Ferguson and Kim Scholtz; who are supported by two Chick Mums, Sindi Khumalo and Phindi Nene. Sindi and Phindi are interns who are studying Nature Conservation at UNISA. From time to time, the programme welcomes volunteers both locally and from abroad, which highlights the profile and extent of the work being done at the Centre.


The Foundation completed the construction of the accommodation block, funded by N3TC in 2016, and the facility has proven invaluable as the 2017 programme 'took flight'. The building accommodates four people comfortably and the team was able to take full advantage of the convenience of the new accommodation.



As a result of the drought in 2016 there were very few nesting pairs in the wild to draw second eggs from; and the Crane Foundation's Centre in Nottingham Road had no water available to fill the dome dams. The wetlands were dry and lifeless which would have made foraging for food impossible, which rendered any dream of rearing chicks fruitless. Thankfully, with a considerable amount of rainfall experienced over the summer months, the Foundation was able to resume the Rearing and Research Programme in 2017.

The rearing season started a little late with wild cranes nesting in some areas very early and in other areas later than usual. Preparation of the Isolation Rearing infrastructure included building up shade cloth barriers so that crane chicks would not be exposed to cleaning, washing and drying of floors, carpets and uniforms. The building and cages were thoroughly disinfected; and the incubators were serviced. New 'Puppet Chick Mum' beaks and uniforms were made; and by July 2017, the team and buildings were ready to accept chicks. Currently the facility is housing three chicks in different stages of development.

Sadly, the first chick met an unfortunate end as it suffocated itself in a freak occurrence. This chick was soon replaced by 'Indoni' (a Zulu word meaning 'beautiful creature'). As the oldest and largest chick he is foraging on his own and discovering the wonders of the wetland.


*“The
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 welcomes
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 work being
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 Centre.”*



Isabelo ('to give a gift' in Zulu) followed. She is bold and growing very fast and enjoys foraging on her own on wetland plants.

Finally, Umfula ('River' in Zulu) arrived. Initially a bit small, delicate and timid, it took some time and patience to teach Umfula new things. Like human children, these chicks have different personalities and characteristics, but good and patient 'parenting' is paying dividends and they are all gaining in confidence and physical stature.

The three chicks are expected to be released into the wild in March or April 2018. Before that time the Foundation will build a suitable crate and 'safe area' to transport and release the chicks into a floater flock and, secondly, to have a safe area for the chicks to return to in the event that they feel threatened before they settle down.



The Wattled Crane Rearing and Research Programme has been a mighty challenge but the Foundation remains steadfast in the belief that the programme will benefit the species in the future. The Wattled Crane is the ultimate symbol of wetland, grassland and water health and is still on the critically endangered list – with the wild population at just over 300. It is remarkable that in 1999 there were less than 200.

“We believe that our efforts, and that of our donors, are not in vain.”
 Jon Bates.





**PROJECT CHAMPION:
BRADLEY GIBBONS**

**YEARS FUNDED:
FOUR**

**PROVINCES:
FREE STATE**



Sivan Parusnath

Sungazer custodianship under the auspices of EWT continues to record successes and make impactful inroads into Sungazer conservation.

It acknowledges landowners for the role they play in the conservation of Sungazers and functions as a method for landowner commitment to conserving Sungazers for a five-year period, which is formalised through a letter signed by the landowner.

The team was delighted to report that a landowner from Heilbron, Peter Wales, involved in the custodianship project has made significant strides in conserving Sungazers on his property for several years. His farm was used as a venue for a Sungazer Working Group meeting in 2016, and he was offered a Sungazer Custodian Board in appreciation for his efforts in Sungazer conservation. He has subsequently, with the EWT's blessing, erected an additional sign at another

entrance to his property, which highlights his dedication to the programme.

The EWT team has been exploring the Lindley district in the Free State as another possible Biodiversity Stewardship site as a replacement for the Roadside area. The team decided that the habitat at the Roadside site is, unfortunately, too transformed to be suitable for proclamation as





“The 50/50 film crew was so impressed with the grassland ecosystem that they have decided to film a documentary.”



a protected area. The Sungazer population in Lindley is prominent and Sungazers are well-known and respected by these landowners. It is an area where cattle farming is common, making it compatible with Sungazer and grassland conservation.

The 50/50 film crew paid another visit to the EWT team in Wakkerstroom to start planning another short film on threats to the grasslands in this area. The film crew was so impressed with the grassland ecosystem that they have decided to film a documentary. The documentary will focus on the biodiversity, ecosystem services, and economic value of the Grassland Biome, and is scheduled to begin in February 2018.

Rhino Oil and Gas applied for a Technical Co-operation Permit for an area surrounding Golden Gate National Park. The EWT team



investigated the application and determined that Rhino Oil and Gas will conduct a desktop study for the area's potential for oil and gas. The EWT team will continue to monitor this study.

The EWT team continuously interacts with farmworkers on farms where Sungazer conservation work is being carried out. Farmworkers are educated on poaching and requested to report any poaching incidents to the police.

The EWT team continues to focus on Biodiversity Stewardship in four areas for Sungazer conservation, namely: Versamelberge (Volksrust district), Wilge Stewardship Initiative (Harrismith district), Eeram to Verkykerskop (Harrismith district) and the new Lindley site.

“Farmworkers are educated on poaching...”



HERO PROFILE

by Nikki Brighton



BRADLEY GIBBONS

EWT Sungazer
Conservation Project



Bradley Gibbons clearly remembers his decision to spend his life working in nature. He was four years old.

"Every Wednesday we visited my Aunt and Uncle's small holding in Midrand - in those days it was still wild. My passion started there and then I spent every free moment exploring the natural places around Roodepoort, where we lived." While Gauteng has changed a lot in the intervening years and there are few wild spots left, Bradley's commitment to learning about and protecting the birds, plants and lizards has never wavered. He saved up his pocket money and at 13 bought his first proper guides – Newman's and Roberts' bird books. "Since then my collection has grown as I just had to get Sinclair's photographic bird book,

then the LBJ book and a new tree book, and then another bookcase..."

Bradley enjoys pouring over his guide books, working through the keys to identify new found species, far more than watching television. *"When I am in the Free State, Tandyberg is my TV," he laughs. "These iconic koppies resemble molars from a particular angle, although it took me a few years to find that view. It's best to view the mountain while driving from Van Reenen towards Memel - which is one of my favourite places, a hidden treasure."*

Since he left Saasveld College (now known as the George Campus of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University) after studying Nature Conservation, Bradley has been fortunate to work for Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT). He completed his Masters in Environmental Management as a part time student during his tenure with EWT. *"This job is a privilege. Working with landowners passionate about the natural and cultural heritage on their properties is amazing. I have a lot of respect for those who know their veld so intimately."* Currently he is



Field Officer for the Threatened Grassland Species Programme focussing on Sungazers. *Smaug giganteus* is a vulnerable, endemic species found only in the highland grasslands of the Free State and Mpumalanga.

“They have a very nice life - sunbathing most of the day with lunch (beetles) delivered right to their door, occasional feasts of flying ants, a great community and no concerns about politics,” he quips. Sungazers do have to worry about losing their homes though, particularly through ploughing, which destroys their underground burrows. 99% of the Sungazer colonies occur on private land, so it is Bradley's job to educate farmers about them and find ways of protecting them. The Sungazer Custodian programme rewards those landowners who take special steps to look after these gentle creatures and use the

Biodiversity Stewardship Programme to safeguard grasslands where Sungazers are found.

The more he learns about Nature, the more Bradley realises how much he doesn't know. *“I can watch the lizards for hours, they are fascinating and unusual. But I also love the common things – I get excited by Cape Chestnut trees in full flower, White-Eyes in the birdbath. Everything is really special, each season different.”*

Bradley is sad that many people are losing their connection to nature, and are afraid of moths and cockroaches. He hopes to inspire everyone he meets to take some time to learn about the wildlife they come across before disregarding it or, worse, killing it.

*“The more he learns about nature,
the more Bradley realises how much he doesn't know.”*



*“How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single
moment to improve the world.”*

Anne Frank





CATEGORY

CHILD WELFARE





**PROJECT CHAMPION:
ELIZABETH MOSHE**

**YEARS FUNDED:
FOUR**

**PROVINCES:
MPUMALANGA AND
FREE STATE**



For 17 years, Topsy has made a significant impact on rural communities in the Dipaleseng District.

Through its Orphaned and Vulnerable Children (OVC) Programme, Topsy employs a multi-faceted approach to helping disadvantaged children meet their full potential.

A significant number of children living in high-risk, impoverished environments are most often faced with a dismal future, resulting in very little purpose or vision to realise their potential. The provision of essential Social Services and support to the poorest and most vulnerable children is fragmented, has limited reach, and is often of insufficient quality.

Issues related to poverty include poor health and nutrition, deficient care, and limited stimulation, all of which have a negative effect on early childhood development. These factors are known to contribute to a trajectory of poor health and schooling outcomes that perpetuate the cycle of poverty. Children's rights, their health and their social, emotional and intellectual development are most often compromised in these circumstances. The more adversity they experience, the worse the outcome. Over the long term, early deprivation leads to low levels of societal development, including poor school performance that reduces the chance of employment in adulthood. However, protective influences such as good nutrition, healthcare, supportive parenting and opportunities for early learning can nurture positive development –

including good health and academic outcomes, economic productivity, responsible citizenship and effective parenting of the next generation.

Topsy operates with the belief that the largest impact it can make is to equip children with the necessary skills to face the future positively in a holistic and all-encompassing manner.

The OVC activities take place from Topsy's central project site at Grootvlei, the 'Topsy Sanctuary', which over the years has been established as a focal point for the surrounding communities. Further outreach work is carried out in three rural communities in the District.



The Programme consists of an essential package of services to facilitate the emotional; intellectual; mental; spiritual; moral; physical and social development; and growth of children. Particular attention is paid to the following areas:

Educational Support

Along with the ECD programme, reported on in the Education Category, additional educational support is provided through an after school centre for primary school children. These children have been identified as being highly at risk through the assessment of a qualified social worker. The after school centre is run by a qualified school teacher and is proving highly beneficial to the learners' academic performance.


Social Support

Two Topsy-appointed social workers provide counselling to children who need to discuss issues and concerns. A social auxiliary worker and seven community health care workers conduct regular home visits in the communities and assist wherever necessary. This includes providing assistance to the families that are eligible to apply for grants. Approximately 550 home visits are carried out monthly.

Roughly 70 children between birth to 18 years of age, whose families have been identified by home and community health care workers as highly at risk (and further assessed by a qualified social worker), receive additional assistance including the provision of school uniforms, access to an after school centre and provision of monthly food and hygiene parcels.

Medical Support

The Topsy medical team consists of highly qualified medical professionals including a medical doctor, professional nurse,


*“Topsy believes
 that all
 children
 deserve the
 opportunity to
 thrive,
 regardless of
 where they
 come from.”*



radiographer and pharmacy assistant. The team provides general medical care to all the children in the OVC programme and includes the dispensing of medication for opportunistic infections. Specialised annual assessments are offered when volunteer dentists, paediatricians and dermatologists are available to visit the Sanctuary.

Nutritional Support

It is impossible for children to function effectively and participate fully in a learning environment on an empty stomach. To meet this need, Topsy's food security programme is vast and includes 145 individual vegetable gardens feeding 145 families per month; and 21 community vegetable gardens that provide fresh vegetables and fruit to 966 beneficiaries monthly. In addition, Topsy distributes food and hygiene parcels to highly at-risk families.

Holiday and Life Skills Programme

Topsy introduced the Life Skills Programme to encourage growth beyond the confines of the 'village' mentality by inspiring a well-rounded world-view. The programme takes place during two school holidays a year – the Easter and Winter breaks. By exposing the children to new and exciting experiences, Topsy is providing them with the life skills and exposure to unknown and new environments that should stand them in good stead.

Topsy reported on its most recent holiday experience when 55 children

were taken on an excursion to a dry ski slope, *Avalanche*, in Johannesburg. Some of the children were so excited that they arrived at Topsy's Centre at 6.30am, almost two hours early! With a wholesome meal packed for each child and following a stringent roll call, the adventure began. The children were given a safety briefing in English, Zulu and Sesotho - excitement and anticipation grew - yet they remained patient. Finally, they were given the go ahead and ran to the start, where they began two hours of fun - skidding down the carpeted slope in a rubber tube. The children shrieked with joy as they sped down the slope, giggling as they collided into each other at the bottom. This went on and on as they climbed to the top of the slope and hurled themselves down, repeatedly. The staff thought they would never get tired but at the end of their long and exciting day they headed back to Mpumalanga and a good night's rest! Elizabeth Moshe proudly reported that 'her' kids were so well behaved and polite to the *Avalanche* staff and other children who were at the venue – “*they made us incredibly proud*”.

Topsy believes that all children deserve the opportunity to thrive, regardless of where they come from. Its work to break the cycle of poverty and empower rural communities in Mpumalanga through education, food security, health services and emotional support is not only noble but essential. N3TC confidently supports Topsy's mission to provide disadvantaged rural communities with the support and tools needed to raise happy, healthy and capable children.



*“Great changes in the destiny of mankind can be effected
only in the minds of children.”*

Sir Herbert Read



A group of young people, mostly Black, are walking several light-brown dogs on leashes in a fenced-in area. In the background, there are colorful houses (blue, red, white) and a white car. The scene appears to be a community walk or a dog training session. A large, semi-transparent gold circle is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the text 'CATEGORY YOUTH DEVELOPMENT' in a serif font, flanked by decorative white flourishes.

CATEGORY
**YOUTH
DEVELOPMENT**



**PROJECT CHAMPION:
KATHERINE MCCLELLAND**

**YEARS FUNDED:
SIX**

**PROVINCES:
KWAZULU-NATAL**



Musical appreciation and the love of music are infiltrating the Midlands lifestyle beyond the classroom.

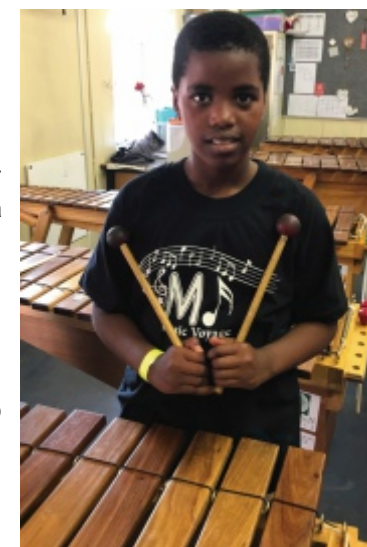
Music Voyage, including the masterminds behind the project and its musically talented and gifted teachers, is taking music into the hearts, minds and homes of locals who would otherwise never have had the opportunity nor ability to 'make music'. Life skills associated with a depth of musical culture are both life changing and everlasting. From gaining skills in discipline to learning to read music, keep a tune and stick to a beat, the Music Voyage musicians are fast becoming highly skilled and talented performers.


Invitations to perform are growing, bringing about travel to interesting destinations throughout South Africa, which gives the young musicians opportunities to experience different cultures and cities ... for many this is an opportunity of a lifetime. It equips them with the skills to cope in a busy city setting without losing touch with the quietness of the day-to-day Midlands life. It goes without saying

that Music Voyage is growing and with that the vision of forming a Midlands orchestra is evolving.

Below are a few highlights from Music Voyage's recent repertoire of activities:

- The Music Voyage Marimba band attended the International Marimba Festival in the hustle and bustle of Joburg. The band was part of a much bigger gathering of marimba players from all over Africa. They were given the opportunity to sign up for workshops of all kinds, such as body percussion, gum boot dancing and marimba playing.
- The 'saxophone girls' and 'guitar guys' played closer to home at a concert held in Nottingham Road. The audience showed absolute delight in the performance and the children were proud of their achievements, all contributing to building confidence in these young musicians.
- The saxophone girls did their grade 4 ABRSM exams in




*“Life skills
 associated with
 a depth of
 musical
 culture are
 both life
 changing and
 everlasting.”*



Pietermaritzburg at the end of September and achieved excellent results.

- The Marimba band participated in the Youth Day Marimba and Djembe Drumming Festival in Pietermaritzburg. It was a day full of laughter, fun, making new friends, creating memories and, of course, lots and lots of music.

The last performance for 2017 was in collaboration with the Midlands Meander Education Project at their annual awards ceremony. It was held at the Howick Agricultural Hall on the 29th of November. The marimbas entertained guests on arrival, playing in the sunshine at the



entrance; and after the official welcome, the Hawkstone Primary School Choir sang, followed by the saxophone girls showing off their amazing skills!

“We were so proud of all the students and humbled to see the difference music can make in their lives,” said Catherine.

Life for the Music Voyage team and musicians is filled with fun and excitement coupled with learning and hard work, the perfect balance for growth.



FUNDA NENJA A TOWNSHIP DOG TRAINING INITIATIVE

**PROJECT CHAMPION:
SANDRA NAIDOO**

**YEARS FUNDED:
ONE
(FIRST YEAR IN 2017)**

**PROVINCES:
KWAZULU-NATAL**



Funda Nenja was added to the N3TC Touching Lives Programme in 2017.

The extent of the work undertaken by Funda Nenja is both extensive and impressive. Operating in Mpophomeni, KwaZulu-Natal, the initiative aims to educate and equip residents of the township with the knowledge and skills to raise healthy dogs that are loved companions, cared for in the best way possible and with all the necessary support.

The Funda Nenja model is made up of the following programmes:

Dog School

- School Education Programme;
- Rabies Clinics;
- Sterilisation Programme;
- Veterinary Clinics; and
- Anti poaching – hunting dogs.

Dog School Basic Obedience Training

The dog school takes place monthly and on average 100 children attend these sessions. The children attend the school with their dogs or even those of neighbours, showing enthusiasm for training dogs and the need for an initiative of this nature.

Rabies Innoculations

Staff and volunteers involved in Funda Nenja's programmes are vaccinated against rabies. This is essential as rabid dogs are encountered on occasion; and the vaccines protect the staff and volunteers from contracting the virus while working with dogs in the communities.

Winter Warmth

Funda Nenja's concern for dogs and their owners in Mpophomeni often takes on a humanitarian nature. Jackets, for dogs and owners, are distributed in the winter months to make sure that both owners and their dogs are able to withstand the cold extremes of Mpophomeni winters.

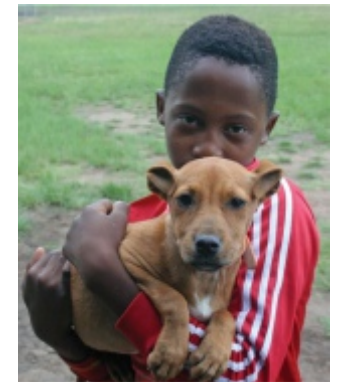
Home Visits

An education officer assesses and evaluates the condition of the dogs in their home environments. He often identifies concern areas that can be handled with very simple interventions such as the provision of a kennel or food. Home visits are essential to evaluating the effects of





*“The initiative
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the education initiatives and the conditions in which the dogs are housed.

Veterinary and Rabies Clinic

Regular clinics are held during the year and are managed by the Funda Nenja welfare officer. The clinics assist with treatments varying from wound management, deworming, tick and flea treatments and other minor ailments.

Anti-Poaching

Together with the EWT, Funda Nenja hosts workshops that address issues of poaching and aims to equip locals with the knowledge to identify poachers and report them to the relevant authorities. It is hoped that this initiative will address the rise in poaching in the Midlands.

Family Support Services

The work of Funda Nenja is holistic and addresses issues on various levels ... man and dog.

Counselling

Counselling sessions are provided to children who are identified in need of support by social workers. Very often, Funda Nenja's

counsellors assist children with behavioural problems, substance abuse and neglect. Timeous and intensive counselling interventions have proven highly beneficial to addressing these concerns and determining a new path for the children that will secure their future.

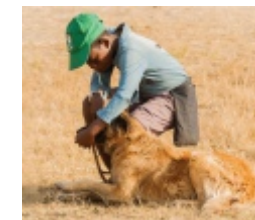
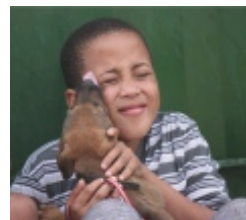
After School education sessions

Every Friday afternoon, children attend an after school session that complements the Life Skills curriculum taught at school. Attendance is growing and the children are encouraged to take responsibility, develop caring techniques and motivate others to improve social engagement in the community.

School Education

With the help of Dogs Trust, Funda Nenja has been able to develop charts, worksheets, presentations and assessment tools for their school visits. These have proven highly valuable in addressing learners in a fun and interactive manner.

The above is merely a taste of the extensive work being done by the Funda Nenja team and their facilitators in Mpophomeni. Life has taken on new meaning for dog owners, which bodes well for social engagement and interaction in the township.





HERO PROFILE

by Nikki Brighton



DELI MASANGO

Music Voyage



Deli Masango loves to dance...

Growing up in the Midlands countryside there was always singing and dancing in her home. *"We made our own music,"* remembers Deli. *"My parents loved music, especially cultural music, so I know all the traditional Zulu songs."* This is certainly a great grounding for her new career with Music Voyage, a Midlands based music initiative, that focuses on teaching children living in rural areas and informal settlements to play instruments.

After her first husband died, leaving her with a small child, Deli decided she needed to upgrade the opportunities in her life. First, she finished

her matric, then she enrolled for a course in Early Childhood Development and completed her driver's licence. While engaged as a domestic worker, the opportunity to be more involved with Music Voyage came up – she didn't hesitate.

On Wednesday afternoons, Deli collects the marimba players and takes them to class in Howick, using the short drive from Mpophomeni to chat to them about the importance of respect, punctuality, humility and conscientiousness. Naturally, she dances happily to the music they create. On Thursdays she fetches learners in Nottingham Road for their saxophone, recorder and violin lessons. Often, in the evening, she transports aspiring musicians to write their exams and returns them safely home late at night, feeling satisfied that she can make a contribution to enriching their lives, through the inspiration, beauty and discipline of music.



“...feeling satisfied that she can make a contribution to enriching their lives, through the inspiration, beauty and discipline of music.”



Many of the youngsters in the Music Voyage family come from challenging backgrounds, but Deli's patience is endless. *“They know I will take care of them and help them if they commit to come every week.”*

It is clear that the young musicians adore her and appreciate what she is doing for them. A kind disciplinarian, she is quick to observe when there might be a problem and ask gently if she can help. She encourages teachers, at the schools that she visits to assist with their choirs or drumming, to do the same.

Naturally, there is still a lot of music in her home. She has been learning to play the guitar, loves listening to gospel or an instrumental piece and is often seen dancing to Yvonne Chaka Chaka while she makes supper. *“My husband laughs at me and says I am like a child!”*

With joy in her heart and a splendid smile, Deli moves to her own special beat, enabling many Midlands children to do the same.





*“There is no greater disability in society,
than the inability to see a person as more.”*

Robert M Hensel





CATEGORY

DISABLED



**PROJECT CHAMPION:
BRENDA GOUWS**

**YEARS FUNDED:
FIVE**

**PROVINCES:
MPUMALANGA**



Sunfield Fortuna, located in the rural heartland near Balfour in Mpumalanga, is home to a 'family' of disabled people from some very young in age to those well into their sixties.

It is a home filled with love and genuine care for many who are forgotten, orphaned or, quite simply, alone in this world. The love that Brenda and her team shower on all their 'kids' is evident. The Sunfield team is always close at hand providing a wholesome meal, medical support and personal assistance when needed. From bathing those who cannot manage their own basic personal hygiene activities to tucking them in their beds at night, those privileged to receive care at Sunfield Fortuna never go without a gentle touch and a comforting hug.

N3TC recognises the dedication of the management of Sunfield Fortuna to provide a comfortable, hygienic and stimulating environment for the residents. The struggles are real, however, as some residents have outlived their parents and loved ones; and are therefore no longer in a position to pay their monthly fees and cannot be relocated to another facility. Grant income from government is sporadic and often delayed by months, all of which contribute to a highly fluctuating cash

flow. However, Brenda is determined to meet all the needs of the residents and very often receives donations or income at just the right time to keep the 'debt collectors' at bay.

Sunfield Fortuna received substantial funding from N3TC over the past two years to cover the costs of building a new workshop that is in keeping with regulations and capable of housing the equipment needed for a sustainable manufacturing business. The more able bodied residents produce cellphone tower trees and other items for orders received that help to bring much-needed income to the home and a



little 'pocket money' for those involved. The workshop has given fresh hope and new life to the home and especially to those 'employed' in the Centre.

Sadly, Sunfield Fortuna experienced a violent 'farm invasion' in 2017. This left Brenda, her team and, sadly, the residents highly traumatised, vulnerable and fearful. But being someone who refuses to accept 'fate', Brenda was determined that she would ensure the security of the home and has led her team and the residents to a place of safety with incredible dignity, courage and strength. N3TC contributed essential funding to improve the safety of the facility and secure the home for the residents. This has meant that everyone is able to sleep peacefully at night without fear of another intrusion.

Sunfield Fortuna is extremely proud of their residents' annual achievements at the local Eisteddfod and, yet again, they brought home many awards, trophies and certificates that adorn the Home's admin offices for all to see.

N3TC is extremely proud to support Sunfield Fortuna and believes that the contributions made to the home will ensure its sustainability for future residents.



KWAZAMOKUHLE SCHOOL FOR THE DISABLED

CEREBRAL PALSY EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAMME

PROJECT CHAMPION:
RUTH BOSSHOF

YEARS FUNDED:
SIX

PROVINCES:
KWAZULU-NATAL



Celebrations for those involved in the Cerebral Palsy (CP) Early Intervention Programme are somewhat different to the norm and the arrival of wheelchairs is reason to rejoice.

Kwanele, a boy with Spinal-Muscular Atrophy, was fitted with a positioning wheelchair with an electric base; and Lungelo, a boy with Arthrogryposis, received his electric base. Lungelo's electric control is the first of its kind at Kwazamokuhle, as he is able to control it with his chin! Both boys love their newly gained independence.

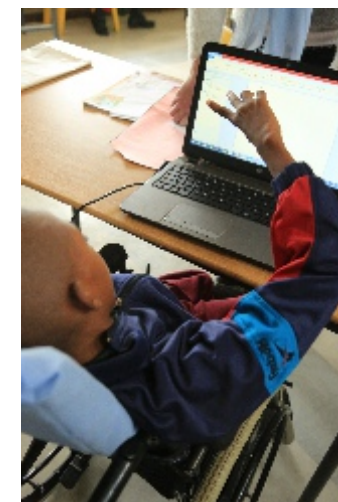
At the same time two learners were measured for positioning wheelchairs and are eagerly awaiting their arrival. A young former rugby player from Winterton who suffered a severe head injury in a car accident has been assessed for his new wheelchair, funded by the generosity of his friends and neighbours in the Winterton community.

CP Indaba

The School's CP Early Intervention Centre arranged the second CP Indaba, providing an opportunity to network and collaborate with the Department of Health about early intervention services for children with CP in the uThukela District.

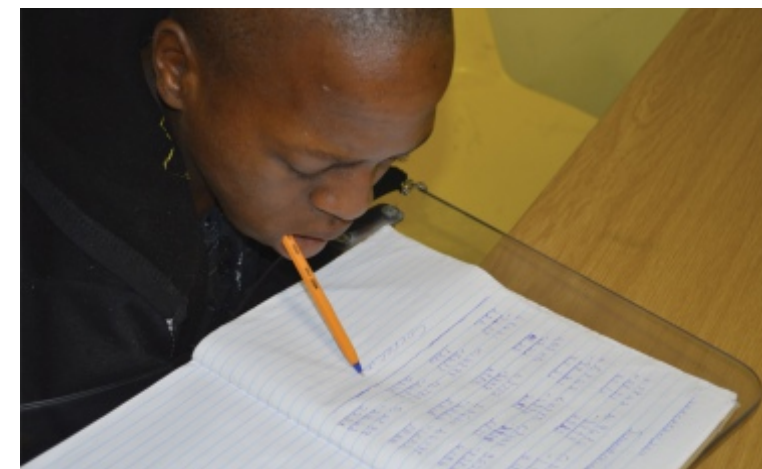
Early intervention for children with CP is crucial to enable them to achieve their maximum potential and to prevent secondary complications (like contractures and lack of stimulation). Like many districts across the country, in uThukela the CP clinics are run largely by community service therapists who often have limited experience in managing the complexities of a child with CP. These clinics are often very full, and time and resources don't allow for extended time with the child and their caregiver to transfer knowledge and skills.

These, among other challenges, were identified by the participants at the Indaba. The Indaba was held over two days and various experts presented on topics around classification, intervention and advocacy for children with CP. Feedback from the discussion groups was excellent and it will be interesting to see how hospitals implement the ideas generated at the Indaba.



The Indaba was attended by many therapists and a few officials from the Departments of Health and Education from uThukela and several therapists from Pietermaritzburg. Dr Neil McKerrow (Head of Paediatrics at KwaZulu-Natal DOH) and two directors from the Disability and Rehabilitation section of the Department were also in attendance, which highlighted the value placed on the Indaba by the Provincial Department. An encouraging outcome of the discussions is the Department's interest in organising a Provincial CP Indaba to share what was started in uThukela.

The work being done by the Early Intervention Centre is life changing and far reaching.





HERO PROFILE

by Nikki Brighton



ROSEMARY ZUMA

Pevensey Place



When Rosemary was a little girl walking across the fields with her family on Sundays to attend church, she never dreamed that one day she might work at this very spot.

Pevensey Place has, for the past 44 years, been a residence for Cerebral Palsied adults. Before that it was part of the Reichenau Mission Seminary. Since 1984 Rosemary has been employed here – with views across to the big gum tree beside the home where she was born in Nhlanhleni Village. This area is peaceful, green and simply lovely.

Rosemary was an only child, but her parents always helped raise other children, so from an early age she understood the importance of community and sharing. *"They liked to help others, I learnt this from them."* Rosemary's father was a farmer and because she had no male siblings, Rosemary got to help with all the tasks – ploughing, taking the cattle out to graze, milking the cows and helping to plant and harvest the potatoes, maize and tomatoes he grew. *"It was a happy life. My father taught me a lot. I knew how to do all the work."* Her mother died when she was 12, so she took on the task of cooking and looking after her father too and cared for him until he died.

Caring and compassion is in her blood. *"I started as a cleaner at Pevensey and very soon I fell in love with the residents. I was so pleased when I got the chance to train as a carer,"* she says, *"now they are like my children."* Rosemary's tasks include assisting at bath time, massaging swollen feet, cutting nails, dressing, making beds and going



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for walks. *“Sometimes we just sit and talk. Everyone loves to have attention, so we have to make time to do that.”* Rosemary enjoys the group outings as much as the residents, even though they are often a lot of hard work. She has happy memories of visiting the Royal Show, manning a water point for the Sani2C MTB Race, and recently a trip to the seaside. *“Oh, they love to swim! They won't get out of the sea, even when they are cold,”* she laughs. *“Last year eight of our residents swam the Midmar Mile.”*

On her days off, Rosemary still enjoys growing food beside her home and cooking her own produce – especially traditional dishes like



isigwamba using the indigenous bitter leaf *inthsungu*, and making *istambo* from her harvest of dried beans.

She recently bottle-fed three tiny week-old calves and dreams of owning sheep and chickens to keep her cows company. *“This is a very nice community to live in. Everyone is friendly, and I know them all. I am lucky to have work so close to my home.”* Pevensey Place is very fortunate to have Rosemary, an integral part of their special community too.

“Last year eight of our residents swam the Midmar Mile.”



*“Every enterprise is a learning and teaching institution.
Training and development must be built into it on all levels
- training and development that never stops.”
Peter Drucker*





CATEGORY

ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

TSA LAPENG DESIGNS RURAL SEWING PROJECT

PROJECT CHAMPION:
RHEOLA VAN DEN BOSCH/
JABULILE CECILIA MOLEFE

YEARS FUNDED:
EIGHT

PROVINCES:
FREE STATE



Tsa Lapeng Designs continues to upskill, train and support women from the communities surrounding Harrismith to produce garments, items and keepsakes that are marketed and sold for profit.

This income positively contributes to the individual's household income with a downstream benefit to the communities where he or she lives.

From providing training in sewing, crocheting, pattern-making, beading, fabric painting and tie-dying, for example, the Tsa Lapeng vision to equip and empower locals is proving both impactful and beneficial.

In 2017, training continued with a specific focus on patternmaking. It is essential for the ladies to learn how to make workable patterns and gain insight into designing fashionable items that will create demand, promote ongoing production and build a clientele to establish a micro enterprise and generate an income.

The culmination of all the patternmaking sessions during the first six months of 2017 was a spectacular Fashion Show held in the Harrismith Town Hall in July. Angelina West who teaches the patternmaking organised an amazing occasion that celebrated the skills of many locals; and highlighted the depth of knowledge that the Tsa Lapeng ladies have gained over the months of their training.

'The models were gorgeous and the garments were well designed and beautiful' was the general consensus of the guests who attended the show.

Annah Nhlapho, one of the Tsa Lapeng ladies-in-training, showcased her collection and was awarded third prize. This is a remarkable



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achievement for a novice designer and the Tsa Lapeng team was very proud of her and the calibre of her styles.

On a positive note, Annah has subsequently received a number of orders since the show, and is busy establishing her little business. The gift of giving continues to reap rewards and Annah has a very bright future ahead of her.

Tsa Lapeng reported that the ladies produced 991 items in a mere three months. Their ability to produce items of high quality at a quicker rate is encouraging for the future of this initiative. All these products are either available for sale at *Rheola's* in Harrismith or at outlets in Clarens and the Midlands. It is essential to build up stock ahead of the Christmas and end of year holiday season as this is the ideal opportunity to generate income for the ladies.



Another talented designer and dressmaker who has been part of the Tsa Lapeng project for a few years is Puleng Skosana. She is currently attending further patternmaking classes and putting a showcase of her styles together for the next Fashion Show. We are eager to see what the future holds for yet another gifted lady.

Tsa Lapeng was invited to exhibit on the N3 Gateway stand at the Hilton Arts Festival, providing the ladies with another platform to profile their talents and wares. Any opportunity to raise awareness of Tsa Lapeng and the items the ladies produce, which are unique in nature and on-trend, is essential to their long term sustainability.





HERO PROFILE

by Nikki Brighton



JABULILE CECILIA MOLEFE

Tsa Lapeng



Cecilia Molefe wears carefully coordinated colours - muted mauve, plum and grey, so it comes as a bit of a surprise to hear her say *“I just love tie-dye.”*

Tie dye is not usually associated with such elegance, but if anyone can pull it off, Cecilia can.

Cecilia manages Tsa Lapeng, an initiative that trains rural women in craft skills like sewing, crochet, knitting and beadwork, and Rheola's, their shop in central Harrismith. All the products, designed by Rheola van den Bosch, are individually made using natural fibres.

When Cecilia joined Rheola in 2003, these crafts were completely new to her. She was particularly fascinated to learn how a beautiful cardigan was created. *“I didn't realise what a long process it was - starting with dyeing the cotton yarn, then knitting and finally assembling the garment. I was astonished that I have never known this before.”* Cecilia's enthusiasm, attention to detail and commitment meant she soon became project initiator Rheola's right hand, and an invaluable part of the team.

A few years ago, she participated in a tie-dye course run by artist Melanie Brummer. *“I fell in love immediately. I could hardly believe that by mixing just three colours – pink, gold and turquoise – I turned an old t-shirt into something amazing. It was like magic.”* she recalls. One of the best things about tie-dye is that you are never exactly sure what you are going to get, so unwrapping the garment is always a surprise. *“You need to go with the flow,”* she smiles, *“even if it is not what you*



*“Cecilia's
enthusiasm,
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project
initiator.”*



aimed for, someone will love it. We always laugh when the scarf we think is a boo-boo sells first!

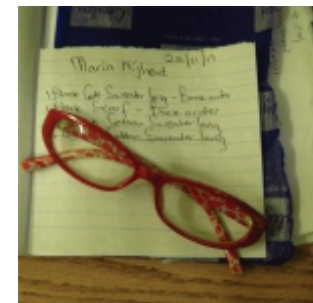
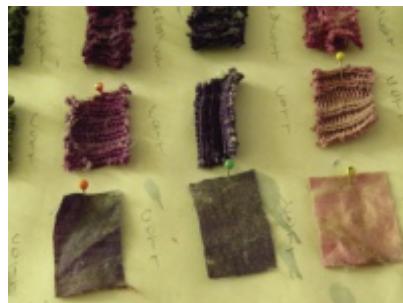
Cecilia loves working with people, always encouraging others to believe in themselves. “Do not underestimate yourself, you will be surprised”, she says, “how will you know what you can do if you just sit in the corner? I tell the ladies to go slowly and not to give up. They are doing something for themselves that will benefit their families in the end.”

Busy with the factory, training centre and the shop, she does not have



as much time as she would like to practice the art of tie-dyeing. Relaxing with her husband and son in the evenings, Cecilia makes plans for completing the décor of their home - in gorgeous shades of aloe green and cherry red, with tie-dyed curtains and crochet cushions, of course.

While Cecilia feels fortunate at the opportunities that have come her way and enjoys working closely with Rheola, it would not be a surprise to come across a little craft shop with an entire section devoted to tie-dye, one day - called Cecilia's.





PROJECT CHAMPION:
DIANA MILFORD

YEARS FUNDED:
FIVE

PROVINCES:
KWAZULU-NATAL



Project Gateway is a church-based organisation with core values and a statement of faith that are intrinsic to the structure of the organisation and define how it is managed and governed.



Its vision is to see local churches mobilised in the areas of Care, Education, and Empowerment, and to provide a resource base for the city of Pietermaritzburg and surrounding communities. A number of empowerment ventures are in place as part of Project Gateway's vision for self-sustainability. These include tours of The Old Prison (tourism); the sale of crafts made by locals (enterprise development); the hiring of conference venues on site (hospitality); and its Volunteers and Teams programme (social outreach). Project Gateway has two charitable trusts operating on its behalf - one in the United Kingdom (PCF Gateway Trust), and the other in America (The American Fund for Charities).

Project Gateway's mission is to change people's lives, physically, emotionally and spiritually, by creating opportunities through job and business development initiatives and through teaching life skills by reaching all people without prejudice.

Care

Project Gateway provides safety, accommodation and meals for the homeless in its Sunset Overnight Shelter on a daily basis. It is actively involved in local food security programmes and has provided more

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 people's lives,
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than 21 million meals to date. It supports over 15 crèches and community gardens including one on the Old Prison site, run by Project Gateway staff. Furthermore, it provides an after school care programme for children attending the Gateway Christian School.

Education

Gateway Christian School is a registered independent primary school that provides quality education at affordable fees to children in the local area who would not normally have access to the level of education it offers.

The school currently has over 500 children registered from Grades RR to 7 and four new classrooms have been built to meet demand.

Empowerment

Project Gateway's empowerment programmes comprise its Business Training Course, Gateway School of Fashion, Computer Literacy Classes and a Mentorship Programme for local crafters.

Through practical training in areas of creative product design, business and marketing strategies, as well as life skills such as human rights and HIV and AIDS awareness, its training and mentorship programmes enable people to take action for positive change. And it is these values that N3TC has confidence in and the reason for its support of Project Gateway's empowerment initiatives.

Products made at the Project Gateway School of Fashion are sold through a variety of outlets, locally and abroad. Its programme of integration and active participation with the selected outlets ensures consistency in the quality of items sold as well as appropriate stock levels to maximise the opportunity and to grow sales. Project Gateway reported that it monitors the sales from these outlets, records improvements and highlights areas of weakness. An example of this process for continuous improvement was the recent purchase of a new point of sale unit for one outlet for more effective display of the crafters products. Sales at this outlet will be closely monitored and based on the results; more units may be purchased for other outlets.

Project Gateway is actively pursuing the development of the “Freedom Route” as a tourism experience in KwaZulu-Natal, which should contribute to the growth in tourism to the area and through the Old Prison site, which should further contribute to increasing sales in the site's retail outlet.

Project Gateway is highly regarded and recognised as a contributor to supporting local communities, making it an ideal project to complement the Touching Lives programme.



PROJECT CHAMPION:
ELSIE MAJOLA

YEARS FUNDED:
FOUR

PROVINCES:
KWAZULU-NATAL

Babanentse Co-Op is a start-up textile business operating in Bruntville, Mooi River.

The business has grown from strength to strength in the four years of N3TC's involvement and the reports, while short and concise, are filled with news of wonderful achievements and highlight the team's determination to succeed.

Babanentse has grown its school customer base to twelve schools. Eight schools are based in Mooi River and a further four are in Hlathikhulu. Babanentse has been appointed to sew the official school uniforms and local schools remain an area of growth for the business going forward.

The Co-Op has managed to purchase an industrial embroidery machine that is used for school bags and various uniform requirements, which further adds value to their product offering.

Mpofana Municipality is another loyal customer that regularly places orders for the Municipality's apparel requirements such as golf shirts, uniforms for workers and so forth. It is extremely encouraging to see this support of a local business.



Babanentse was given the opportunity to co-exhibit at the N3 Gateway stand at the Hilton Arts Festival and other local festivals, which have helped to raise awareness of Babanentse and orders are looking promising.

Babanentse is a well-managed, genuinely local micro enterprise that has the potential to grow substantially and become a recognised employer in the Bruntville community.

N3TC is proud to be associated with the work of the Babanentse Co-Op and its vision to provide quality products to a growing customer base.



**PROJECT CHAMPION:
MANANA MOLOI**

**YEARS FUNDED:
THREE**

**PROVINCES:
FREE STATE**

Mamello Support Group is located in Intabazwe, Harrismith.

The brainchild of local 'gogo', Manana Moloi, Mamello has grown from providing after school care to two children (one of which was her grandchild) to providing love, care and support to over 200 children. It has been a journey of 'discovery' for Manana and the Mamello Support Group, marked with sheer determination and an ability to overcome any challenge with a positive attitude fuelled by a genuine love for children.

While providing an all-encompassing after school facility for community children – meal, homework support and social welfare assistance – Mamello established a bakery in late 2015 as a means to provide baked goods to the project but, more importantly, to generate an income for the Centre, that will contribute to reaching a point of self-funding over the longer term. Since its inception, the bakery has generated an income through the sales of its baked goods such as scones, red cakes, red velvet cakes and muffins. Orders from local schools, clinics, Thebe Hospital, Harrismith College, Highway Junction, Wimpy complex and the local community are regularly filled and delivered, some on a daily basis. These humble beginnings are proving a success and the bakery is set to become a thriving local business.

The bakery has been awarded the necessary certificates by the Health Department and inspections are carried out as determined by the authority, making it a legitimate business that is registered to supply baked goods to customers.



Mamello Support Group receives support from many other organisations including:

- The Department of Correctional Services;
- Debonaires;
- Pick 'n Pay;
- Shoprite; and
- Spar.

Donations are regularly provided to Mamello by various groups and organisations on key 'days' such as Mandela Day, Youth Day and Heritage Day. These donations and contributions in kind are essential to the day-to-day running of the Centre.

N3 GATEWAY TOURISM ASSOCIATION

PROJECT CHAMPION:
NIKI GLEN

YEARS FUNDED:
NINE

PROVINCES:
GAUTENG, MPUMALANGA,
FREE STATE, KWAZULU-
NATAL – ROUTE

N3 Gateway, established by N3TC in 2008, remains a high profile project in the Touching Lives programme.

Through the efforts of the N3 Gateway marketing platforms, N3TC has been positioned as a key role-player in the region and supporter of communities and their development over the long term. N3TC remains actively involved at Board level and engages with the N3 Gateway team on a daily basis. Essential to the N3 Gateway's future and its strategic planning is its sustainability to continue to operate as a recognised tourism entity beyond the N3TC concession period.

Social Media

N3 Gateway's primary engagement platform is social media. Its profile is dependent on achieving credibility on the various social media platforms, which are monitored closely. N3 Gateway is increasingly being tagged and mentioned on various tourism-related social media pages including SA Tourism. The following has been achieved:

- Facebook likes exceeded the 49 000 mark;
- Twitter following exceeded 60 400 followers; and
- Instagram is gaining momentum on this platform, with more than 4 700 followers.



Marketing

There remains a lot of merit in maintaining a presence in the traditional marketing platforms such as printed media, electronic media and mainstream exhibitions. N3 Gateway has strategically selected key consumer-focused expos such as the Getaway Show to engage directly with a potential customer base; along with a number of community festivals to profile the organisation locally. Furthermore, the digital strategy stems from the strength of the N3 Gateway website, which remains a focus area. Furthermore, effort is placed in generating publicity in local and national media and N3 Gateway has a regular presence in the following publications:

- On Route Magazine;
- Explore Magazine;
- N3TC Mobility; and
- By The Way.

Partnerships

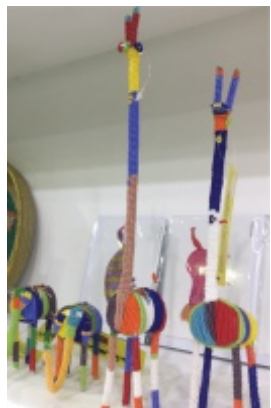
N3 Gateway has entered into partnerships with the following organisations:

- **Weston Agricultural Training College:** Weston will provide training and development for young chefs at the Van Reenen Siyathuthuka Centre;



“... its ongoing efforts to grow the tourism 'pie' in the region and gain tourism traffic to the Corridor.”

- **Aurecon:** a mutually beneficial agreement has been reached with Aurecon, which will result in N3 Gateway acting as a tourism specialist on various tender-stage projects, and Aurecon will provide community development facilitation to N3 Gateway-led projects;
- **Kwazinga Development Company:** Kwazinga will support the N3 Gateway when it applies for specialist funds for enterprise development projects;
- **Tourism KwaZulu-Natal Tourism Research Department:** TKZN and the N3 Gateway will conduct event impact assessments (funding dependent) on large-scale events taking place within the Corridor. The two organisations will jointly apply for funding to conduct critical research on the impact of tourism through sporting events in the Corridor; and
- **Africa!Ignite:** The N3 Gateway was included as a service provider in the Jobs Fund Application submitted by Africa!Ignite, which has been selected for the second round of the adjudication process.



Member Capacity Building

N3 Gateway has identified capacity building as an essential requirement to the growth and development of its members. It has held capacity building workshops with Sedibeng and Bergville; and two Social Media Training workshops with Lesotho and Sedibeng. In addition, N3 Gateway conducted a tour and social media training with six interns and staff from Mooi River Tourism Association and Info Office to assist them with improving their social media capabilities. N3 Gateway has been instrumental in assisting Mooi River CTO to revise its constitution and continues to assist the CTO with the development of a marketing strategy.

The main challenge for N3 Gateway and its members has been to gain partnerships at various levels of government. Engagement with the various tourism and related government entities are challenging and while essential to the future of the organisation, will not become a hindrance to its ongoing efforts to grow the tourism 'pie' in the region and gain tourism traffic to the Corridor.



PROJECT CHAMPION:
JULIE HAY

YEARS FUNDED:
SIX

PROVINCES:
KWAZULU-NATAL

Singakwenza, meaning 'we can do it!' in Isizulu, aims to build sustainable early childhood education programmes in economically disadvantaged communities.

Based in Hilton, KwaZulu-Natal, Singakwenza uses resources made solely from recycled materials to help caregivers and educators provide fun, education activities that enable young children to learn through play during their formative and foundation phase years.

Training and Mentorship Programme

Singakwenza introduced a Toddler Stimulation programme, which has been well received by caregivers, and the children in their care have responded well to the activities. Daily activities are clearly outlined to help the caregivers provide the best possible stimulation using simple guidelines and easy to follow instructions.

"Watching those pudgy little hands manipulating the plastic 'knives' made from margarine containers while cutting up playdough snakes is just too precious!" says Julie. The caregivers have been amazed at what their little ones can understand and do at a young age and are enjoying watching the children's development.



Othandweni Creche, Bruntville

Singakwenza has been providing support and mentorship to the caregivers and educators at Othandweni Creche (a project supported by N3TC as part of its Touching Lives Programme). Having identified that the crèche required assistance in financial management, the Singakwenza team has been teaching the senior educator, Bongi, bookkeeping. This has been a challenging concept for Bongi to grasp but Joseph Mohlakoana, Singakwenza's bookkeeping trainer, has been patiently guiding her through the process of invoicing, receipting and cross-referencing to make sure all the invoices have been paid

*“Singakwenza
is fast
becoming a
leading Early
Childhood
Development
organisation.”*

and receipting and collating all expense slips. He will move onto teaching her how to enter her income and expenses into a Cash Book and record her petty cash, once she has accurately mastered the invoicing and receipting processes. Now that the crèche is receiving funding from the Department of Social Development, this is a vitally important skill for Bongi to master.

Waste 2 Toys Workshops

The Singakwenza Waste 2 Toys Workshops are becoming extremely popular and it is not unusual to see a Singakwenza team on the N3 Toll Route travelling to a new community, school or early learning centre to share their skills in changing waste into wonderful educational toys. Workshops are held far and wide and in recent months the Singakwenza crew was seen in Ladysmith sharing their ideas with a number of educators and caregivers, for example. The Waste 2 Toys workshops focus on the importance of learning through play and emphasise that it is not how much money is spent on toys that is important but the availability of toys. The feedback from delegates attending these workshops are always encouraging as they leave enriched and empowered with a better understanding of the importance of the early years in a child's development. Their appreciation for how simple the activities are to make and how much the children can learn from each activity is expressed at every workshop.



2017 Play Conference

Keeping abreast of educational advances and challenges is essential and Julie Hay was fortunate to attend The Play Conference in 2017. It was hosted by The Lego Foundation, the Department of Basic Education, UNICEF and Cotlands; and Julie reported that every speaker who addressed the Conference reiterated for her that the Singakwenza methodology and activities are on track and beneficial to building strong early childhood learning foundations.

“It was interesting to note that the government has started to realise the importance of this early stage of a child's development and Minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshekga, spoke about the fact that they are trying to move Early Childhood Education from the Department of Social Development (whose mandate is the physical wellbeing of a child) to the Department of Basic Education to ensure that access to stimulation from a young age starts happening for more children,” commented Julie.

Singakwenza is fast becoming a leading Early Childhood Development organisation that receives support far and wide as people recognise the importance of the education through play 'work' that it promotes. It is a shining example of an individual's passion growing into a nationally-recognised entity that will impact future generations. N3TC is proud to be associated with the work of Singakwenza.

SENZAKAHLE PRIMARY CO-OP

**PROJECT CHAMPION:
NTOMBIZODWA EGNAT
KHOZWA**

**YEARS FUNDED:
FOUR**

**PROVINCES:
KWAZULU-NATAL**



Senzakahle is a wholly-owned, black female Co-Op operating in Bruntville, Mooi River.

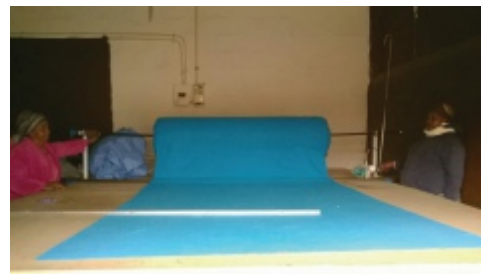
It produces a wide range of textile products predominantly for the hospitality and tourism sector such as bed linen, table linen, curtaining and soft furnishings.

The Co-op decided to expand its product offering and is producing fashionable clothing that is sold at affordable prices directly to the public.

The Co-Op has stringent quality controls in place to ensure that every product it produces is of a suitable quality to meet its customer's expectations. With a growing customer base and solid business foundations in place, it is a shining example of a successful micro enterprise that operates locally but thinks nationally.

Since N3TC has funded this project, the Co-Op has increased productivity and managed to invest in the following equipment:

- Blind Machine (to overlock curtains);
- Overlocking machine;



- Zig Zag Machine; and
- Laptop and Printer.

The laptop is used for the business' admin functions. Quotes, orders, invoices and receipts are now set up electronically and printed, which is a massive advantage for a small informal organisation and has resulted in Senzakahle operating at a more professional level.

This small operation has the capability to make 500 curtains a week and its marketing efforts are starting to pay off, requiring growth in the distribution side of the business to deliver to its customer base as far as Estcourt and Howick. Currently customers are typically ordering and/or purchasing items such as gowns, t-shirts and vests but with improved service levels it is merely a matter of time before Senzakahle's order book will be overflowing.

Having placed emphasis on improving their business and financial management, the Co-Op was delighted to report that every volunteer working at the Co-Op is now paid a stipend.

Senzakahle was another co-exhibitor at the Hilton Arts Festival, where they gained exposure and grew their network that should further help their marketing efforts.

Senzakahle is yet another inspiring business with firm foundations and a noble work ethic that will bode well for its sustainability and success.





“There is immense power when a group of people with similar interests gets together to work toward the same goals.”

Idowu Koyenikan





CATEGORY

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



**S.M.I.L.E.
CLASSROOM TEACHER
TRAINING AND
SUPPORT
PROGRAMME**

**PROJECT CHAMPION:
DANIELA BROWNE
AND NICKY LYLE**

**YEARS FUNDED:
THREE**

**PROVINCES:
FREE STATE AND
KWAZULU-NATAL**



S.M.I.L.E.'s (St Mary's Interactive Learning Experience) Classroom Teacher Training and Support Programme takes place in rural, semi-rural and urban Primary and High Schools where learners

- from Grades 4 to 12 – speak and learn in their home language, and English is taught as their first additional Language.

For most of these learners they hear very little English - only in their English

language lessons – and often English is taught through their mother tongue. This limited exposure to English affects the learners' level of understanding in all subjects and negatively impacts on their academic results. Many teachers are not skilled in speaking, or teaching English and they are in need of up-skilling their teaching techniques and require nurturing, mentorship and motivation to teach differently. Furthermore, there is always a shortage of Learning and Teaching Support Materials (LTSM), which makes teaching very difficult as learners share textbooks and readers in under-resourced schools.

S.M.I.L.E. continued its support, for a second year, in two high schools in the Vulindlela/Bruntville areas of KwaZulu-Natal, focused on grades 8 to 12. N3TC was delighted to learn that S.M.I.L.E. had successfully included ten schools in the 2017 Programme from Warden, Harrismith, Vrede and Villiers. These schools all stem from communities in close proximity to the N3 Toll Route.

The Programme takes place over a period of one year and should additional support be needed in new grades at a school, this will take





“This limited exposure to English affects the learners' level of understanding in all subjects and negatively impacts on their academic results.”



place the following year, dependent on the needs of teachers and learners.

Training takes the form of skills workshops, demonstration lessons, and observation lessons with each teacher, to build the teacher's confidence and provide motivation for ongoing improvement.

S.M.I.L.E. has a comprehensive reporting process after each visit, lesson and workshop that provides valuable and detailed feedback on the teachers' progress in each school. These reports assist S.M.I.L.E. to identify concerns and make adjustments that may be needed.



The work of S.M.I.L.E. has long term benefits and addresses many teacher-related issues by focusing on solutions and providing tips and suggestions for effective education and learning methods.

Teachers continuously express their gratitude to S.M.I.L.E. as they believe that the Programme has helped them to learn valuable skills. They see the benefit of using S.M.I.L.E.'s Learning and Teaching Support Materials and greatly appreciate the 'hands on' assistance in classrooms and at workshops. These skills and materials will stand the teachers in good stead for years to come.





HERO PROFILE

by Nikki Brighton



AYESHA KAZI

Treverton Educator's Skill
Development in Environmental
Learning



You wouldn't expect a school principal to turn half a dozen loaves of bread into sandwiches before bed each night.

However, Ayesha Kazi is not your run of the mill principal. *"I couldn't believe it during a lesson on healthy eating, when I mentioned the importance of a good breakfast and one little girl told me that there is no food in her house. How can a child focus on lessons when they are hungry?"* So, Ayesha took it upon herself to ensure that there was at least a sandwich for everyone to start their day.

Al Kajee School in Mooi River is where Ayesha has lived and worked for the past 23 years. She adores living in a small town - with priceless views of Giant's Castle from her front door. *"I love Mooi River, especially the seasonal changes that I observe in the hills"*, she says with obvious joy. *"We are so fortunate – our school grounds are our classroom, we have a wetland right next door and the learners get to experience snow first hand."*

These surroundings have fuelled her passion for the natural environment. When fellow teachers enrolled to do the Educator Skills Development course (teaching about Biodiversity) at Treverton Schools nearby, she couldn't resist joining them and loved it so much that she signed up for the next one too! *"50% of the curriculum is Environmental Education, but not all teachers have the knowledge or skills to do it well."* She encourages her staff to grasp all the opportunities that come their way so that the learners get the very best



“We are so fortunate – our school grounds are our classroom, we have a wetland right next door and the learners get to experience snow first hand.”



education possible. No wonder there is a long waiting list for places at Al Kajee School.

Growing up in Benoni, Ayesha's mum grew most of the vegetables the family ate. “I get my love of gardening from her. I still like to nibble on raw carrots or make a simple grated beetroot salad.” So, it comes as no surprise to find flourishing vegetable and herb gardens just below her office. Fresh spinach, and sometimes patty pans or pumpkins, are regularly included in the lunchtime feeding scheme, ensuring no one leaves school hungry at the end of the day. Learners are all involved and feel proud when they dig up the potatoes they planted.

Besides her busy role as principal, Ayesha teaches the Life Skills class. “It is such an important subject in the curriculum – involving not



only useful social skills, but creativity and exercise too. Recently, we learnt about medicinal herbs like bulbinella, which the children now pick to soothe rashes and scratches. We always celebrate Spring Day with beautiful hats made from recycled materials and plant indigenous trees.”

Ayesha is adamant that teaching is not a job, it is a passion. Interacting with the children is a joy. “They are fantastic and so responsive. I never have to shout, I gently tell them the consequences of the choices they make and encourage them to be responsible.”

After watching a breathtakingly beautiful sunset over the Drakensberg, Ayesha sets to work on the sandwiches and sleeps well, knowing she is doing the very best that she can for the learners in her care.



ITHEMBA PROJECTS

**PROJECT CHAMPION:
STU WALKER**

**YEARS FUNDED:
FOUR**

**PROVINCES:
KWAZULU-NATAL**

N3TC continued to support iThemba and its efforts to provide quality Early Childhood Development (ECD) in the Zayeka community of Sweetwaters, KwaZulu-Natal.

iThemba prides itself on creating a culture where stimulating and interacting with children is the norm. It believes this is the best way to impact a community as research has shown that ECD has the best return on investment when it comes to preparing children for future education, training and employment.

"We cannot emphasise the importance of quality Early Childhood Education and the crucial role that nutrition plays in the development of children. Thank you, N3TC for helping us change lives through this partnership!" Stu Walker

Gretta has been involved in iThemba's Child Nutrition Programme since it began. Through her partnership with iThemba, she has kept a vegetable garden at Sbukosezwe Crèche using permaculture methods. She tells the story of **Asimahle**.

I remember when Asimahle arrived at my crèche. She was a frail child, always sleeping, with no interest in playing with other children. We were convinced she had a disability. I decided to focus on this child but she was not interested in eating and would vomit soon after being fed. It was as though she was not used to eating and she wouldn't move from where she had been left.

Concerned for Asimahle, Gretta investigated and learned more about her home life. Asimahle's mother Lihle, is a beautiful 20 year old girl, who is still finishing high school. Lihle lives with four siblings and their mother, Asimahle's grandmother. The year Asimahle was born, the family was living in a small house made of mud and sticks. On cold rainy days they suffered. Not a single





“Research has shown that ECD has the best return on investment when it comes to preparing children for future education, training and employment.”



person worked and many days would pass without food. Asimahle's grandmother now has a job as a domestic worker and they get a small grant from Government, but it is minimal given the needs of the family. Like other families in Sweetwaters, Asimahle's lack of antenatal care as well as her impoverished environment put her at risk for malnutrition.

Once Gretta learned of Asimahle's home situation, she began to understand that Asimahle was not disabled, but simply malnourished. *“We feed the children using vegetables from our garden and we encourage parents to bring at least one vegetable to crèche from home because we believe that one nutritious meal can make a difference in a child's life,”* says Gretta.

Asimahle has benefited from her meals at the crèche that include spinach, carrots, beetroots, beans, an assortment of leafy vegetables



and herbs. It has been a year now since Asimahle joined the crèche and her health has improved tremendously. You can hardly get her to stop running and playing. Asimahle is now nicknamed 'Gretta's friend' because she is so lively and full of energy.

Lihle was generally oblivious of her child's situation, growing in poverty herself and being a teenage mother. When asked if she knew her child was sick she says, *“She was just okay but ever since she has been going to crèche she is livelier, happier and very pretty!”* Lihle has joined the home-based ECD programme that iThemba runs and through its home mentor, Savy, she has learnt about the importance of stimulating Asimahle at home through play, as well as the importance of nutrition. Asimahle's story shows that it's not just one intervention that brings lasting, sustainable change. Rather, it's a collective of a number of interventions.

Gretta sees her role as one of helping and mentoring others. If Gretta had not spotted this problem, Asimahle would have missed out on a critical time of her development, which could have had long-term ramifications on her life and future.

“N3TC, through your partnership, you are enabling teachers in Sweetwaters, like Gretta, to provide quality ECD, as well as helping us transform parent's perceptions of ECD and nutrition. Thank you for making this possible!” Stu Walker



HERO PROFILE

by Nikki Brighton



LONDANI MTSHALI

iThemba



"I dream about mud," Londani Mtshali says with a smile, "Before I go to sleep I use the quiet time to think about challenges and come up with solutions to implement the next day."

Londani leads the team that is building a community centre and crèche in kwaMpumuza in Sweetwaters using rammed earth technology. This method was chosen by iThemba Projects because it is truly sustainable both for the environment and the community. iThemba believes in spending funding on building skills rather than building materials.

The process of rammed earth building involves digging out soil from the site, sieving to allow for proper mixing and



compaction, mixing it with a stabilizer and ramming it between shuttering (wooden planks with gum pole upright supports) until it has cured. The shuttering is then removed and reused. Conventional rammed-earth buildings use machines to ram the walls, but iThemba chose to ram by hand. While this takes longer, it costs less and requires few outside materials so it can be replicated within the community.

Although Londani grew up in a house made of mud bricks that his grandfather built, he was unconvinced in the beginning. *"I could understand this technology quite easily as it is a similar technique, but I thought this will fall because there is nothing to join the earth. I changed my mind when I saw how strong it was. What has surprised me is how high we can build and what big rooms we can create."*

The entire team is as passionate about the process as Londani,



“Rammed earth technology was chosen by iThemba Projects because it is truly sustainable both for the environment and the community.”



despite the hard, physical labour. Over the years, Londani has developed into a good leader as well as a rammed earth expert, needing to focus not only on construction but on the group dynamics as well - making sure that injuries are treated properly, and personal issues dealt with. *“I am fortunate that the guys work hard not only to prove themselves, but they do not want to let the team down.”* While everyone was unskilled when they began, they now have marketable skills and have already been asked to construct other buildings once the community centre is complete.

Recently, Londani (with his wife Lindo and sons Esihle and Abenathi) moved into the caretaker's cottage (the first building to be completed) as he wanted to experience living in a rammed earth building first

hand. Inside it looks no different from any other building and with walls at 1/2m thick it is well insulated, warm in winter and cool in summer.

After starting as a volunteer, Londani has become an important member of the iThemba team and a valuable contributor to his community. *“I would like to see this idea spreading. People ask many questions because they see us putting our heart into this building and I feel proud.”* Job satisfaction is not something everyone feels.

“I like working with the soil. It feels normal, beautiful and natural. You have to be dirty at the end of the day”, he laughs, “the shower must be full of mud. Then you know you have done a good job.”





*“Sport reveals your character, it teaches you to play by the rules,
it teaches you what it feels like to win and lose -
it teaches you about life.”*

Billy Jean King





CATEGORY

SPONSORSHIPS



N3TC DRAK CHALLENGE

**PROJECT CHAMPION:
STU BERRY**

**YEARS FUNDED:
SEVEN**

**PROVINCES:
KWAZULU-NATAL**



As the summer rains replenished water levels throughout the Southern Drakensberg, paddlers from all over the country made the journey to Underberg to tackle what was to become one of the best N3TC Drak Challenge's that certainly exceeded everyone's expectations.

Race entries outnumbered previous years' records by reaching 628 at the close of the pre-entry process. An impressive 579 paddlers finished the Challenge on the Sunday afternoon after two magnificent days on the Umzimkulu River. It is evident that paddlers enjoy the laid back, country atmosphere that the event provides and with the favourable rains and exciting water level it

was clearly a top contender for their 2017 paddling season races. Residents of the greater Underberg and Himeville region were equally enthusiastic to welcome the paddlers, their families and supporters to their town for the weekend living up to their reputation of being extremely hospitable and welcoming.

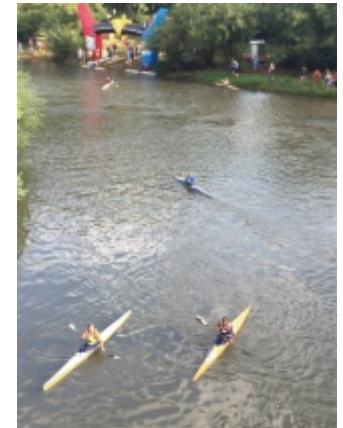
Race officials, most of whom are farmers in the Underberg/Himeville area, were all very excited to see river levels return to 'normal' and worked hard to prepare the race village, starts and finishes as well as the spectator points to accommodate the welcome rise in numbers.

The appeal of the N3TC Drak Challenge spans a wide range of ages and abilities with entries from paddlers as young as 13 years of age to those well into their 60's. The race attracts many novice paddlers and school pupils, as well as recreational paddlers who might not be attracted to more endurance based canoeing events.

At 26 kilometres, the first day is not long but technically demanding as it includes ten kilometres of relentless rocky rapids. The second stage is longer at 39 kilometres and includes numerous long flat pools and the popular rapid-laced section through the Underberg Gorge.



“The appeal of the N3TC Drak Challenge spans a wide range of ages and abilities with entries from paddlers as young as 13 years of age to those well into their 60's.”



The local community is committed to the event, and income through services such as catering, car shuttles, camping, boat repairs and running the very popular Saturday night party boosts many coffers at the end of the weekend.

Not to mention the spin-off benefits of the event. The Drak Challenge makes worthy donations to a number of local charitable causes in Underberg that collectively reach in excess of 850 beneficiaries. These charities include:

- Underberg Primary School – R30 000;
- Pevensy Place – R10 000;
- Sani Round Table – R30 000;
- Endangered Wildlife Trust – R10 000;
- Sani Marshall Club – R2000;
- Sani Search Volunteers – R30 000;
- Development Paddlers – R30 000; and
- Wattle Clearing Project – R40 000.

Andy Birkett took his fourth N3TC Drak Challenge title as he out-sprinted the reigning world champion Hank McGregor at the end of this year's riveting race that also entrenched Abby Solms as the race's most successful paddler when she won her seventh women's title.

While many top paddlers tend to regard the Drak Challenge as a stepping stone to their Dusi campaigns, Solms took a different view, and prioritised the Drak. It is hoped that many more paddlers will take this stance in the future.

The N3TC Drak Challenge is possibly one of the most successful community-based events that can demonstrate the economic and social upliftment of the event to the area. The event demonstrates its community focus by providing direct benefits to locals and community members by encouraging involvement from all spheres of the community. Due to the nature and outstanding organisational structure of this event, N3TC is proud to support the Drak Challenge as anchor sponsor.

OLD MUTUAL JOBERG2C

**PROJECT CHAMPION:
CRAIG WAPNICK**

**YEARS FUNDED:
SIX**

**PROVINCES:
GAUTENG, MPUMALANGA,
FREE STATE AND KWAZULU-
NATAL - ROUTE**



The Old Mutual joBerg2c is riding the roads less travelled and trails never travelled between Heidelberg and Scottburgh, traversing the four provinces along the N3 Corridor and predominantly taking a journey parallel to the N3 Toll Route.

It is racing, riding and touring across this magnificent country. It is sharing a passion for mountain biking with those who love riding.

From the creators of South Africa's two favourite mountain bike stage races, the Berg & Bush and Sani2c, the joBerg2c is a ride that captures the imagination of passionate mountain bikers across the

country, if not the world. Starting in the south of Johannesburg in Heidelberg and finishing nine days later at Scottburgh on the KwaZulu-Natal South Coast; the joBerg2c is part race part adventure. The joBerg2c takes competitors through the country, from the heat and dust of the big city to the cool crisp air of the sea via spectacular mountain passes.

Using a community-driven formula, the race contributes meaningfully to communities and provides them with a fool-proof way to raise money for their schools, churches and local charities. Every organisation that works on the Old Mutual joBerg2c benefits financially from the event. From road crossings to water points, it is a way for communities, many of which are marginalised, to raise money and work together.

N3TC supports the event through the N3TC drOp'ngo2c Supporters Tour, which provides spectators, supporters and family members with an opportunity to travel the road 'less travelled' as well as the N3 Toll





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charities.”*



Route, while experiencing some of South Africa's greatest sights, hospitality and destinations. The Supporters Tour is a guided journey that profiles the tourist destinations along the joBerg2c Route and ensures an experience not to be forgotten for those who laboriously support the riders for nine days.

The 2017 joBerg2c hosted 735 teams at the event of which 645 rode into Scottburgh on Day Nine. The Old Mutual joBerg2c, along with the unique N3TC Supporters Tour, has become recognised as one of South Africa's best long-distance, multi-stage events for outstanding organisation, phenomenal service, added value; and hospitality that outshines many others.

The joBerg2c prides itself on giving back to the community, not only through the event itself as highlighted above but through its support of three worthy charities. These include:

- Mandela Day Initiative – building libraries in communities along the

Route of which four have been built. This year, the race participants raised R600 000 for this cause;

- Surgeons for Little Lives – funds are needed for 'little people' needing major surgeries. The project is hoping to build a home where mothers can be accommodated during their children's hospitalisation and a new outpatient department. This year, riders generously raised R350 000 for this worthwhile project; and
- St Laurence's Children's Haven – six children from the Haven are given the opportunity to participate in the joBerg2c with all costs and requirements covered by the event and its sponsors.

The Old Mutual joBerg2c is contributing to the development and growth of the communities along the N3 Toll Route long after the excitement has died down and the towns return to their normal daily routines. The tourism spin-offs along with economic benefits are unquantifiable but will be felt well into the future.





HERO PROFILE

by Nikki Brighton



KEVIN KHUMALO

1000 Paws - uMngeni SPCA



Kevin Khumalo walks his talk.

After a day spent helping creatures in distress and advising people on how to take better care of their animals, he'd prefer not to sit down to a steak for supper. *"It just hit me one day after observing cruelty to some cattle. I should be vegan. Every sentient being has value and should be treated with respect. How can anyone decide it is ok to eat a stew made of cow, but not of Labrador?"*

Kevin is the Inspector for Mooi River & District SPCA and to say he is dedicated to his job is an understatement. He is on duty 24/7, often being called in the early hours to assist when a

truck has overturned on the N3, or there is some other animal emergency. *"I see horrible things, but it is always a relief when I can ensure that the animal's suffering is over, or can make a real difference to the way an animal is treated. People are sometimes so careless and uncaring."*

Kevin's dedication and kindness do not go unnoticed in the community. When he needed donations for the annual 1000 Paws Walk for SPCA, a major fundraiser for the Mooi River, Pietermaritzburg and Umngeni-Howick SPCAs he just asked the community and everyone helped. He ended up raising more money from Mooi River on his own than any previous collection efforts! This event is much loved on the Midlands calendar and Kevin's own dogs Hunter, Hazel and Ozzie would love to attend, but he is just too busy helping to ensure that the event runs smoothly. *"It's pretty interesting, all types of dogs and their owners having such a happy time together. It is nice to see something other than cruelty."*





*“Kevin's
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unnoticed in
the
community.”*



When Kevin moved to Mooi River in 2013, he began volunteering at the SPCA and soon became a valued member of staff. He attends to cruelty cases and inspections as far away as Bergville and Weenen, even though these areas are not officially part of the Mooi River & District territory that should reach from Estcourt to Balgowan. He organises outreaches to rural communities, educates people on their rights regarding dog hunting syndicates that invade their areas, helps at the Bruntville Dog Project on Saturday mornings, arranges Rabies vaccination days and gives talks to local schools. That is a busy schedule – particularly when you add in the sleepless Friday nights, when so many accidents happen on country roads involving innocent animals.

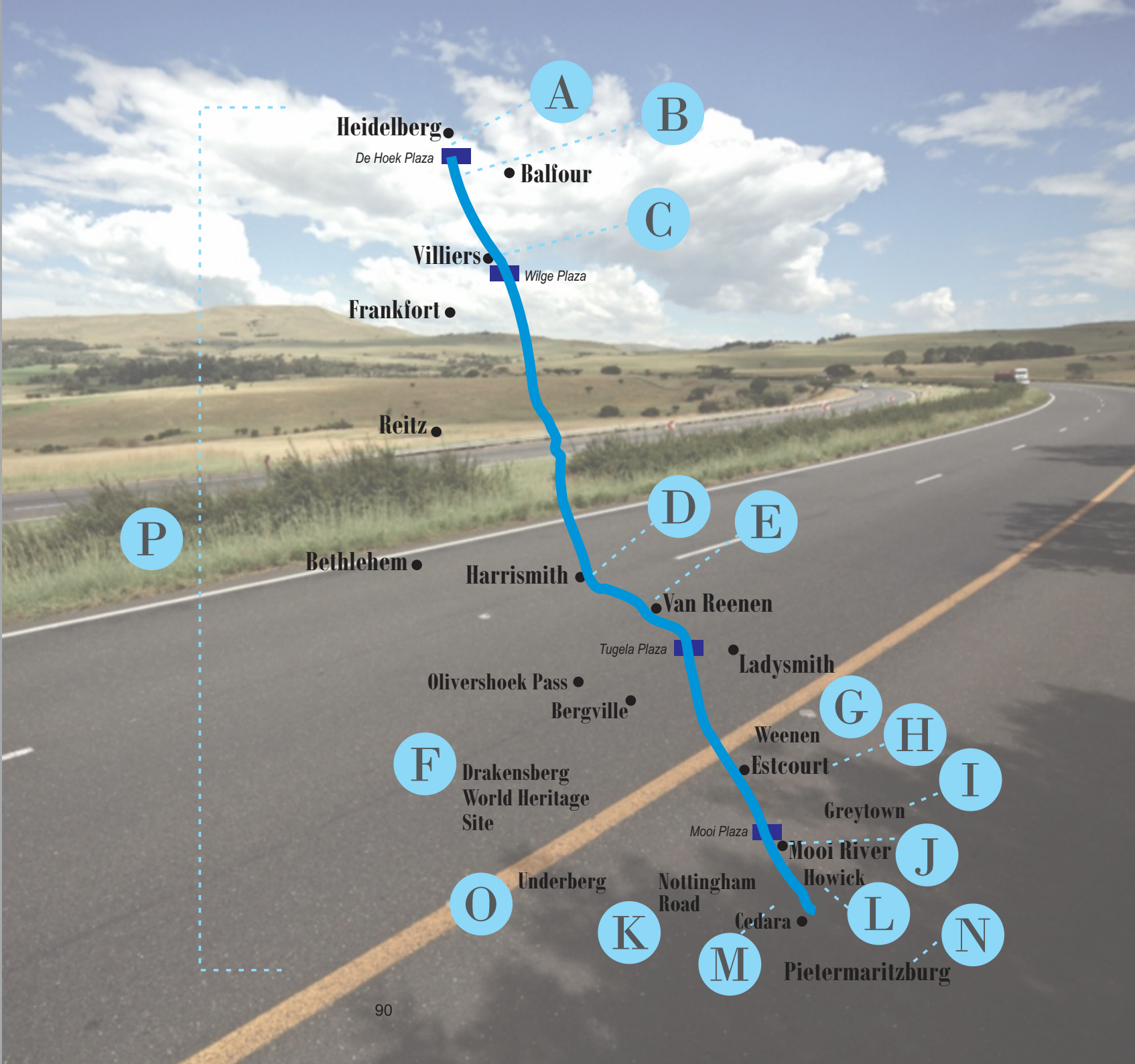
Chairman of the Mooi River SPCA volunteer management committee, Gaynor Lawson, is thrilled to have a dynamic animal-mad man of action on board. *“The SPCA cares for all animals, from fish and birds to livestock, wildlife and domestic pets. Kevin is passionate about them all. Whether he's saving crocodiles that have fallen from a moving truck, loosening a duiker from a snare, pulling bogged-down cattle from wetlands, saving terrified locals from supposedly dangerous snakes or transporting dogs and cats to the vets for sterilisation, he is an integral part of the team from Mooi River SPCA,”* she says.



At the SPCA kennels in Mooi River, the dogs awaiting adoption bounce with delight when Kevin enters their enclosures and offer him cuddles and licks to soothe the stressful parts of his important work. Children, farmers, road patrol teams, goats and cats are fortunate to have a man of Kevin's calibre on their side.



GEOGRAPHIC
SPREAD





A	Meals on Wheels Cycle Event LUSA – Gr8Start ECD Project	Sponsorships Community Training
B	Sunfield Fortuna Topsy Foundation	Disabled Child Welfare Education
C	Villiers High School Free State Eco-Schools Project	Education: Top-Up Bursaries Education
D	Free State Care in Action Maluti Child Care Project Tsa Lapeng Designs Mamello Support Group Harrismith Primary School New Horizon College Refilwe Gardens	Child Welfare Child Welfare Enterprise Development Enterprise Development Education: Top-Up Bursaries Education: Top-Up Bursaries Enterprise Development
E	Angels in Motion Community Medical Services N3TC Khanyisile Trust Nakakela BirdLife Project Trans Drak MTB Event Sungazer & Grasslands Conservation Project Van Reenen/Swinburne Tourism	Road Safety Road Safety Child Welfare Conservation Community Events Conservation Enterprise Development

F	EWT Drakensberg Crane Project Drakensberg CDIC Drakensberg Boys Choir School Royal Drak Primary School KwaZamokuhle School for the Disabled Alpine Heath Hospitality Management Programme	Conservation Enterprise Development Education: Top-Up Bursaries Education: Top-Up Bursaries Community Events Disabled Education: Top-Up Bursaries Community Training
G	Sam-Lyn Literacy Programme	Education
H	Estcourt High School	Education: Top-Up Bursaries
I	St David's Diocesan School	Education Education: Top-Up Bursaries
J	Othandweni Babanentse Co-Op Senzakahle Primary Co-Op Treverton Sports Festival Treverton Educators' Skill Development in Environmental Learning Treverton Schools Brunville Primary School Computer Training Summerhill Equine School of Management	Child Welfare Enterprise Development Enterprise Development Youth Development Community Training Education: Top-Up Bursaries Community Training Community Training
K	KZN Crane Foundation Midlands Community College Esiphethwini Sendezi Primary School	Education Conservation Education Education

L	Midmar Mile SADD Youth Road Safety Project 1000 Paws Walk	Sponsorships Road Safety Community Events
M	Vula Maths and Science Programme Midlands Meander Education Programme Curry's Post Primary School Lions River Primary School Singakwenza ECD Programme Midlands Meander Emerging Artists Project Owl Box Project Music Voyage Funda Nenja	Education Education Education Education Enterprise Development Enterprise Development Conservation Youth Development Youth Development
N	Comrades Marathon Crystal Springs Primary School Project Gateway PROTEC Pmb SMILE iThemba Projects Fleetwatch Brake and Tyre Watch	Community Events Education Enterprise Development Education: Top-Up Bursaries Community Training Community Training Road Safety
O	N3TC Drak Challenge Splashy Fen Underberg Primary School Pevensey Place Underberg Pre-Primary School	Sponsorships Community Events Education Education: Top-Up Bursaries Disabled Education
P	Trucking Wellness Old Mutual joBerg2c N3 Gateway Tourism Association Duduza and Care Bears Project	HIV/AIDS Sponsorships Enterprise Development Child Welfare



*“Now is the time to lend a hand.
Now is the time for each of us to say ‘send me’.
Now is the time for all of us to work together.”*

Cyril Ramaphosa

(paraphrasing ‘Thuma Mina’ by Hugh Masekela)



THANK YOU

