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FROM EASTERN CAPE TO CUBA

In our last newsletter we mentioned that we would be profiling Jabulani staff in future issues, so meet Mzimasi, a hospital translator who is about to leave the rural former Transkei to study medicine in Cuba. It's a story of how the right family support, personal dedication, good education, and having opportunities can help someone transcend the cycle of poverty. We caught up with him to talk about his story.

JRHF: Mzimasi, tell us a bit about your family background.

Mzimasi: I am the fourth in a family of 8 children. My father passed away in 2011; my mother is an entrepreneur who supports the family by selling refrigerated meat to the community from a gas fridge in our house. We have no electricity or running water at home, and have to walk 8km to fetch good clean drinking water.

JRHF: Wow... Tell us a bit about your education.

Mzimasi: I first went to my local school, and then from Grade 10 my parents sent me to Dudumayo, the best school in the district. The first year there was very difficult as I had to walk 1.5hrs each way every day. I would wake up at 4am to wash and do work at home before leaving for school at 6am. For my last two years my family rented a room nearer to the school for my brother and me. There was of course, lots to do at home, but my parents always encouraged us in our education. My three older siblings have all finished Grade 12 and gone on to do further study. My parents used to say, "School is the key to success."

JRHF: Have you always wanted to go to university?

Mzimasi: Always. From Grade 9 I have wanted to be a doctor. I like to help people and I think it fits my character. At school I worked very hard to try get into medicine. I knew it was very difficult. In Grade 12 we were in class until 4pm, and then because there was no electricity where I was staying I would go back to school to study from 6pm-10pm.

JRHF: And then on top of that, you did extra classes with Axiom Education?

Mzimasi: Yes, I was selected to be part of Axiom's programme in Grade 11 and 12. We went to extra classes on Saturdays and in school holidays, in Maths, English



Mzimasi in Zithulele Hospital

and Physical Sciences. They were great; they taught the most difficult topics, and really helped us to understand. I then used to teach others at school what I'd learnt at Axiom. They also helped us apply for universities, something very difficult for us without the internet, the right forms and money to apply.

JRHF: Tell us about getting into university.

Mzimasi: The night before I got my results I did not sleep. When I finally saw what I got I was so excited, I was jumping around. My family was so proud, especially my mother. I applied to study medicine at a number of South African universities, but I was not accepted. Then my school principal suggested that I apply for the Cuban programme [the SA government has an arrangement with the Cuban government where previously disadvantaged South Africans can study medicine in Cuba.] When I found out in February that I had been accepted to study medicine there, I was so happy. We leave for Cuba in September.

JRHF: How are you feeling about Cuba?

Mzimasi: I am just so excited. It will be my first time outside South Africa. And on an aeroplane. I will get to meet lots of new people. But it will be difficult. I have to learn Spanish! And I will be away for 6 years while I study, and only come back once after 3 years. I will miss my family and friends.

JRHF: What have you been doing since finishing school?

Mzimasi: When Jabulani found out that I had been accepted to study medicine but was not leaving until September, they offered me a job as a translator in Zithulele Hospital. It has been brilliant. I got to work inside a hospital, and learn how the hospital operates and about working as a doctor. I also earned a salary for my work which has helped me and my family in this time.

JRHF: What do you want to do when you've finished

studying?

Mzimasi: I want to come back and work here, right here close to my family and with my people. I think being a Xhosa doctor will help the patients to speak freely, and I will be able to understand the cultural issues first-hand. Maybe I will even work at Zithulele Hospital.

We look forward to welcoming Mzimasi back and wish him all the best on this adventure.

LENDING SUPPORT TO LITERACY DEVELOPMENT

It was fantastic to see more than 20 kids signing up to take books out from the Zithulele community library for the first time! This came about through Axiom's first Chatterbox Holiday Club that they ran during the June/July school break.

Grade 7-9 learners engaged in interactive literacy-rich activities: singing songs together, listening to interactive stories, acting, reading for enjoyment silently and to each other, and completing comprehension-building tasks.

Having a library in Zithulele has allowed for the development of a variety of different fun and educational opportunities for the young people of this community, beyond what we could ever have imagined. Another example of this is our desire to convert the back room of the library into an afterschool homework room where support and supervision will be provided, a project that is currently in the pipeline.



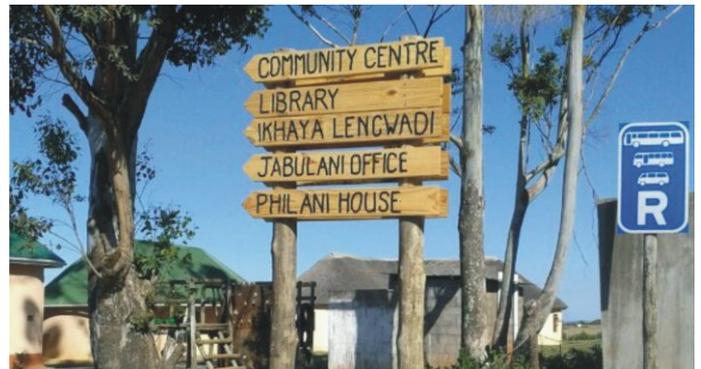
Axiom's Chatterbox holiday club in the library

TIME TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Whether with us for a few days or a year, it is no exaggeration to say that volunteers are indispensable to our work in Zithulele!

One of the most important volunteering partnerships is with UK-based NGO Project Trust, through whom two high school graduates come every year to perform a vital administrative role in the Hospital's ARV programme. We recently said goodbye to our 2012-2013 volunteers Catherine and Rhona, and welcomed their replacements, Daisy and Anna, who already seem to be settling in well. We have also recently bid farewell to volunteers Jessica, Zoe, Lena and Vanessa from Germany; Rachel from America; Kayleigh from Scotland (returning to volunteer for the fourth time!); and Emily from America, a long term volunteer who was invaluable to the running of Jabulani during the year she was with us!

Short-term volunteering is not to be underestimated either. Over the June-July period, a number of groups came to Zithulele bringing a total of 50 volunteers. Here is the impressive list of what they managed to achieve during a short time, working alongside Roger, (who heads up our Healthy Village Project and Carpentry School), and Ruan (from Axiom Education):



New sign post



Mentoring programme

- Painted a great wall mural at our new Khanyisa preschool;
- Erected new rubbish bins outside the hospital gate and collected over 116 bags of rubbish;
- Planted over 30 trees and removed alien vegetation in an important catchment area;
- Helped a stroke patient to make mud bricks for her house;
- Cleared and repaired a pipe that fed the only drinking water at KwaBoto community;
- Painted signs on the Library and erected a new sign board for the Community Centre;
- Ran a Kids Club for 2 weeks during school holidays, in 2 different venues;

- Painted a large periodic table in a classroom at Sea View Senior;
- Mentored 20 high school kids, with leadership and life skills for 10 days;
- Assisted Axiom Education with Khan Academy, Boot camp, computer, maths and English lessons; and
- Assisted the Hospital Therapy department with important data capturing.

Each volunteer, whether long-term or short-term, helps to make a difference to our community. A huge thank you to all of you!

AT A GLANCE

RECOGNISING JABULANI'S FOUNDERS

Although they would be the first to acknowledge that the successes and progress seen in Zithulele have been the culmination of many an individual and team effort, it is their long-term commitment that has drawn some amazing people to work in Zithulele Hospital and in NGO's attached to the hospital in both education and health. Ben and Taryn Gaunt and Karl and Sally Le Roux are not only the Founders of Jabulani and still contribute significantly to our work, but they maintain their day jobs as rural doctors, for which they have been recently recognised. As a couple, Ben and Taryn won the Rural Doctor of the Year Award at the recent RuDaSA conference; while Karl and Sally have jetted off to America to take up a 6-month fellowship teaching position at Princeton University.



Jabulani founders in 2007

1000 FROM A 1000

Following the conversion of garages into an accommodation unit, phase two of the '1000 from a 1000 challenge' accommodation project is now complete. The construction of a three-bedroom house on church property has just been finished and its first occupants have moved in! The third and final phase is due to start in September.



Newly constructed 3 bedroom house

RURAL MURAL

We are happy to report that the Khanyisa pre-school (a second pre-school supported by Jabulani) is doing really well. Since Jabulani finished the construction of their new building, the young learners no longer need to share a classroom with the Grade R pupils at the local government school, but have a space dedicated to their needs. A huge thank you to the Meadowridge Baptist group who painted a beautiful mural on the outside walls during their recent visit.



Khanyisa pre-school