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HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

To continue with our staff profiles, we caught up with one of Jabulani's longest-serving staff members, Asanda Jonga, known affectionately to everyone as "Asa". She comes with maturity well beyond her years, an ability to instantly and warmly connect with others, and a formidable Ultimate Frisbee game.

JRHF: Asa, how did you end up here in Zithulele?

Asa: I am from Ngqeleni area [about 1.5 hour's drive from Zithulele]. I was born in 1991, the second eldest daughter in a family of four to a single mother. I went to the local primary and high schools, about 11km from home – a group of us kids used to walk there and back every day – the worst was the rain!

In my final year of school I went through a number of health and personal difficulties, and while I still succeeded in passing Matric, I didn't achieve the grades I needed to enter university. My dream was to help the community through counselling – I love talking! – by studying either Social Work or OT.

While I was trying to work out what to do next, I came to Zithulele to visit my sister Zandi who works here as a Pharmacy Assistant. Luckily, one day I met Karl [Jabulani director Karl le Roux] and he said to me, "Well, do you want to come volunteer in our ARV programme?" And, almost 5 years later, here I am!

JRHF: Tell us a bit about your work in the ARV programme.

Asa: After volunteering for a few months, I was employed to work full time in the programme. I was given training and worked as a counsellor and translator. It was challenging but rewarding work. It is so difficult to help people accept their HIV status, or deal with anger over how they got the disease, or guilt at also passing it on to one's child. But we could talk through these things, and offer hope – hope that there was treatment and life could continue. I loved learning new things, and from knowing almost nothing about HIV I became the person who would teach the new doctors about the programme when they first arrived!

JRHF: Now you've taken the opportunity to do something quite different?

Asa: Totally different! In September last year I applied for



Asanda Jonga

my current role in the new Mercy Vision Zithulele programme. Formally I am called the "Administrative Assistant" – essentially I am the co-ordinator of a lot of different parts of the project, and act as the bridge between our work and the community. We need to get word out there of the amazing service we offer, build and manage good relationships with the clinics, and make the surgery process and experience of patients as positive as possible. Of course we still have a long way to go, but in just one year we have done so much in the community too.

JRHF: And to help prepare you Mercy Ships gave you an amazing training experience...

Asa: In January this year Mercy Ships took me and a couple of other team members to do 3 weeks' of training on the Ship in Guinea. It was my first flight (scary at first, but fine by the end of my 15th flight!) and my first time out of South Africa. It was amazing seeing what Mercy Ships does, meeting all the staff on the ship, and experiencing another culture. But actually it did also make me appreciate what we have in South Africa and the Transkei!

JRHF: And where might we find Asanda Jonga in 5 years' time?

Asa: I'm saving up to go to university – I still really want to do Social Work. There is just so much need for it here in South Africa. Hopefully God will use me to make a difference to bring change – HIV, rape, hope for rural youth. I have matured and learnt so much through my time at Jabulani – I think I feel ready for anything!

ZITHUDLALA - LET'S PLAY

This term we were excited to launch a new after-school programme called 'Zithudlala' (as a result of fun activities successfully piloted earlier in the year). The Xhosa word "dlala" means play and hence Zithudlala is centred round the use of play as a means to stimulate children's educational growth and development. However, Zithudlala is also about promoting play as an end in itself for children whose difficult living conditions and limited access to resources may mean that they rarely get to enjoy this basic human right*.

The long-term goal of Zithudlala is to have a play centre that provides a safe space for primary children to play on weekday afternoons by facilitating access to play equipment and supervised activities. For now, we have made use of the community library for an hour from Monday-Wednesday to offer LEGO building, arts and crafts activities and puppet shows for 20-30 kids each week. At 4pm on these days, you can usually hear Kirsty

shouting, "Siyadlala eLibrary" to all and sundry, which usually results in a familiar collection of kids scurrying over to join the fun.

The very generous donation of even more LEGO and DUPLO we received from the LEGO Charity has been a hit with the kids, and we are always astounded at the natural creativity which they show in their LEGO builds and works of art.

In addition to running Zithudlala for the kids, Kirsty has also been providing weekly training for pre-school teachers, care-givers, and Philani's ECD playgroup mothers.

* Did you know? The right of children to engage in play activities was included as a human right in the UN Convention on the Rights of a Child in 1989.



Fun with LEGO



Training

SPORTS FESTIVAL 2013

In September we held the annual Zithulele Sports Festival. Over the years it has grown from a simple men's soccer tournament, hosted by Jabulani, to an event with numerous sports and activities for the whole Zithulele community and co-hosted by all of the NGO's working in Zithulele. The main focus of the day remains HIV awareness and testing, motivation for the latter being provided in that while anyone could participate, only those who had tested on the day were eligible for prizes. A further aim however, was for the various NGO's to foster relationships with the community and take the opportunity to communicate the message of what they are doing and offering in Zithulele.

This year we retained the soccer and touch rugby team

sports competitions that are not only hugely popular but also target the key age-group of young men. We also added in various events in which the entire community could participate, including 'active' events such as wheelbarrow, bucket-balancing and sack races, and more prosaic events such as 'threading the needle' and 'tower building' aimed at the elderly. These new events were immensely enjoyed! The most popular event of the day, however, was the inaugural tug of war competition!

Everyone who attended the day enjoyed it hugely, and it was another successful step along the road towards not only HIV prevention and treatment, but also community engagement and upliftment.



Community Sporting Fun

AT A GLANCE

NUMBERS...

It is always important not to get too caught up in the "numbers", especially as we are dealing with individual people. Having said that, they do give an indication of the effectiveness of the interventions and therefore provide for encouraging reading. Here is a selection from this year thus far:

ARV programme:

3795 Number of active patients on the ARV programme receiving life-saving medication each month

90% Percentage of the above patients who receive their pre-packaged medication from the facility of their choice. Those patients who continue receiving care at the hospital are either those who require hospital level intervention or those who choose (for reasons of their own) not to receive treatment at a clinic

0 Number of patients on a waiting list to receive ARV's

Mercy Vision Zithulele:

3317 Routine eye examinations conducted
967 Ready-made glasses issued
280 Prescriptions glasses issued
126 Cataract surgeries performed
29 Glaucoma patients properly assessed and treated



KHANYISA PRESCHOOL OPENING CEREMONY

In the last newsletter we reported that construction of the new Khanyisa Pre-school building had been completed. On Friday 4 October, this was officially celebrated by the community at the opening ceremony. It was a fun-filled day with dancers, choirs and speeches all culminating in the official opening by a representative from the Department of Education. The day was concluded by a delicious lunch!

A special word of thanks must go to the funders, Stichting Zithulele, and in particular, Dirk Bosfonds, who generously donated the funds for the construction of the new building.



Official opening ceremony

JOB VACANCY

The Jabulani Rural Health Foundation (JRHF), in collaboration with the Christian Blind Mission (CBM), is recruiting for a Programme Co-ordinator to manage its Rural Ability Programme, a community based service to people with disabilities. The Co-ordinator will be responsible for overseeing the strategic planning, implementation, management, and operational requirements of the programme to ensure that an effective and efficient service is offered, bringing hope to disabled people in rural communities. For the full job advert please visit... www.jabulanifoundation.org/whats-new-4.html