



IN THIS ISSUE

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- FROM FIELDS TO MARATHONSpg 1
- REFUSING TO GIVE UPpg 2
- BREAKING DESPAIR, BRINGING HOPEpg 2
- AT A GLANCEpg 3

FROM FIELDS TO MARATHONS

Work can be so much more than just a job and for many of us in Zithulele, we are privileged and grateful that this is so. Sometimes the opportunity to work with people whom we may not otherwise have crossed paths with provides enormous opportunities for relationships, personal growth, new challenges and new opportunities. Take Wonga, Liaan and Lulamile for example.

Wonga and Liaan work in the same Jabulani team and got chatting about running one day, discovering that they both have a passion for it. Liaan hadn't run long distance in a while and Wonga was only used to running on the soccer field, so they set themselves the challenge of running along the Zithulele tar road, a distance of 20 km. This laid a foundation and with the White Clay off-road half marathon around the corner, they started training together. On the day of the race, Wonga came in second! Next stop in their newfound running relationship, was the inaugural MadZit, a collaborative 28km trail run between Madwaleni and Zithulele Hospitals (see the 'At a Glance' section below for more information on the next one). A number of the Zithulele community did this race and Lulamile, another Jabulani employee who had not run in a long time but was jajoled into doing the race by another colleague, met Wonga and Liaan during this race. From there, things started to get a bit more serious.

The Mdumbi 18km trail run, that they undertook next, was a real turning point for Lulamile. They all went along together to this race and it sealed their interest in training together and setting their sights on bigger things...the Two Oceans Ultra Marathon. Lulamile and Wonga joined the Cheetah's running club in Mthatha in order to gain a licenced entry into the Two Oceans and Liaan assisted them with getting places and helping secure the necessary funds and support

to undertake this race in Cape Town. A qualifying marathon was completed and when it came time to travel to Cape Town, it took them further from home than they had ever been before. With seemingly effortless completion of this race under their belts, conversation between runners on the taxi journey back from Cape Town inspired Lulamile to attempt the Comrades Marathon along with Liaan, who started assisting him to get a substitution place. Wonga had previously decided not to pursue the Comrades, but friendly competitiveness between the three of them changed his mind.

In total, four members of the Jabulani team completed the Comrades Marathon on the 29th May as Siza also completed it along with other members of his running club. We promised them we wouldn't list their times (no need to fan the competitive flames), but they all did extremely well. When asked what has been the best thing about running together, the guys said: building the relationship between us; running is not only about the winning...we are in it together although we can run at our own pace; it has been helpful to learn strategies from someone who is more experienced, like learning to pace yourself as the 'race only begins at the halfway point' (sounds like there might be a life lesson there too); we have gone to new places, explored like tourists, had new experiences and met people who we would never have become friends with. Sounds like a fantastic outcome from a seemingly innocuous workplace conversation and we hope that it is something that many of us here in Zithulele and beyond can learn from as we continue to strive to cross language, cultural, social, economic and a multitude of other barriers that can keep people apart.



Our running champs

REFUSING TO GIVE UP

As of the 31st March, we could no longer say that we receive no municipal services in Zithulele. For some, although granted not all, it is hard to imagine living in a place where there are no municipal services; no one providing piped water, no one collecting your rubbish, no one dealing with sewerage, but until the 31st March, this was our reality. Jabulani has fought long and hard, with significant amounts of energy and input from Roger Galloway, for the municipality to be involved in collecting refuse from Zithulele. The issue of dealing with refuse is a good example of how we always try to maintain the delicate balance between meeting a need or filling a gap while also advocating and facilitating the uptake of responsibilities by the relevant structures and bodies, often government-related. As such, under our Healthy Village Project, we have for the last few years raised funds to enable us to cart rubbish to a dump site 55km away and recycling to Mthatha, 90km away, while continually lobbying the municipality to take up this responsibility. Our dream to establish a refuse and recycling centre was initially restricted by funding and even after this was received through the Freddie Marincowitz Welfare Trust, available land was an issue.



Our first refuse collection

We eventually brokered an agreement with Zithulele Hospital this year, with them agreeing to give us dedicated space in return for extending to them whatever refuse service we could arrange or manage. With available land to provide a central point for collecting refuse, the municipality agreed to trial doing weekly refuse collections, a service that will be paid for by Jabulani. Individuals and the hospital can drop off refuse at the centre where it will be securely stored away from ravaging animals until each collection. The bins that Jabulani have previously erected along the Zithulele Village main road continue to be emptied by a Health Village Project employee who then sorts this into refuse and recycling. We continue to take the recycling to the depot in Mthatha which although is a financial loss-creating exercise for us, remains a priority given our commitment to focus on environmental issues in and around Zithulele.

The refuse and recycling centre is testament to Roger's perseverance driven by passion, and a legacy to his impact on Zithulele during the Galloway's time in our community.



The centre under construction

BREAKING DESPAIR, BRINGING HOPE

Last year when we gave recognition to the fact that we had passed the mark of 5000 patients currently active on the ARV programme, some of our doctors shared with us their experiences of the early days of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, when ARV treatment was not yet available in the public sector. "I remember skeletons filling the wards, lying in pools of diarrhoea as the nurses struggled to keep up with the need for linen changes. I remember too many pairs of haunted eyes, staring out from hollow sockets, dry lips caked with blood and tongues thickened by thrush. I remember praying, praying for patients to die quickly; wishing, wishing there was something I could do", said one. "Quite emotional to remember actually", said another. "Those were very, very bad times. I still get teary thinking of how many people I got to know and lost. Walking with families and not being able to do anything to help. There was so much suffering and so much grief, and such a feeling of helplessness".

With the availability of ARVs in the public sector, it has been

possible for the programme to make a difference to literally hundreds and thousands of patients (and have an indirect impact on many more). "I remember celebrating 300 patients on ARVs", said one of our doctors; "that was when our programme was still hospital-based and small. Then we would never have dreamed of a 5000 celebration. The programme has made this not only a possibility but a reality". "The ARV clinic has always been a ray of light at Zithulele, especially when things have been tough, and the amazing impact that the treatment dispensed through the [ARV] programme has had on the community cannot be over-emphasised. It is a place from which hope springs forth", another commented.

After passing this momentous mark on the programme last year and reviewing the parts of our programme that have worked really well but the areas that still need attention and refining, 2016 has brought new horizons to our programme as we have been required to enter patients from our programme onto a new national dispensing and distribution

BREAKING DESPAIR, BRINGING HOPE continued....

programme for chronic conditions. As our programme has always focussed on both access to treatment and clinical management of patients, moving onto an initiative that's design has been primarily focussed on distribution has posed some significant challenges to us. Not a team to shy away from challenges though, we have worked extremely hard both within our team but also with the various private companies and government departments who are rolling out this programme, to make sure that we don't lose the clinical monitoring aspects of our programme that have ensured the ongoing success of the programme and the health of our patients over the years. We are optimistic that some of our past learning and experience and thus the suggestions we have made, and complementary systems we have developed, may be adopted at our local level and possibly even nationally.



The ARV programme in action

AT A GLANCE

NEW LUNDI

Early 2016 brought to completion the accommodation drive that we started in 2011, when lack of accommodation options for clinical professionals wanting to come to Zithulele reached a peak. Since 2011 we have renovated a garage structure into a three bedroomed home in the hospital's accommodation area called "The Plaza", and built 12 homes on hospital land, providing 24 rooms for healthcare professionals working in the hospital and NGO staff working on health-related programmes, in an area we have called "New Lundi" (meaning New Horizons).

The latest part of the project started in September 2015 and was completed in February 2016, and was funded by the Anglo American Chairman's Fund. It has for now, met the accommodation needs of the clinical staff in Zithulele, although accommodation for NGO staff remains a challenge that we are constantly exploring ways to address.



New houses at New Lundi

STANDING FOR HOPE

Achumile is an 8 year old child with Cerebral Palsy and Epilepsy. We started supporting him through the Rural Ability Programme in September 2014 and at this time, his seizures were not well-controlled and he was not walking or talking. Tabisa, the Community Disability Worker in his area, has spent time working with Achumile and his family and the results have been fantastic. Tabisa encouraged the whole family to teach him to stand and walk. Even his little brother would get him to stand up against the wall. Tabisa also built parallel bars with the family for him to use to practice walking. It is with tremendous joy that we can announce that Achumile started walking at the end of last year!



Achumile walking

MAD ZIT

After the inaugural run last year, the MadZit trail run is making a comeback and you don't want to miss it. Come join in on a 28km trail run and experience the raw beauty of the Wild Coast with it's gorgeous coast lines and rolling hills. Anyone and everyone is welcome to join in the fun. This year, the trail starts at Zithulele Mission hospital and will end at Madwaleni Hospital. The relay event this year will be for Zithulele and Madwaleni runners only.

From Zithulele Hospital → Madwaleni Hospital

28KM

THE 2016 MAD ZIT TRAIL RUN

29 Oct 2016
Start @ 7am
Entries: R100 pp
R30 pp unemployed

Entries close 28 Oct
Entries before 30 Sep inc T-shirt

Visit MadZit Trail Run on Facebook
Entry forms available from
liaan@jabulanifoundation.org