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WHEN WHEELS REPLACE LEGS

On the 21st of May 2012, the Zithulele Hospital Rehabilitation department was abuzz with excitement. Not only had an enormous truck, bearing more than 50 wheelchairs, arrived, but a team of seating experts were on hand to provide advice and training. Therapists from hospitals across the region – Canzibe, Madwaleni and Zithulele – congregated around patients, eager to introduce them to their very own custom devices. All this was made possible by a generous donation from the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) to the tune of half a million rand.

While wheelchairs are available through the state tender, such chairs are most often designed for urban environments, and are unsuitable for navigating the obstacles of the rural setting, leaving patients scarcely more mobile than they would otherwise have been. On behalf of Rural Ability (Zithulele Hospital's therapy team), Jabulani sent the IDC a detailed appeal for seating devices suitable to the rural context, and to the complex needs of patients living therein.

Each donated chair was specified for a particular patient,

depending on their individual needs, which included increased mobility at school, independent movement from one place to another, and halting the progress of debilitating spinal deformities. In addition to these individual specifications, each device requires customisation to the body of the individual who will be using it.

The week of the 21st of May 2012 saw the first donated chairs being issued. Fourteen therapists received training in basic and intermediate seating principles from Shonaquip seating experts. 11 individual patients were then seated by teams of therapists under the expert guidance of Shonaquip. The change in each case was remarkable: seated in appropriate devices, patients were able to move with their chairs, rather than in (or even sometimes against) them.

The remaining devices will be issued over the coming months, with therapists drawing on the expertise gained during this week to ensure that patients are able to make optimal use of their new chairs.



A serious thank you

Happy in a rural chair

Neighbouring and local therapists trained by Shonaquip

PROMOTING LITERACY IN THE LIBRARY

The Zithulele Community Library held a school competition this month to promote literacy and encourage students to use the library as a resource. All of the surrounding schools were invited to compete in reading, writing, poetry, story telling, and spelling competitions held in Xhosa and in English.

Throughout the day we were continuously impressed by the poise and confidence of the students. Each participant went up on stage in front of their peers, teachers, and a panel of judges to read, spell, or tell us a poem or story they had written themselves; it was as if none of them had even the least bit of stage fright!

The poetry competition was particularly lively, students

starting in grade 3 delivered poems they had written with wonderful expression and passion. A few of them were so moving they drew a standing ovation from the crowd! Another major highlight of the day was an impressive recital of the whole "Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears..." monologue from Shakespeare's Julius Caesar.

All of this would never have been possible without the support of our amazing community here at Zithulele. Thanks to some generous donations, we were able to provide food and drinks for all of the children and adults that attended and send all of the competition-winners home with wonderfully illustrated books! At the end of the day, the kids went home proud of themselves and their schoolmates... and hopefully eager to return to the library!



ABET students



Beginning of the day

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT IN EVERY HOME

The Jabulani commitment to education focuses on three main areas: supporting early childhood development (ECD), promoting literacy, and supporting schools. Though we have made great steps with our preschool and library, we have come to realize that in order to reach more children and families it is necessary to visit parents and care-givers in the home. In our community, many care-givers are unaware of the importance of ECD. Some may feel that their child's education is the responsibility of teachers and schools; while others believe they are not equipped with the experience or resources to support their child in this way.

In collaboration with the Philani Mentor Mothers project in Zithulele (MMZ), who provide families they visit with an introduction to ECD as a part of their broader support network, Jabulani has developed the ECD in Every Home project to reach out to those who do not know what ECD is

or how crucial positive interaction is in the early years of a child's growth. Mandisa, recently the Zithulele Community Librarian, will be following her passion for community outreach and her skill at communicating the importance of education to become the 'ECD Advocate.' Her new role will be to inspire care-givers with the importance of ECD and their role as their child's first teacher, model positive ways of interacting with their child, teach them games to play, demonstrate simple toys that can easily be made from materials around the home, and finally engage the caregivers in parenting and ECD workshops.

Through this programme, not only does Jabulani hope to increase ECD practices within the home and benefit children's educational outcomes in general, but also foster parental participation in the community and in the further education of their children beyond ECD.

PUTTING ON A SMILE (PUMLANI'S JOURNEY PT. 2)

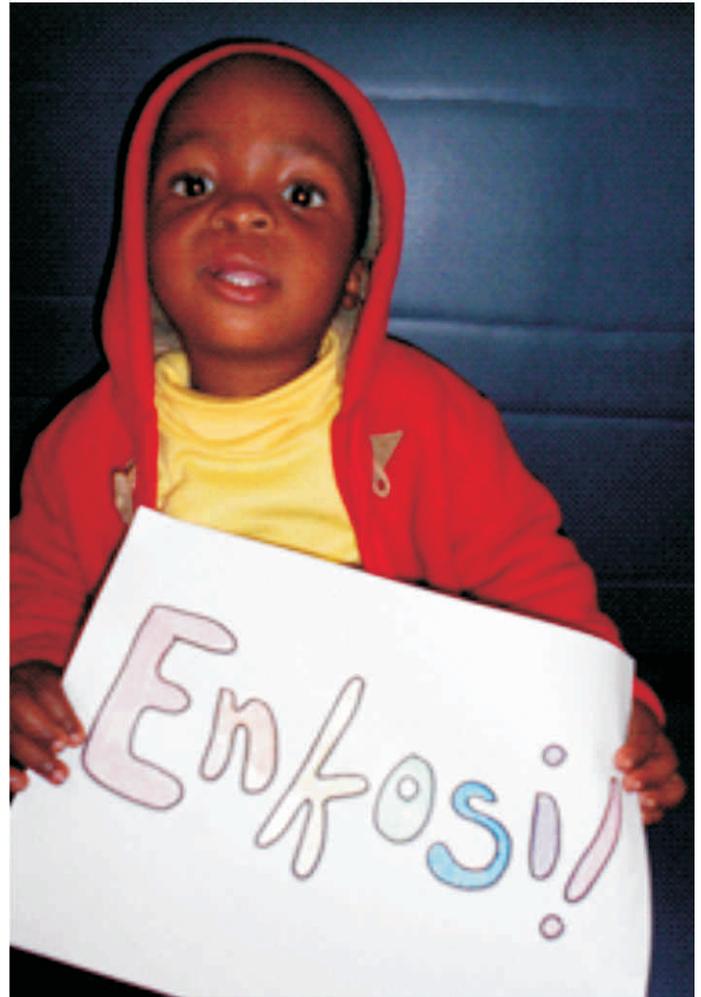
On the 3rd of May 2012, Pumlani and his mother travelled back to Johannesburg for the second operation to repair the cleft in his palate. Considerably more involved than the first, this surgery was to reconstruct the roof of the mouth.

Although sore after his operation, Pumlani was discharged after just one night in the hospital. Thanks to the extraordinary generosity of Desiree Allen (who offered us her home and hospitality), Pumlani recovered in a comfortable environment, and was soon showing signs of returning to his precocious self.

Within days, he began eating solid foods that were previously unmanageable. He experimented with varied speech sounds, and clearly uttered a number of words that had been unintelligible before the surgery. Surgeons reviewed his lip and palate a week later and declared him fit to return home. The trip was accompanied by the beautiful sound of Pumlani's snoring – another newly acquired skill!

Pumlani is now receiving intensive speech-language therapy at Zithulele Hospital to facilitate his development, which had been arrested by his cleft. Judging by the progress already made, he will soon be talking up a storm.

We would like to extend our deep thanks to all of you who contributed resources towards this cause, including Prof Chait, his surgical team, Desiree Allen and Dr David Benn.



Big thanks from Pumlani

AT A GLANCE

ELECTRICITY IN THE AIR

We are extremely excited to announce that after an 18 month wait since our first application to Eskom, the electricity connection to the community land on which the library, community centre, Jabulani office and Philani's new centre, are all situated has finally been made. Even without power, the community centre and library have been put to good use, but this connection will enable even greater use and functionality. It also means that the Jabulani office will finally be able to be used for what it was intended!

BUILDING PHILANI

We were all very excited this month with the completion of construction on Philani's Mentor Mothers Centre built on land given by the community to Jabulani under the auspices that it will be used for community development. This new building has space for more accommodation in Zithulele (up to eight beds!), two beautifully appointed training centres, and last but certainly not least, a lovely view of the ocean! Already Philani has taken advantage of this site for a week long training for all of the Mentor Mothers in early childhood development. We look forward to seeing what more there is to come!

APPRENTICE PROGRAMME UPDATE

Over the past year Banele has been building up an arsenal of carpentry skills. Under the guidance of Roger, who heads up the Healthy Village Project, he has gone from knowing virtually nothing about working with wood, to completing projects on his own. Using mainly chunky, reclaimed wood from packing crates, he has created beds, benches, book shelves, coffee tables and even a kennel with a living roof. To cap it all off, he is now in the process of applying for a Small Business Management Diploma through Tsiba.

With such success, we are increasing the number of participants. Banele, now a mentor, passes on his knowledge to the next generation of carpenters. In the future we also hope to extend this programme by offering apprenticeships in agriculture and construction.



Kennel with a living roof



Bench from recycled wood