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**NONCEBA: A REAL BLESSING**

In keeping with our staff profiles, we bring you an interview with Nonceba Ndesi. Nonceba is one of the unsung heroes of Jabulani. As Personal Assistant to Ben Gaunt (Clinical Manager at Zithulele Hospital and founding director of Jabulani), her work is largely administrative, something that is usually not glamorous or exciting. However, her work is what keeps Ben sane enough to maintain a medical focus to his job rather than drowning in admin! Nonceba is 38 years old and is married with two children. Humble yet confident, she comes with a massive smile, an incredible work ethic, absolute dependability, and a desire to always keep learning. We caught up with her to bring you a bit of her story.

**JRHF:** Nonceba, please tell us a bit about your background.

**Nonceba:** I was born in Tafelehashe [a village around 45 minutes' drive from Zithulele]. I was the third of 6 children in my family. I went to the local schools, but my matric was not as good as I needed, and so I could not go study at university to study Social Work like I had wanted. After school I worked for a short while in a store in a bigger town. In 2004 I got married to my husband, Sukile, who lives in Mpame [a nearby village]. He works as a taxi driver. We have two children, Siyanda (8) and Kamva (6), who are at boarding school.

**JRHF:** How did you come to work for Jabulani?

**Nonceba:** I heard about the Personal Assistant job being advertised at the Hospital. Although I wasn't successful in getting that job, I was awarded a job as a translator in the Therapy Department. I started work in September 2010. The most difficult part was learning the correct medical terms – like tibia and fibia! But the Therapists gave us classes and we improved. I really enjoyed the work going out to clinics and doing home visits. I loved working with the Physio's as you gained knowledge that you can use to help others, even your family. Working with the OT's made me realise how important it is to help people through counselling.

**JRHF:** After the staff in the therapy department helped to develop in you new skills, such as learning to use a computer, what happened next?

**Nonceba:** In September 2011 I was appointed to the position of Personal Assistant to the Clinical Manager. The beginning was very difficult, having to learn many new skills. I learnt those, but actually I am always learning new skills. I think it is one of the best aspects of this job; although



Nonceba Ndesi

sometimes I have to work long hours, I am always learning.

**JRHF:** Fantastic Nonceba. And what does the future hold for you?

**Nonceba:** Working here in the Hospital has reconfirmed my desire to help people deal with difficult social situations. So I still want to go study Social Work at university. I have redone my matric subjects so I am able to do that. Hopefully when I am qualified I can come back here to Zithulele!

It is difficult to overstate how much Nonceba has learnt and how vital a role she now plays. As Ben says, "Nonceba is an incredible asset. Not only does she keep me sane and organised, she quite often anticipates my needs. Beyond that she keeps aspects such as the MDR TB patients, death certificate recording, paediatric discharge records, Disability Grant application bookings, leave monitoring etc. all being done properly without ever having to be reminded. She is diligent, reliable, respectful and polite to staff and patients. She is a real blessing".

## NEW HORIZONS

We are extremely excited to announce that the new accommodation development in Zithulele has largely been completed!

During planning and construction it has been known as the "new build" or "big build", but like the arrival of a new-born child (and one not without its labour pains!), it has been given the official name of "New Lundi". Meaning "New Horizons", the name points both to the beautiful view of the ocean on the horizon and to the new opportunities in community development that this expansion brings.

You may be wondering why Jabulani needs to provide new accommodation. Ironically, in our deeply rural village, the greatest impediment to further development at present is not a lack of skilled and willing staff, but a lack of suitable accommodation (that is with piped water, sanitation and electricity) for them to live in. The New Lundi accommodation development has been the largest accommodation development that Jabulani has undertaken to date, bringing 6 beautiful new houses (with a total of 14 bedrooms), plus a storeroom, laundry, parking and facilities. Importantly, these multi-bedroom homes now provide attractive and sustainable housing for

professionals with families, thus enabling the Hospital and NGO's to retain staff long term, something we have discovered to be a key driver of significant community transformation.

This large development has cost a very economical R2.5m, and we are extremely thankful to everyone who has generously donated to make it a reality, whether individuals through the "1000 from a 1000 campaign"\* or our large corporate donors (Anglo American Chairman's Fund and the Discovery Foundation). It is both truly exciting that Zithulele is now able to attract and house more hospital and NGO professionals, but also for what that in turn means for the lives, healthcare and education of the men, women and children of our area.

Enkosi kakhulu! Siyabulela! (Thank you very much! We are so joyful!)

\*in total, the campaign raised over R3 million and allowed for the building or renovation of 8 housing units that accommodate 15 new professional staff, some with partners and families.



New Lundi accommodation complex

## HOPE FOR DISABLED PEOPLE IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

Transport to the clinic for a patient in a wheelchair: R600 per trip. Access to special needs education: only one school, 90km away. Employment opportunities for the disabled: almost zero. Disabled people in urban areas face challenges that able-bodied people don't ever have to consider. These challenges are exacerbated by our deeply rural setting, to the point where we know of disabled adults in our community who have never left their homes.

We are therefore pleased to announce the launch of Jabulani's first Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) programme. This, together with all of the initiatives and interventions that Jabulani run in partnership with Zithulele Hospital's Rehabilitation Department, will come under the umbrella Rural Ability. The realisation of a dream of having a local CBR programme, with a broader scope than just health or rehabilitation, has been made possible through the partnership between Jabulani and the Christian Blind Mission.

"As an Occupational Therapist who worked in the Rehabilitation department at Zithulele Hospital for five

years, I am incredibly excited about the potential of this project and the impact it will have on the lives of people living with disabilities in the area", says Shannon, who will be managing the programme for Jabulani. "People with disabilities face many barriers in this area; the landscape and access to health services, assistive devices, grants, and information on their rights, to name but a few. The programme aims to improve interaction and continuity of rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities in their homes and communities. This will be realised through the training of community disability workers (CDW) equipped with the necessary rehabilitation skills working in selected areas."

These CDWs will partner with the Zithulele Hospital's therapists to bring services closer to the community and prevent secondary complications through early identification, referral, education and support. Rehabilitation will remain the core element of the CDWs role as they expand their support into other spheres such as advocacy and schooling for children with disabilities. They will also work alongside people with disabilities to identify

opportunities available to them in their communities as well as finding solutions to overcoming barriers to accessing services. Through this joint effort they will create opportunities for inclusion in main stream society and create awareness about disability in their communities.

Through these efforts, it is hoped that people with disabilities will feel an improved sense of agency and quality of life.

Philile is a vibrant and social man who struggles to walk due to a movement disorder. With support from the Zithulele Hospital rehabilitation team, he and his mom constructed parallel bars from tree branches, so that he can exercise his legs right outside his home.



## AT A GLANCE

### FROM LITTLE THINGS, BIG THINGS GROW...

The Jabulani programmes and therefore the number of Jabulani staff just keep expanding! At present we have 37 paid or stipended staff members – quite something when one considers we had just 18 three years ago. Most recently we have welcomed Shannon Morgan to co-ordinate the Rural Ability Programme (see article above), Liaan and Gerda Marais to co-ordinate the Education projects and building services, Kirsty Paxton to run Zithudlala, Pumza Matebese to work in the Library and a host of translators to work for the growing clinical team in the Hospital. Sadly, we have also said goodbye to Mbasa, our highly respected ECD Advocate, who has moved on to Mthatha to complete her studies. This year we hope to expand our existing support of the Hospital and our Education projects, pour more resources into the Healthy Village Project, upscale the Carpentry School and kick off the Jumpstart programme.

### ...AND BIG THINGS COST MONEY

The growth in our programmes obviously brings with it a necessary increase in costs as well as a need to hire skilled and experienced staff to run the programmes. This year we need to raise more funds than ever before. We're extremely thankful for how much of this has already been covered by some of our large donors (such as Stichting Zithulele and Stichting Sonnevank) and all the Friends of Jabulani who have committed to giving a regular donation this year. However the following projects are still short on funds for the year: ARV Programme support, General Hospital support, Healthy Village Project, Carpentry School, Education Programmes (Pre-schools, Library, ECD in the Home, Zithudlala), and Jumpstart. Whether monthly contributions or one-off lump sums, every cent that anyone gives makes a big difference.



Carpentry apprentice at work



Story time at the library



Life-saving ARVs being pre-packed at the Hospital