



Outreach programme kicks off

Patients suffering from HIV/AIDS in our community now have better access to treatment thanks to Zithulele Hospital's ARV new outreach programme. Since May, the hospital has been sending out teams to Mapuzi and Ngcwanguba clinics to prepare patients for ARVs (anti-retroviral drugs), follow up those on treatment and supply their ARVs. Weekly support groups are also taking place in Jalamba and Wilo clinics, following our fundraising efforts to employ extra counsellors who take these all-important sessions.

"By far the most common cause of illness seen here at the hospital is HIV/AIDS and related diseases," says Zithulele ARV doctor Sally le Roux. "We need to be starting at least 120 new patients a month on ARVs in order to effectively tackle the growing epidemic - this will become more achievable as the outreach programme expands. Many more people have access to ARVs now, but there are still those who live too far away to access care."



Patients wait in line for treatment at the clinics

Dr Sally le Roux in action!



"Another goal of the programme is to spread awareness and encourage more people to test," she says. "Many people don't test until they are already very ill, which significantly affects their ability to respond to the ARV drugs."

The outreach programme still faces challenges however. "Lack of a dedicated vehicle means that finding transport each week is difficult," says Sally. "We would also like to raise funds to put a park-home at each of the outreach clinics so that support group needn't take place under the trees!"

Small beginnings...

Ask anyone from Zithulele what they most want for their community and more often than not, the answer will be— "a preschool". With no official preschools in the area and a rising awareness of the importance of early childhood development, one of our priorities is to re-establish Zithulele preschool, with plans to eventually provide a training centre for teachers and a series of satellite preschools.

"Research has shown that the quality of early childhood education has a significant impact on childrens' primary school progress," says Jabulani founder member and head of Zithulele Hospital's paediatric ward Dr Taryn Gaunt. "Since Zithulele preschool closed down a few years ago, children aged from three and six are missing out on the stimulation needed to prepare them for school and other life experiences."



Little things make a big difference!

Rehab at Zithulele is all about making things happen from nothing, and after two years, the therapy department at Zithulele Hospital are becoming experts at the little things that make a real difference to people's lives. "We want to raise small amounts of 'petty cash' to buy basic things – stuff you find in hardware shops and supermarkets but that's virtually impossible to buy with government funds!", says chief occupational therapist Kate Sherry. "For example, a recent donation allowed us to buy toys for children who come to us for treatment—the toys help with their therapy and the kids love them too!"



Toys can transform the lives of children like Tina, who has cerebral palsy



Kate converts a garden chair

Affectionately known as Bob the Builder by her colleagues, Kate and her team are often to be found making splints, fitting foam into wheelchairs or cutting holes in plastic garden chairs to use as makeshift commodes—essential skills in an area where resources are limited. "Most of what we give out to the patients we make ourselves," she says. This means that items like glue, foam, scissors, screws and wood get used up quickly and are in constant demand by the department.

Other small items that go a long way towards transforming patients lives are adult nappies and other hygiene equipment, plastic soccer balls and spare wheelchairs.

Volunteers wanted!

We are actively seeking volunteers to help us manage and develop our projects. No special skills or qualifications are necessary—just a genuine desire to help our community, a mature and positive attitude and a commitment to stay with us for at least two months.

As a volunteer, you could be helping out with administration or fundraising one day and attending a lively community meeting the next; or even manage your own project.

It's a fantastic opportunity to become part of the local Xhosa community and make a real difference to their lives

Interested applicants should get in touch via email at jabulanifoundation@gmail.com.



Come and be part of our community!

Dr Henk Boonstra

We are sad to record the passing of Dr Henk Boonstra on 22 May 2008.

Dr Boonstra was the second doctor ever to work at Zithulele, arriving in 1961. He was instrumental in the expansion of the mission's work and in subsequent years he remained involved in health in the developing world and in Zithulele in particular. He was the founder of the Stichting Zithulele and the vision behind the Masikhule garden & nutrition project. We extend our condolences to his wife Tiny and their family.

We would like to thank all the donors who contributed to the projects mentioned in this newsletter: Breadline Africa, Duncan & Kirsti Gutsche, John & Alex Davidge and Letsema employees.

If you would like to become a Friend of Zithulele or make a donation, either contact us or see our bank details below.

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