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The Herald

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Mother's torment after child, 9, infected with rabies 'I watched my son die'

REPORT INSIDE



BROKEN-HEARTED: Ntomboxolo Bhuti, 37, sobs while recalling how her child, Owam Bhuti, 9, died after he contracted rabies
Picture: EUGENE COETZEE

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Ramaphosa announces move to level 2 **REPORT INSIDE**



CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2021 WINNERS!

The Herald NELSON MANDELA UNIVERSITY SPAR vodacom

Spirit of inspiration at The Herald Citizens of the Year awards event

More than 30 years since she received the inaugural The Herald Citizen of the Year award in 1989, Missionvale Care Centre founder Sister Ethel Normoyle's spirit continued to inspire active social responsibility as she was honoured in her absence at the 30th edition of the awards on Friday evening.

Normoyle succumbed to lung cancer just weeks before she could receive and smell her flowers at the awards gala evening held at the Radisson Blu Hotel in Gqeberha.

Even from beyond the grave, Normoyle touched the hearts of guests at the hybrid event as speakers urged all to adopt her spirit and extend unreserved care to the less fortunate.

Normoyle's honorary award was received by Missionvale Care Centre marketing manager Linda van Oudheusden, who said the awards had remained an important event on Normoyle's calendar for years.

This year's awards ceremony celebrated 10 citizens who are leading changemakers in 10 categories.

Nelson Mandela University engagement and transformation deputy vice-chancellor Andre Keet said the message of the awards resonated with the institution's ethos of being responsive and engaging institutions in service of society.

"At a certain level, marrying society to itself and generating independent voices against the abuse of power, a newspaper and the university share a par-



WORTHY WINNERS: Celebrating their special accolades at The Herald Citizens of the Year awards function are, left, philanthropist category winner Sindiso Genge with SPAR Eastern Cape promotions and events manager Alan Stapleton, and right, innovations category winner Maria Grewar with Nelson Mandela University senior communications and marketing manager Chantal Janneker Pictures: EUGENE COETZEE

ticular fundamental and they also correspond with each other on the production and generation of hope — hope for an inclusive narrative of progress, hope for lives worth living.

"The 10 winners of this year's awards exemplify this hope," Keet said.

Derrick Hoshe won in the sport category, Sindiso (Ntombosindiso) Genge in the philanthropy category, Apostle Earl Piet in the frontline category, Pamela Mabini for civil society, Yolanda Bukani for entrepreneurship, Dr Zikhona Ngeva for education, Usen Obot for arts and culture, Prof Zukiswa Zingela for health care, Maria Grewar for innovation

and Tamsanqa Nkevu in the community category.

The night was made even more special for Mabini, whose foundation received R5,000 worth of sanitary towels from Vodacom's regional marketing manager, Morne Geldenhuys.

Mabini, a Kwazakhele born-and-bred social and gender activist, supports impoverished communities with food parcels, giving hygiene talks and supplying sanitary products to homeless women through her Maro Foundation. She also partners with schools to supply young girls with sanitary towels.

"Some of the girls are unable to talk about girl stuff with their teachers, some of them are

growing up with their fathers, so they can't discuss such things with them.

"That's where I fit in and have sessions with the girls to talk about hygiene, when to change their sanitary towels and how to take care of themselves," Mabini said.

The gala, hosted by Umhlobo Wenene FM presenter Putco Mafani, was attended by the winners, awards judges and sponsor representatives from SPAR, NMU and Vodacom.

SPAR head of sponsorship and events Alan Stapleton thanked the award winners for bringing light to the wind.

"In the retail world we have a saying that the big wheel

turns ... To you, know that the big wheel will turn in the reverse because all the good you are doing will come back to you and, very specially, you tonight will be linked to the name of Sister Ethel," Stapleton said.

The Herald and Weekend Post editor in chief Rochelle de Kock commended the winners for their positive contribution to society.

"All of you sitting here can give yourselves a round of applause for all you do. You deserve to be honoured," she said.

"As The Herald, we are truly grateful that 30 years on, we still get to celebrate the unsung heroes living among us."

Tribute to Sister Ethel, page 2

Message from Prof André Keet, deputy vice-chancellor, engagement and transformation, and chair: critical studies in higher education transformation, NMU:

Nelson Mandela University is proud to be associated with The Herald Citizen of the Year, a long-standing community-spirited project in this metro.

Its message resonates with our ethos of being a responsive and engaged institution in service of society.

Reading about the generous work being done to support others in this region is inspiring, and encourages us all to get involved in activities that advances our collective public interests.

Congratulations to all the finalists!



Message from SPAR Eastern Cape promotions and events manager Alan Stapleton:

It is a privilege for SPAR to be able to partner with The Herald and NMU in the 2021 Herald Citizen of the Year Awards and to celebrate and recognise normal people, who do extraordinary things in their communities to uplift and empower others.

To be exposed to the work being done by so many Gqeberha people, has been humbling. In these troubled times, when most of us are just looking to cover our own bases, these are folk who reach out to others, grow them, and in Maya Angelou's words, watch them RISE.

To all of those who were nominated. So many of you. Well done, and please continue. You are all winners.

But to the 10 Citizens of the Year, in the Retail World we have a saying that "the big wheel turns". Usually used after an unpleasant negotiation. To you, know that this is the reverse. All the good you are doing will come back to you.



Message from Arena Holdings Eastern Cape general manager Ryan Megaw:

On behalf of The Herald, we congratulate the exceptional individuals who have selflessly served our community, and have made it a better, kinder place.

It is so difficult to identify individual award winners, as everyone who was nominated is really a winner. Their stories challenge and inspire us all.

These heroes have refused to be passive or complacent but have stepped up and personally chosen to be the change. Often they have stood alone and done this when no one else would.

We celebrate their work, in the hope that this will elevate their efforts further, by giving them wider exposure and support, and in turn will inspire future generation of citizen heroes.





CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2021 WINNERS!

The Herald NELSON MANDELA UNIVERSITY SPAR VODACOM



APOSTLE EARL PIET
Frontline category winner



NTOMBOSINDISO GENGE
Philanthropist category winner



DERRICK HOSHE
Sports category winner



PAMELA MABINI
Civil Society category winner



DOC ZIKHONA NGEVA
Education category winner



PROF ZUKISWA ZINGELA
Health category winner



TAMSANQA NKEVU
Community category winner



USEN OBOT
Arts & Culture category winner



YOLANDA BUKANI
Entrepreneurial category winner



MARIA GREWAR
Innovations category winner

Tribute to our first-ever Citizen of the Year, Sister Ethel Normoyle

Linda van Oudheusden

It was bittersweet for me to deliver a tribute to Sister Ethel at The Herald Citizen of the Year awards this year, as originally the plan had been for Sister Ethel to address the awards herself.

She would have loved it too — it was the one event on the calendar each year she wouldn't miss for the world.

She drew a lot of hope and inspiration from the people featured.

She always admired the fantastic platform the awards created to bring the good news stories from our city to a place where great deeds could be recognised and supported.

When the invitation for the 2021 awards came, I never expected to be standing in her place and worse, being asked to deliver a tribute.

It's not that I didn't know what to say.

It's that there is SO much to say!

How could one ever do or say enough to do justice on a tribute to such an extraordinary person?

Ironically, whenever I was faced with such a dilemma in the past, she would be the person I'd turn to for advice!

Now I have to rely on the conversations we've had and as I began writing (a very different tribute), I suddenly remembered something.

We were both very at ease talking about death.

One thing she could not stand was when someone died that their CV would be read out.

You'd hear about all the qualifications, awards and promotions, but the person would not emerge.

She also did not like it when only the wonderful bits would be told.

She loved it when people were real, up-front and honest.

And so, while there are many "letters behind her name" and awards on her wall, I will talk to you about this incredible little lady and the unique person she was.

She could never be defined or summed up.

She did everything a little differently; a little better, to be honest.

When the people asked for a church, she turned 11 cents in a matchbox into a place of worship.

When a horticulturist told her that nothing would ever grow in the salty Missionvale soil, she grew a vegetable garden that feeds families to this day.

When others would say "it's good enough for the poor", she'd say, "only the BEST is good enough for the poor".

She was the first one to bring Father Christmas to Missionvale.

She'd be asked: "Are toys necessary when people are going hungry?"

And she would reply: "Life would be very awful if we all did only what was necessary."

She was the only one who taught children mathematics by counting raindrops falling on her nose.

Under the famous tree, she showed the children how to turn the alphabet into words.

The first sentence written there in the sand there was: "My name is Mariska, and I am beautiful."

She entered into people's lives in a profound way.

It did not matter if you were dirt poor or world famous, stinking rich or even royal!

Everyone felt a connection to her.

Our wonderful donors are so much more than benefactors.

She entered into their lives with genuine interest and concern.

Everyone fell in love with her. She was so easy to love.



TREASURED MOMENTS: Sister Ethel Normoyle with Missionvale Care Centre marketing manager Linda van Oudheusden. Sister Ethel passed away in August

In her home she set up a small chapel where she would pray for people by name each day.
She never forgot anyone.

She loved to laugh and had a razor sharp sense of humour herself.
With love and due respect, I have to say she was a terrible driver.

Every time we'd pass a graveyard she'd slam on anchors to make the sign of the cross and then be genuinely shocked and surprised when people hooted at her in dismay!

Though she believed in recycling, and in fact began the recycling project we still use today, I've never met anyone who uses more plastic baggies than her.

Later I would come to learn that she needed them to preserve the contents as she was always planning for a rainy day.

If she had been here, she would have spoken about gratitude.

She always believed that if we all had gratitude in our hearts, that there would be no wars.

Sr Ethel often spoke to me of the night she won the very first ever Herald Citizen of the Year Award.

She admitted that initially she did not fully understand what it meant and so she accepted the award without much thought about it!

However, in the days that followed, her appreciation of it grew.

People who never knew about her or the Care Centre made contact and offered to help.

She said that The Herald made it possible for people to know where they could give, where there would be accountability and where the lives of the poor would be directly impacted.

She remembered that night so well.

She had a small bakkie and would collect donations of food from anyone who would give it, and so, on the way to the event, she stopped off to collect some maize meal.

Some of the dust from the maize meal was on her skirt and she just did her best to wipe it off.

She said it was a wonderful group of people there that evening.

Before revealing the winner, they described the person in great detail.

They said how this person was selfless, energetic, kind, compassionate, extraordinary.

She looked around the room trying to guess who they were talking about.

Even after they called her name she turned to look behind her as she was sure there was a mistake.

She remembered very vividly how they played "When Irish eyes are smiling" as she went up to accept the award.

And every year since then, she has been invited back, a gesture she found deeply meaningful.

To the nominees, the winners and to all striving to do good, I want to share something that Sr Ethel introduced me to.

It is credited to Mother Teresa:

People are often unreasonable, irrational, and self-centered. Forgive them anyway.

If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives. Be kind anyway.

If you are successful, you will win some unfaithful friends and some genuine enemies. Succeed anyway.

If you are honest and sincere people may deceive you. Be honest and sincere anyway.

What you spend years creating, others could destroy overnight. Create anyway.

If you find serenity and happiness, some may be jealous. Be happy anyway.

The good you do today, will often be forgotten. Do good anyway.

Give the best you have, and it will never be enough. Give your best anyway.

In the final analysis, it is between you and God.

It was never between you and them anyway.

Thank you for remembering Sister Ethel and keeping her and her life's work of the Missionvale Care Centre in your hearts.

"To make God's glory praised."

Sister Ethel Normoyle

Inaugural winner of The Herald Citizen of the Year Awards, 1989. Forever a beacon of our community. May we continue to live her legacy.



NELSON MANDELA UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

Converging in service of society

The Hubs of Convergence (HoC) is a project within the Nelson Mandela University's engagement and transformation space to help the university act in service of society alongside internal and external stakeholders.

A key part of our learning since the hubs started in 2019 is the importance of the creation of equalising spaces as we co-construct solutions to complex historical and contemporary challenges.

These equalising spaces seek to critically engage with our multiple stakeholder communities in a way which acknowledges and celebrates the knowledge and agency they bring to engagement at the university.

The recent signing of a memorandum of understanding with Ubuntu Pathways in Zwile represents one of many conscious efforts to engage and learn through solidifying and formalising partnerships.

"I'm so grateful for the opportunity to partner with Ubuntu Pathways," NMMU Vice-Chancellor Prof Sibongile Muthwa said, citing the chance this gives for the university to address societal challenges and contribute to the improvement of humanity.

Being in service of society lay at the heart of this endeavour, she said, noting that "for us, this is essentially the critical role of the university".

Over 2020 and 2021, the coronavirus pandemic has presented the HoC with the

chance to respond in a co-ordinated and purposeful way to a few of these challenges. This involved conceptualising, developing and supporting various projects related to food sovereignty; personal and organisational wellness; gender-based violence; exploring community-based economic initiatives, and supporting community-initiated projects.

The development of the concept of the Community Kitchen in collaboration with the iKhala Trust is one such project as, from initial support to "soup kitchens" in the metro, the university realised that it was doing much more than feeding communities.

These community kitchens serve as points of convergence for various activities, including advocacy around the pandemic and critical thinking around sustainability.

A partnership with the faculty of engineering's eNTSA entity and the university's Emergency Medical Care is included in this collaboration which, among other projects, is piloting a fire killer product in partnership with an SMME, FireKilla.

These forms of engagements facilitated by the HoC help to provide this outward focus of generous, solidaristic and reciprocal sharing of intellectual and other assets.

They also provide a platform to understand how multiple forms of knowledge may be used to respond to the challenges of our time.



SAFETY FIRST: Members of Yizani Sakhe community kitchen in Wells Estate receive their FireKilla units as part of a pilot project

Psychology clinics offer help from north to south

Reaching from northern areas to the southern suburbs of Gqeberha, Nelson Mandela University's two psychology clinics provide a comprehensive and accessible service to people who would not otherwise be able to afford psychological services.

Both clinics are dedicated to the education and professional training of post-graduate psychology students in the faculty of health sciences. They also offer assessment procedures, therapeutic interventions, community engagement and psycho-educational programmes to their surrounding communities.

Clinical psychologist and lecturer Dr Thabisa Mabusela, director of the Missionvale Psychology Clinic, said the services were open to all.

"Even though we are in Missionvale, we are open to provide a service to anyone and everyone. We don't chase people away just because they come from the other side of town," Dr Mabusela said.

A sign of this country's extensive mental health needs, however, is the consistent and ever-increasing demand for Uclin's psychological services.

"One of the biggest challenges we have is our waiting list," Dr Mabusela said.

"Because of Covid-19 regulations, we are not in a position to assist as many

people as we would like. As a result, the number we have been able to assist has dropped significantly."

Uclin is registered with the Professional Board for Psychology (HPCSA) as an accredited training institution. Students apply theory in a practical manner, engaging with residents of the areas around campus.

As with the law clinic nearby on Missionvale Campus, students at the psychology clinic work under supervision to provide a much-needed service to the public and at the same time learn what it means to be "in service of society".

The Missionvale clinic includes an inter-professional health-facility, Ukhanyo Clinic, operating two mornings a week.

Community outreach programmes are also part of the training, and students and staff provide services to NGOs such as the nearby Missionvale Care Centre. They also continue to forge new relationships with other community entities.

An integrated transdisciplinary approach helps to provide a wide psychological "safety net" to the needy.

Uclin is recognised by the professional community as credible in sought-after scholastic, neuropsychological and developmental assessments. It also offers psychotherapy and trauma debriefing.



PERSONAL TOUCH: Law clinic receptionist Zanele Mlindazwi helps a client register for legal assistance

Missionvale law clinic gives free access to justice

The law clinic at the Missionvale Campus is a full-fledged law firm which provides free legal services to people in need, and at the same time gives students opportunities to train in a real-life setting.

Final-year legal practice students are exposed to community service and see first-hand the need for access to justice by the poor and working class, and how they as lawyers can contribute to public wellbeing.

"We provide access to justice in the form of high quality legal services to indigent peoples in the community," law clinic director Matilda Smith said.

"Having the clinic here in Missionvale is fantastic because we are surrounded by townships, formal and informal, and a large number of our clientele come from nearby."

The facility is free, but clients still undergo a procedural means test as they would at the Legal Aid Board.

The service is in demand — several hundred pairs of feet come through the clinic each month in a quest for justice.

"We are obviously limited by our

funding so there are times when we have to say 'we don't have capacity to deal with this at the moment' and then we will refer on," Smith said.

A team of supervising attorneys ensure that the student work is top-notch, along with access to the full law library and legal resources of the university.

"We are registered as a university law clinic, accredited by the Legal Practice Council," Smith said.

Qualified lawyers, candidate attorneys and paralegals, which consist of final-year students registered for the legal practice course, staff the clinic.

In addition to consultations, the clinic also offers a pro bono mediation service, which can be useful to smooth, and shorten, legal processes and leaves people more at peace than after litigation.

The law clinic's collaborative approach is also a bonus. For example, if a complainant in a domestic abuse case needs psychosocial support services, they can be referred to the psychology clinic nearby.

The latter, in turn, may refer a client in need of legal advice to the law clinic.

Manyano Schools Network co-creates educational opportunity

The Centre for the Community School (CCS), an engagement entity of the faculty of education, organised a celebration of learning in July to reflect on 10 years of the Manyano Schools Network.

Supported by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the network in the Nelson Mandela Metro is, in collaboration with the university, constantly striving to critically reimagine school improvement projects that are responsive to the contextual realities of the schools they work with.

At the virtual event, principals, parents and teachers shared how, among other projects, literacy clubs had been developed, support for schools-based support teams had grown, and capacity had been boosted in school management teams and governing bodies.

In her welcome address, the dean of the faculty of education, Dr Muki Moeng, described the work of the Manyano Schools Network as aligned with the ideals of Paulo Freire because they view learning as a continuous process that requires one not to just exist in the world, but to act in the world and change it.

It implies, therefore, having a deep love



REIMAGINING OUR SCHOOLS: The Manyano Schools Network has been working on school improvement projects with schools in New Brighton, Zwile, Kwazakhele, the northern areas and Kariega

for the people whom we serve and lead.

Delegates at the symposium spoke about the impact of the Manyano Schools Network.

"We are who we are because of Manyano," Getrude Shope Primary School principal Thembeke Ncape said, echoing the views of many of the 12 schools represented on the day.

Ncape highlighted how schools felt better equipped to face challenges they encountered.

Former school principal Nkosinathi Mzuzu, interim manager of the CCS, said that, as with so much of the university's work, collaboration was key to the success of the Manyano Schools Network.

"A considerable amount of progress has been made to capacitate and improve management and governance skills levels," Mzuzu said.

Of the initial 14 schools from New

Brighton, Zwile, Kwazakhele, the northern areas and Kariega, 12 are still active in the network.

The lessons learnt influence the CCS approach to school improvement, which has extended to the rural Eastern Cape, starting with three schools in Cala.

The collaboration with the network, CCS director Dr Bruce Damons said, shows "the true complexity of developing improvement programmes responsive to the contextual realities of schools as they endeavour to create spaces where all our kids can actualise their full potential".

"The conscious effort to value the voices and agency of all involved in the process of co-construction has ensured learning which benefits everyone, including the university."

"This co-constructed approach to the historical and contemporary challenges facing our communities forms a core outcome of Vision 2030, which has as its apex priority to be in the service of society."

And, though the external funding has ended, the Manyano schools which remain connected to the university are definitely taking what they have learnt forward into the future.

Engineering students help health-care sector



STUDENTS STEP UP: The Salutaris ventilator team is from left, Kelvin Langwani, Neo Mabunda and brothers Zain and Zaahid Imran

needed personal protective equipment, as well as in-theatre and in-ICU devices, to Livingstone Hospital in Gqeberha.

AEDG students, together with Custom-Works and Shibah Engineering, whose director, Cecil Frost, is a Mandela Uni Mech Eng alumni, designed an intubation box or "hood" for patients to use during the intubation procedure.

By stopping the aerosolised droplets

from patients potentially infected with the virus from becoming airborne, the box shields the medical staff in theatre during the procedure.

Additional smaller jobs also emerged, such as 3D prints of an adapter for the vacuum extractor, suction waste collector connectors and an extraction cover for a surgical saw device.

The Salutaris Ventilator Project was another rapid response when a student-run start-up, Hedge-SA, created a low-cost, easy-to-manufacture, automated resuscitator to help address the ventilator shortage.

The current Salutaris design is a non-invasive ventilator but, as the year progressed, the National Ventilator Project called for an invasive ventilator to help patients with more severe breathing difficulties.

AEDG stepped up to this also, and Hands sees significant scope for research and development to advance the device.

More than one EBET entity has been working on ventilators: its innovation hub eNtsa has been working with a consortium of companies and Walter Sisulu University to reverse-engineer and manufacture the Nuffield 200 ventilator system.

How the NMU Convergence Fund is helping the needy

As the Covid-19 pandemic continues its negative impact on the most vulnerable in society, the efforts of the Nelson Mandela University Convergence Fund remain desperately needed.

Thanks to this fund, which has to date raised almost R1.5-million in monetary donations and more in kind, many in the Eastern Cape have been able to get some relief.

Recipients include the elderly, those affected by gender-based violence, communities, schools and organisations.

The fund was set up in May 2020 as part of the university's engagement philosophy of convergence.

Since then it has contributed to numerous vulnerable and disaster-struck communities, and worked alongside various schools and community-based organisations to make a difference.

The Convergence Fund Deployment Committee (CFDC) which manages the fund is responsive to challenges communities face over Covid-19.

At the same time, it is also exploring the broader objective of making Nelson Mandela University a transformed, engaged and responsive university.

"The work being done allows us to explore how best to converge the space of existence and life of the university and society," Dr Bruce Damons, who heads



BAGS OF BOOKS: There are eight titles in the book bag project

the CFDC, said.

"It has opened the space for us to further understand transdisciplinary collaboration in service of society through engagement

with all sectors that play a role in the community and its development."

So far there have been three distribution cycles, with the most recent focusing on sustainable food relief in partnership with other organisations.

The focus is on "safe food relief", as the food parcels also include Covid-19 safety elements such as sanitisers and masks.

The Community Kitchens Project — part of this third cycle — goes beyond immediate relief and rather links to medium and longer-term objectives around food sovereignty.

The fund is supporting a dozen initiatives in Gqeberha and George.

The Convergence Fund has also partnered with the US-based Utopia Foundation on a Book Bag Project which encourages reading among young children, particularly during the pandemic.

Launched in May 2021, the Book Bag Project saw pupils from some of Nelson Mandela Bay's under-resourced schools receiving a pack of eight carefully selected books, aimed at building resilience among children.

As the fund continues its work, it remains guided by the principle of converging with communities in a concerted bid to change the world. For more information, visit mandela.ac.za/convergencefund

Three cheers for public vaccination site on North Campus

Youth Month, June 2021, was the month Nelson Mandela University launched its vaccination programme to the public, playing its part in the national drive to contain and turn the tide against the Covid-19 pandemic.

It was moving to hear the cheers all round when the vaccines arrived as part of phase two of South Africa's vaccination programme.

As well as members of the public, dozens of essential workers and Nelson Mandela Bay executive mayor Ngqaba Bhang, a former student, have visited our North Campus site for immunisation against Covid-19.

The university joined the national roll-out after approval as a Master Facility Covid-19 Vaccination Site by the Eastern Cape department of health.

Already the university's Covid-19 vaccination hub has become a popular — and much praised — destination for the procedure, as it is an official vaccination site for staff, students and the community.

Vaccination is a key element in preventing ongoing transmission of the coronavirus and in saving lives.

The vaccines presented at Mandela Uni offer protection against getting seriously ill or dying from Covid-19.



TO THE POINT: Nelson Mandela University staff are vaccinating members of the public

This is part of the university's ongoing externally focused efforts, in collaboration with provincial government, private sector and civil society organisations, to respond to the pandemic as an engaged institution in the service of society.

It became clear as Nelson Mandela University and sister universities begun experiencing rising infections that containing the spread of the virus on campuses would not be successful without containing the virus in communities and broader society.

"We are in this together because, if I am not safe, you are not safe; and if Africa is not safe, then the rest of the world is not safe."

"It will take a collaborative effort to safeguard the world — and that collaboration starts with you and me," university vice-chancellor Prof Sibongile Muthwa said.

The university has been planning for this moment for almost a year and it has developed more than a dozen systems in response to Covid-19 to enable students and staff to book various services online.

This includes a vaccine booking system to allow just-in-time distribution and scheduling of vaccine rollouts in three hubs identified on campus.

The university's Centre for Community Technologies has made the same system available for use by the wider public.

FARMING FOR THE FUTURE

Aquaponics partnership yields tons of veg and fish

The aquaponics project on Nelson Mandela University's Missionvale Campus is an example of how the university is working with private enterprise, a non-profit organisation and schools in the area to grow food sustainably all year round.

Through a partnership with Inmed SA and Mondelē International Foundation, this adaptive agriculture and aquaponics project brings together aquaculture (fish farming) and hydroponics (soilless crop production) in a closed system that uses 90% less water than traditional agriculture.

Since 2016, Inmed's aquaponics system generates several tons of fish and vegetables — tomatoes, lettuce, cucumber and kale annually.

"It has really made a very big influence on the region," Inmed SA programme director Unathi Sihlahla said.

"We saw the university as a strategic partner because it is at the heart of these communities we are serving."

The vision was to create an alternative source of food for schools with over-stretched nutritional budgets, part of Inmed's Health in Action programme.

Over the course of the Covid-19 pandemic, this need has increased.

Because aquaponics is a technology that

can be installed almost anywhere, as it does not need soil let alone fertile soil, it was ideal. The dual production system also means vegetables and protein (fish) are growing at the same time.

"Aquaponics opens opportunities for household gardeners and small-scale farmers."

"It's a very simple technology, geared to improve access to fresh foods for children in schools as well as community members," Sihlahla said.

"It's a project that is really supporting the community, but also pushing the agenda of education."

Students from the faculty of agriculture conduct research and take part in in-service training, and the department of dietetics also plays a role in assessing the nutritional value of food produced.

"There are opportunities for learning, and exchanging information," Sihlahla said, noting the potential for research generated to play a role in influencing policy on food security.

He said the pandemic had highlighted how many were struggling to feed their families, putting the focus on achieving food security and sustainable income generation for the future.



NOURISHING THE FUTURE: School children benefit from the fresh produce grown at the aquaponics project

SPAR EASTERN CAPE COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

Women's Challenge highlights fight against gender-based violence

With close to 60 000 entries nationwide, the SPAR Virtual Women's Challenge maintained its role as a major force for change in the continuing fight against gender-based violence (GBV).

The popular mass participation event was resurrected this year after last year's cancellation due to Covid-19 and took place on September 4 around SA.

Runners and walkers came out in their droves in the Eastern Cape, with about 5,000 entrants creating a wave of maroon in the region as they took this opportunity to support the event's beneficiaries.

SPAR EC promotions and events manager Alan Stapleton said they were delighted with the support they received.

"From sunrise, pockets of runners in their groups, and in their maroon shirts and buffs, could be seen enjoying an almost perfect day," he said.

"Even more encouraging was the massive social media coverage generated, while women, men and children around the province enjoyed the opportunity to celebrate their special friendship while exercising together."

The Eastern Cape beneficiaries were Masimanyane in East London and On Eagles' Wings in Jeffreys Bay, organisations that tie in with SPAR's pledge to lead the fight against GBV.

At the Virtual Women's Challenge launch, SPAR EC MD Angelo Swartz reaffirmed the retailer's commitment to supporting women and families.

"Our core values revolve around business, family, passion and entrepreneurship, and in that women and family play a massive role," he said.

"The Women's Challenge is the epitome of what we see in supporting women in our community as we strive to bring families together."

Masimanyane, started in 1996, has developed into a worldwide movement fighting for women's rights.

"The initial idea was to have a support system for women who are survivors of domestic violence and rape," executive director Lesley Ann Foster said.

"But, over 25 years, we have grown into a global organisation. We are essentially an equality and social justice organisation that is locally rooted but globally connected."

Foster said Masimanyane focused on violence against women and addressed this by investigating all the factors that



VIRTUAL CHALLENGE: Thousands of runners throughout the Eastern Cape joined in the fun of the SPAR Virtual Women's Challenge on September 4. Proceeds were used to raise funds for local charities Masimanyane and On Eagles' Wings

contributed to it.

In a similar vein, On Eagles' Wings, under the leadership of Mercy Cwayi, has

been operating in the Kouga municipality for the past 14 years.

"In South Africa, gender-based violence



HANDS-ON AMBASSADOR: SPAR Eastern Cape Virtual Women's Challenge ambassador Jeanie Steyn, front centre, leads her Madibaz netball teammates on a run to the SANCCOB facility in Cape Recife during the event on September 4 Picture: LEON HUGO

is seen as a second pandemic, causing many families to be dysfunctional," she said.

"We have a multi-purpose facility in Jef-

freys Bay to assist those in need, providing services for women and children in counselling, socioeconomic skills and shelter."

SPAR on a roll in tackling mobility issues

SPAR Eastern Cape's involvement in the annual Wheelchair Wednesday campaign will boost its objective of generating funds for those in need, while also promoting awareness, when it is rolled out later this year.

Volunteers from various walks of life are confined to a wheelchair for four hours each Wednesday during a selected month to experience what those with mobility difficulties confront every day.

The project, managed by the Association for Persons with Physical Disabilities (APD) Nelson Mandela Bay and supported by SPAR Eastern Cape, also raises awareness among businesses to ensure their facilities provide easy access for wheelchair users.

Wheelchair Wednesday will celebrate its 10th anniversary in 2021, building on another successful campaign last year when APD reached an overall donation target of 1,200 wheelchairs.

SPAR EC promotions and events manager Alan Stapleton said they had broadened the Wheelchair Wednesday concept in recent times.

"Last year we welcomed on board the



WHEELCHAIR WEDNESDAY: Volunteers will again spend four hours in a wheelchair in the name of charity when the Wheelchair Wednesday campaign is rolled out later this year Picture: FULL STOP COMMUNICATIONS

Amputee Support Group and this year we want to go a step further by placing a focus on the visually impaired as well."

He said that the people tasked with pushing the wheelchairs would be asked to wear vision stimulation eyewear.

"This will expose that person to the challenges which people who are visually impaired face in going about their daily life. The 'seated one' will have to direct

the pusher."

The connection with the Amputee Support Group last year set up the Collect a Crutch drive.

Headed by Brian Paddey, this organisation concentrates on collecting walking aids for the many people who cannot afford them, while also offering counselling and material support to amputees and their families.

Annual golf day drive to assist charities

The annual Penguin Classic Charity Golf Day returned to Gqeberha's fairways in April after a year of isolation due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Despite cold temperatures, gusts of wind and welcome rain at the PE Golf Club, SPAR Eastern Cape promotions and events manager Alan Stapleton said the event went well under par in bringing like-minded people together in a spirit of sharing and caring.

He said the charity drive fell in line with SPAR's mission statement of supporting national campaigns, with four beneficiaries selected.

Those to receive a shot in the arm were On Eagles' Wings, Igazi Foundation, Wings and Wishes and the Southern African Association for the Conservation of Coastal Birds (SANCCOB).

Stapleton paid tribute to these charities for their contributions to society.

"On Eagles' Wings, based in Jeffreys Bay, is about the community as they educate the public about gender-based violence, and it also feeds into providing sanitary products for schoolgirls."

He said that Wings and Wishes was about helping family, while the Igazi Foundation focused on fighting cancer and edu-



GOLF DAY: SPAR Eastern Cape held another successful Penguin Classic Charity Golf Day at PE Golf Club in April, raising funds for various organisations Picture: CHARNE MUNGUR

cating rural communities about early cancer detection.

Apart from saving penguins, Stapleton said SANCCOB created awareness of the damage being done to the natural environment through plastic pollution.

A total of R34,000 was donated to each of these organisations.

The day was limited to 25 four-balls due to lockdown restrictions, with the "prize-offering" taking place afterwards.

"We call it a prize-offering because in

some cases the winners donated back to the beneficiaries," Stapleton said.

Besides the top four teams presenting R1,000 each to every recipient, the fun activity of collecting stones spread around the course was introduced to raise further funds.

The collection of penguin-painted stones was used to enable SPAR to fund the finders' adoption of penguins, with 16 of the birds being adopted by the end of the day.



Mandela University Convergence Fund

Nelson Mandela University, anchored in its resolve towards social justice, established a Convergence Fund, in response to the myriad of challenges affecting communities.

The Mandela University Convergence Fund assists local communities and organisations experiencing hardships due to the triple challenges – poverty, inequality and unemployment – that are further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

To contribute to the fund, please visit <https://www.mandela.ac.za/News-and-Events/Coronavirus-Information/Convergence-Fund> for available options.

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