



May 2009

Dear Subscriber

This month the National Office of Epilepsy South Africa is focussing on preparations for our National Wine Auction that is taking place on 25 June 2009. The whole of Epilepsy South Africa is busy with preparations for **National Epilepsy Week which will take place from 15 – 21 June 2009**. Please note that 21 June is National Epilepsy Day and that you can contact your closest Branch of Epilepsy South Africa to participate in their Epilepsy Week programme and activities. Phone 0860 EPILEPSY (0840 374537) to get in contact with your closest Epilepsy South Africa Branch.

31 March 2009 was also the end of Epilepsy South Africa's financial year and we are all busy finalising our annual financial audits. I hereby would also like to inform all members of Epilepsy South Africa that the National Office AGM will take place on 1 August 2009, where our new National Constitution will be on the agenda for adoption. All paid up members of Epilepsy South Africa are invited to attend this AGM and a detailed notice specifying the venue and time will be circulated closer to the time.

In closing I again want to invite people with epilepsy that are willing to act as advocates for epilepsy to please contact me, as we would like to implement a national advocacy campaign highlighting the rights of people with epilepsy and decreasing the discrimination that people with epilepsy still experience. We truly need your assistance in this matter, as we believe that people with epilepsy themselves, with the support of Epilepsy South Africa, should address these matters.

I hope that the month of May will be a positive month for all and I look forward to the busy month of June ahead. I hope to see you at our wine auction and if you haven't purchased your tickets yet, please contact Drikie Snyman at tel 021 – 447 3014 urgently.

Kind regards,
N de Goede

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IBE conference in Zambia - report



The following report was sent to us from the Chairperson Dr. Chirwa on the conference for the African region held in Zambia April 2009:

"We had a very productive and informative conference that brought together local and international experts, and provided ample opportunity for the presentation of original research as well as personal experiences that span the gamut. The full program with abstracts can be downloaded from our website <http://www.epilepsyzambia2009.org>. Several plans of actions, as a follow-up to the conference, were formulated and we are presently editing these for subsequent dissemination to stakeholders. Mr. Anthony Zimba, Chairperson of the Epilepsy Association of Zambia and current Vice President for IBE Africa Region, will update you on future plans for the African Region to follow up on the 'epilepsy and stigma' conference. Thank you!"

The detailed report will be sent to you once available.

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We are hosting a soup and sherry evening on the banks of the Vaal River on 13 June 2009 at R 70-00 per person. The evening will be one of fun with the Rodeo Girls Line Dancers. They will provide entertainment to our guests and teach everyone how to do line dancing also known as barn dance. This group is excellent and has performed with people like Kurt Darren. For more information please phone Alta Cronje at 056 811 5959.

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Ocean Basket Evening: Free State

Those of you that received the electronic news letter last month read that we had a very successful fundraising event in Parys. Thanks to the support of all our wonderful guests we can announce that we are going to do it again on 19 May 2009. With this event we are going to have Professional Belly Dancers from Cairo Moon Dancing School. The tickets are R 60.00 per person and we can accommodate 100 guests. So to avoid disappointment please contact Yvonne Boucher at 087 808 4939 or 056 811 5959

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Dome Bikers Rally 2009: Free State



The weekend of 1 and 2 May 2009 was the Dame Bikers Rally in Parys. We had the opportunity to sell food to the bikers as one of our fundraising events. The menu was as follows Sparerib Burgers, Chicken kebabs and Boerwors Rolls. Our residents helped us to prepare the food and sell it to the public. It was the very first time for some of us to attend a

bikers rally. Two of our residents enjoyed a trip in a limousine and they speak about it all the time.

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Welcome Angelique Homan : Free State



Angelique Homan Combrink is newly appointed as a Community Mental Health Counsellor currently employed at Epilepsy South Africa. To qualify as a professional - Angelique had to complete an Honours degree in Psychology as well as 720 hours of practicum. Thereafter she had to obtain a minimum of 70% in a national examination set up by the Board, which tests applied intervention and ethical professional competencies. This led to her registration at the HPCSA as a Community Mental Health Counsellor. As a psychological counsellor her work consists of executing formal, structured and short-term interventions. She therefore design and manage elements of intervention programmes which take place at primary curative/preventative levels. Interventions consist of basic psycho-education, training and promoting psychosocial wellbeing.

"I applied at Epilepsy SA because I believe they care about people in need and try to make a difference. I hope to be an asset to Epilepsy SA in every project I am a part of, to make their work in the community an even greater success."

With service delivery like this we can only give the best support to our clients. We hope that Angelique will have a wonderful working experience with us and that she will be with us for long.

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Call 087 808 4943 and donate : Free State

Free State Branch has a new creative fundraising project : As from 1 May 2009 our branch have a new addition to our telephone numbers. We received a VOX phone that we use to make our calls on and save on our expenses as this system is cheaper as the normal land line. As part of this system we are receiving money when people call us without additional

charges to the person calling. This new number is 087 808 4943

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Report on the "Beer experience": Free State



On the 25 April 2009 we had our first beer experience. The aim of this event was to educate the public on the real skill to taste beer and to find the right beer for you. This was done by the different micro brewers that exhibited their beers. At this event we had 200 guests and they all enjoyed the function. It was nice to add new friends to the growing group of Epilepsy South Africa, especially because they came from all over. The guests were eager to become involved with us as it was the first time that they were introduced to our services.

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Pilot Disability Internship Project: Western Cape

The Department of Social Development piloted a Disability Internship Project which ran from 01 April 2008 – 31 March 2009. The aim of the project was to give graduates with disabilities the opportunity to be in a working environment in the hope that it would then make it easier for them to access employment opportunities on the future.

Epilepsy South Africa hosted two interns at the organization for this period. Buyiswa and Priscilla have over the year, formed an integral part of the organization in that they provided us with extra much needed capacity. It was a huge eye-opener to be working with graduates with disabilities who have never worked before as many factors relating especially to reasonable accommodation had to be worked on.

Some of the projected outcomes of this project would be that:

- Graduates should have gained skills, knowledge and work experience that will improve their employability
- The Department of Social Development and NGO's will have a clear understanding of the employment challenges which confront young people who have disabilities and the have mechanisms in place to deal with these
- And that graduates have gained skills to engage confidently and professionally in the

workplace

These are but a few of the objectives set out in the beginning, and I can safely say that through interview and continuous monitoring and evaluation of the interns, we have successfully achieved this.

It has been a great experience participating in this project, and we would not hesitate to do something like this again, as it means that people with disabilities will be given the opportunity to improve their lives.

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Message from Blanche Wells : Person living with epilepsy!



I always see the adverts on TV and in magazines about Epilepsy and I sometimes find it so difficult to believe that at the age of 24 it was discovered that I also had the condition. Many people say that “You suffer from Epilepsy” but for me its not a suffering but a way to prove to myself that I can be who I want to be no matter the challenge that I am facing. Three years ago (I was 8 months pregnant) I had my 1st seizure, I was rushed to the hospital and my baby girl was delivered by emergency C/Section. I was put on chronic medication immediately. After about 10 months I had another seizure, my fiancé decided to leave me, call the wedding off and said that he didn’t want anything to do with me and abandoned me and Lee-Ann. In the past three years I’ve had 5 seizures and I always wanted to give up, but I had my child to look after so I had to make a life for her and not let her down. I never wanted to live again. I told myself that I will never fall in love again. I recently met someone who seemed interested in me, I decided to tell him about my condition before things became serious, he told me that he didn’t have any problem as he believed THAT GOD didn’t intend for us to all be perfect. He visited me almost everyday a few weeks ago when I had a seizure and it seemed like he cared a lot. I’ve been alone for the past 3 years and I don’t want to be hurt anymore. I’ve recently learnt that even though I’m a single mother living with Epilepsy, I haven’t failed myself or anyone else. GOD will carry me through this

whole ordeal and bring me to new heights; HE didn't bring me to this world to suffer.

So this is a message that I want to send out to people living with Epilepsy, "GOD loves you and you will always have a SPECIAL place in HIS heart. HE will never leave or forsake you, but instead HE will fight for you and protect you.

KEEP STRONG AND REMEMBER YOU ARE NOT ALONE.

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Jonty coming to the Epilepsy South Africa National Wine Auction 2009: National Office



Our very own hero and supporter : Jonty Rhodes will be attending our third wine auction themed "Esprit de Vin!" If you wish to enjoy a memorable and very special evening with guests that has the same passion - be sure to mark the 25th of June 2009 in your diary. A fine collection of national wines from reputable farms will be auctioned, so expect to be enthralled by the mastery of Cellars, as Epilepsy South Africa becomes your French connection for the evening.

The Alliance Group will be our professional auctioneers and some very interesting donations made from wine estates such as: Under Oaks, Deetlefs, Boland Cellars, De Doorns, De Grendel, Anthony Smook Wines, Ridgeback Wines, The Company of Wine People, Paarl Vintners Group, Lanzerac and Lourensford estates. Some interesting wines that you will be able to taste will come from Blank Bottle, Under Oaks, Boland Cellars, De Grendel and Deetlefs. (but visit this page for more info <http://epilepsy.org.za/nationaloffice/whatsnew.php>)

The Rotunda, the exquisitely beautiful venue of Bay Hotel in Camps Bay, will host the prestigious event with Daniele Pascal setting the stage for the evening of French enjoyment. Decadent French cuisine and entertainment will charm the much appreciated

guests. You will be swept away literally and in the “Esprit de Vin” of the moment experience an evening of class and enjoyment which will surely leave you in awe.

This is certainly a trip that can not be missed! Note that no passports are required as association with the organisation will give you special clearance at R500 per person or R5 000 per table, seating ten. For more information please contact Drikie at funddev.no@epilepsy.org.za

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Sponsored Knit - South Cape/ Karoo

This fun event has become a regular on the South Cape/Karoo fundraising calendar. This year we had 71 enthusiastic knitters taking part and a fair number of knitters walking off with fantastic prizes. The morning session of our Sponsored Knit is usually more of an outing and social event arranged for our older supporters from the homes for the elderly in Knysna. This group of participants had collected an unexpected but very welcome R3000 in sponsorships. The evening event, as always, took place amidst an air of friendly competition, much laughter and enjoyment. The perfect setting for the event – made available to us free of charge - was the Knysna Angling Club's clubhouse right on the edge of the Knysna Lagoon.

After an hour of knitting the serious business of the counting of rows and judging of decorative pieces was done by Epilepsy SA staff while our knitters tucked into the delicious fare prepared by the Epilepsy SA Centre's kitchen staff. The judging was serious business as super prizes were at stake: amongst others there were original paintings by local artists, a wonderful game drive at the luxury Bottelierskop Game Reserve, an Ocean Safaris whale watching trip and vouchers for meals by local restaurants. We also auctioned a game of golf at the renowned Pezula Golf Course.

We are indeed fortunate to have the support of generous sponsors in Knysna and Plettenberg Bay and enthusiastic supporters of this annual event.

Our Sponsored knit raised R14,335 and we are already looking forward to next year's event.

by, Vivien Paremoer

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We are 30 years old! - Mpumalanga Limpopo



The branch of Epilepsy South Africa that serves the Mpumalanga and Limpopo provinces is situated in Dulstroom and is celebrating its 30th birthday this year. They will be doing so with special events right through the year. Some of these are highlighted in this article:

We have started celebrating on 6th of May with a thanksgiving breakfast to those wonderful people who have supported us during the past years. The residents had an Easter egg hunt during the Easter weekend to “warm up” for the events that will follow. Other events will be announced in the media and will include a street parade, roadblock, a dance, a picnic and achievers awards ceremony for the residents and many more.

All annual events will focus on the birthday and the history of the development of the organisation during the last 30 years. We will publish the “story” of Epilepsy South Africa Mpumalanga/Limpopo in “chapters” in every edition of ONS NUUS/OUR NEWS with the permission of the editor.

Here is part 1: The organisation opened its doors on 7 January 1979 with 40 residents.

Mrs Katryn Griffin, whose husband had epilepsy, was one of the first staff members in Dullstroom and retired in 2003. Mr Bob Wolf, the chief of SANEL at the time, initiated the establishment of a centre for adult people with Epilepsy after realising that school-leaving children with Epilepsy had no opportunities to work and live in their communities. Soon after starting a centre in Geduld, Springs the management of SANEL discovered that the need was much bigger for this type of service than the space they had available in Springs.

Through the DR Church he heard about the building in Dullstroom, which used to be a school hostel, being used at the time as an old age home by the church. For obvious reasons at that time an old age home was not a good idea in Dullstroom! The people, SANEL “catered” for, could easily make use of these facilities and they did. Renovation of the building and grounds began and a year later it was registered with the Department of Welfare for 62 residents. Since then there has never been a bed vacant in the centre.

The creation of work for the residents has always been a challenge and a vital part of the services. Thus a workshop and vegetable garden kept them busy during the day. Land behind the centre was purchased for this purpose and in 1980 Anglo donated money to erect a steel structure with a roof to build a workshop on the premises where an old house used to be. The house was demolished and the building was erected where it is today.

The residents started to build their workshop in 1987 after enough money was collected for building material.

We will continue our story in the next edition.

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