

To all involved with the Irish Lifesaving Foundation, thank you for your ongoing support for the 'Soweto' project, also for your patience with me with my poor reporting. We have had a good year with Ellis Park pool being fully functional and with an excellent working relationship with the pool staff. They are always most accommodating and assist wherever possible with the training from free entry to the pool to jumping in as a 'patient' when we are short.

The following candidates have passed the Lifeguard Award so far this year:

Lerato Qambi, from Jabavu, Soweto

Henrico Ruiters from Newclare, Joburg

Sabelo Simelane from Tsakane, Brakpan

Nkosana Mabena from Kwa Thema, Springs

The lifeguard from Klerksdorp, Goodman Hlongwane, came to do his annual retest with us and asked if we could assist him with training some of their local youth. He started training them and then we arranged to bring 4 of them through to Ellis to assess their swimming ability. They were all quite good but not quite up to standard. As their local pool was closing for winter I had 3 of them to stay for a couple of days and completed some of the modules for the award to keep their interest. Joseph Koloane and Klaas Moroe, came through and completed the Qualifying Certificate (this is an award we offer to people who are keen to assist with training but cannot meet the swimming standard – later they can convert it to a full award if they wish). Both have indicated that they are now able to make the swim time so will attend the next assessment at the end of the month. This has proved to be quite an expensive exercise as their transport costs have been about R200 each per round trip. However thanks to the Foundation's help this has been covered.

I am hoping that Joseph and Klaas will then motivate the other two to complete the Award. Unfortunately Goodman has moved to a permanent appointment on the East Rand.

I now have 2 candidates from Daveyton, Benoni on the East Rand who are almost ready for assessments and who too have had to travel quite a distance to come into Ellis Park.

One of the Meadowland lifesavers, Thomas is busy training some local lads to improve their fitness so that they can join the class.

Word has certainly got around that there is training available and with getting candidates from various regions there is a possibility of them getting jobs despite the recession.

Thank you once again for your support.

Pat Wilcox



Pat Wilcox met with John Connolly in Cork in December to discuss the Lifeguard Training Scheme



Summary of Recent Lifesaving Activities in South Africa



Mrs. Patricia Wilcox Recipient of the 2010 Ireland Medal

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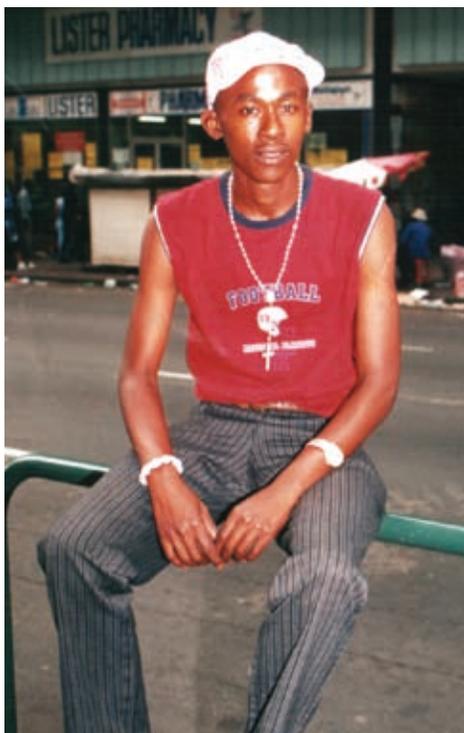


2007

Lifesaving South Africa

The Foundation has two separate projects in South Africa; a general lifesaving and lifeguard training programme in Soweto and the area around Johannesburg organised by Mrs Pat Wilcox, and a full lifeguard training project throughout the country in association with Lifesaving South Africa. South Africa, as a country, has pockets of extreme wealth and extreme poverty and the aim of the Foundation is to help poor unemployed youths gain employment as lifeguards in leisure centres and on beaches. We are pleased to report that over 50 young male and female swimmers have successfully gained employment as lifeguards through Foundation funded schemes.

South Africa Lifesaving is a world leader in the field of lifesaving and surf lifeguarding and we were pleased to learn that it will share its knowledge and expertise with the fledgling Royal Lesotho Lifesaving Association. We look forward to supporting this new project in 2008 and onwards.



Clockwise from top left: Monica, Sibusiso, Thulisile and Ruth who received assistance from the Foundation.

2008

Soweto Project Report

Once again I must begin with my heartfelt thanks to all at the Irish Lifesaving Foundation for your belief in this project and ongoing financial support. Without both it would be a much more difficult project to run. Thanks too for the hospitality extended to my husband Gus and myself when we were with you in June. Despite the wet weather we felt really welcome and part of your special foundation with members as passionate about lifesaving as I am.

On my return to South Africa I started recruiting candidates and since then the following have qualified: Chad, Grant, Declan, Claude and Ricardo. It was a very mixed group. One young man had been working as a general worker (labourer) at the pools and had at last attained the swimming entry level.

I have 4 new candidates, including Lerato a young lady from Dobsonville in Soweto who has been training since last season to attain the swimming entry level. Other enquiries have come from 2 young men from Pretoria who had somehow heard about me and 4 from Klerksdorp in the Northwest Province. So the New Year looks promising. It is good to have candidates from various areas so that we do not flood an area and then there are no jobs.

Unfortunately there was a drowning this week at one of our private schools. The child is related to the Mandela family, which meant there was considerable media coverage. These tragedies however do make people more conscious of the need for safety and the role lifeguards play.

Ellis Park Pool, which has been out of action all year reopened last week. I am thrilled as I have been using Coronationville pool on the other side of the city and which has no 'space' for showing videos, teaching CPR or teaching theory. The pool area as with all indoor pools is very noisy. Ellis Park is very central for public transport and about 40km closer for me. Traffic in Jo'burg is chaotic at present as we prepare for 2010 Soccer World Cup.

Thank you all once again for your support.

Pat Wilcox
South Africa



Pat Wilcox addressing the Ireland Seminar.