

## Soweto Project Report 2009

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*

## Some letters received from lifeguard trainees in Soweto

19 – 06 - 2009

The reason why I would love to be a lifeguard is all my life I wanted to give back to the community, in a sense of serving them through being a lifeguard, serving them with an open mind. And also to be a role model to other children in the community, to inspire the young to know about casualties of not knowing how to swim and one day to have my own swimming club.

Henrico Ruiters

17 – 06 – 2009

My name is Lerato. I live in Soweto. The reason I want to be a lifesaver is I want to save the lives of people from drowning, especially on holidays and festive seasons and busy times.

I developed the love of swimming when there was a project of teaching women how to swim in Soweto. I joined Jaws Swimming Club teaching kids how to swim. Many lifeguards in South Africa are men. I think its great that women are given a chance to be lifeguards. I give thanks to mrs. Pat Wilcox for teaching and training us all.

Lerato



Lerato with her son.

Dear Sir / Madam,

I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to express myself to you.

I am Nkosana, a 25 year old boy and the first born at home. At a very young age I've always had a love for swimming. Lifesaving is not maybe what I love to do during my spare time but it has been a part of my life. It would open doors to my future. Not only will it change my life but the lives of others. By that I mean I enjoy rescuing people in water, so I would save lives and make a difference and teaching people.

If I was given the opportunity to do lifesaving I would be a great help to my parents. They do not earn enough to satisfy the whole family. Lifesaving would be a great opportunity for me to teach the youth or the whole community. It would open the door for me as I have been dropping out of school due to financial constraints.

Nkosana Mabene

## LeisureWorld Bishopstown sponsor lifeguard training in Africa

LeisureWorld Leisure Centre, Bishopstown, donated €900 to the Foundation and its Lifeguard Training Project in Soweto, South Africa. The money was donated by parents of children attending personal survival classes organised by the centre staff in association with the lifesaving foundation. The money will be used to pay the lifeguard training costs of young unemployed male and female swimmers in Soweto, Johannesburg and the surrounding regions in South Africa.

The donation was accepted on behalf of the training project by Mrs Pat Wilcox (South African Lifeguard Trainer Assessor) who directs the training on behalf of Foundation. Mrs. Wilcox explained that there are lifeguard jobs available in pools and on beaches in South Africa but many local swimmers don't have the money to pay the training and examination fees. The money donated will be used to pay the training, travel and basic subsistence costs of unemployed youths. Once the lifeguards are employed they are in a position to support themselves and their extended families. Lifeguards are respected in Africa and youths who previously received little or no respect find that once they wear a lifeguard uniform they become valued and respected members of their communities.



Photo (l-r): Pat Wilcox (South Africa), Bryan O'Brien (Leisureworld Bishopstown), Joe Nosford (Leisureworld Bishopstown), John Connolly (Irish Lifesaving Foundation)