

YO SCHOOL MAGAZINE

"ENABLE OUR CHILDREN NOW FOR BETTER DAYS"

Inside:

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- ✓ *Culture Is How Things Are Done*
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- ✓ *No Matric! There are options!*

We're raising
a nation of
good men.

Be one of them.



Yo School Magazine



Editor's Note

Sunday 16 June 2024 was a reminder of the 48th year of the struggles by the Class of 1976 to bring democracy in our country.

The Class of 1976 was forced to learn all their subjects in school in Afrikaans.

The learners of 1976 said NO MORE! The Class of 1976 was met by a regime of the day with aggression, bloodshed as well as fatalities. The Youth of 1976 fought so that we can enjoy the opportunities we have today. Let us take a stand to correct all the ills in our communities, workplaces, churches, and schools. The youth of 2024 must enjoy the fruits of liberation. Let's spend more time at school, work and less time at night-clubs, taverns and shebeens. Let us take a stand against Nyaope, Unprotected Sex, Teenage Pregnancy, Drug and Substance Abuse.

Enjoy the READ. By Mzukona Mantshontsho,
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CAN TRUST...**

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Factual – **A**ccountable – **I**ndependent – **R**esponsible

Let us protect our Children



By Mzukona Mantshontsho

“It takes a village to raise a child,” so says an African Proverb. The *Enyobeni Tavern* fatalities in June 2022, where at least 20 children died at the tavern in Scenery Park in the Eastern Cape who suffocated to death because of overcrowding, sent a message to ALL parents, siblings, communities and the country, about the importance of protecting our children.

Sources close to the investigation believe the children - aged 13 to 17 - were killed by toxic fumes that emanated from a petrol generator that was suspected to have been used inside the tavern. Preliminary results of post-mortem examinations conducted on the victims found traces of carbon monoxide.

In every age group death is never far. All of us are forever at risk. Even so, all of us on a daily basis need to take care to avoid dangers and avoidable risks as much as possible. In many cases discipline in the fields of health and safety; general security; health and fitness and staying at home all reduce risks that are ever present. Risk is real. Law enforcement agencies must do the necessary but youth and elders need to scrutinise their own discipline for future purposes. Taverns and boozing cannot be approached neutrally if progress and human safety will be achieved.

Many concerned citizens in South Africa and the rest of the world took a stand against the terrorist group Boko Haram that kidnapped over 276 school girls in Chibok village in Nigeria on Monday 14 April 2014.

Children require a great deal of assistance and guidance in everyday life, much more so than adults do. From the time they are born, children need help with almost everything they do, from basic tasks such as having a bath and getting dressed, to learning how to treat other people. Children are much more vulnerable than adults and therefore require protection from the many dangers that threaten their well-being.

Since 1998, South Africa has commemorated Child Protection Week every year under the direction of the Department of Social Development. This is done to create awareness amongst South African communities about the shared role we each must play in safeguarding children.

Threats that face South African Children:

- Lack of proper nutrition and shelter
- Lack of access to proper healthcare
- Neglect
- Violence
- Sexual abuse
- Child pornography
- Child trafficking
- Accidental drowning, burns, electrocution, poisoning and choking
- Motor vehicle accidents
- Lack of proper education
- Bullying.

No Matric! There are options!



When results come out for every Matric Class annually, many young people are despondent because they did not pass their matric exams. They are bombarded with good-natured advice that adds more to their anxiety than it helps.

Asking to have exam answers remarked is costly and do not boost a student's results as many believe it would. Doing supplementary exams could be useful but the results are normally published after college or university enrolments have closed for the year. This means that matriculants hope to a July enrolment and by that time, many have given up hope for further studies.

The reality is that not all qualifications require a Matric Certificate. In fact, certain professional qualifications require only a Grade 11 and nothing else. Parents should not think that a person without matric does not have access to university studies.

Some National Diplomas at NQF 6 level contain sufficient credits to allow a student access to a degree program without a matriculation certificate. In addition, universities all have age exemption rules that provide anyone older than 23 years to qualify for degree studies later in life.

The next reality is that no all professions require a degree. For example, students who want to become professional financial accountants require only Grade 10 to enrol for their first year. At the end of a three-year program, the student will qualify for a National Diploma Financial Accounting (NQF 6). A professional body recognises this National Diploma and students will be allowed to practice at a level prescribed by the professional body.

Thereafter, the student can apply to write three additional board exams to obtain the same professional status as someone with a degree. No one with a least a Grade 10 can say that there are no opportunities for them. Look out for other options Matric Class of 2024!

Singer Yvonne Chaka Chaka Considers Going Back to School!



Yvonne Chaka Chaka, a well-known South African singer and songwriter, recently decided to pursue more schooling. The *Umqombothi* hitmaker completed her honours degree in December 2023, just before her mother died. She plans to continue her education.

"I went back to school because I sit on different boards, and some of them are international. If you go there and you've got no knowledge, it becomes a mission, and that's what inspired me to do management practices and leadership. However, it was terrible. Academic writing is not easy, but I'm glad I did it," she said.

Yvonne also mentioned that if she decides to go back and study, it'll mean for her to travel to England as some of the classes are being lectured there:

"I'm considering it. With my honour's degree, I felt ready and decided to go for it, tackling the challenge head-on. It wasn't easy, but I managed it. As an adult, the flexibility of different schedules and cohorts helps.

"However, this Master's degree takes 24 months because it's from the University of Reading, which is part of Henley, a British university. You can study here, but some classes require travel to England. I need to decide if I really want to commit. The honours degree was intense, and while people say the master's is slightly easier, I'm still unsure."

To all the teenage mothers out there!



By Pamela Kekana

We all know that no one is perfect and we cannot change what has happened to us, or turn back the clock.

Let us stop blaming ourselves about what happened in the past, let us rather try and move on with our lives. I know this because I am teenage mother myself, but I promise myself that no matter how hard it is, even though I would fall ten times, I would keep on pushing until I get what I want and all I need.

Having a baby doesn't mean you have to stop taking care of yourself, you still have to hold your head up high and look good, you don't have to let yourself go!

Having a baby doesn't mean you have to bury yourself in the sand, lying to yourself that it's the end of the world, it is not. You can go on; you still have your dreams to pursue.

In life, I have realized that to become a better person, you will go through hard times, all you can do is **FACE THOSE OBSTACLES!**

I want you to know this:

You are a Dame,

You are a powerful outstanding woman,

You are a very determined woman,

A woman with a voice,

A woman who takes time to fall, very brave and humble,

That is an inspiring Woman!

Be informed about your rights as a Child



You have the right to say NO to any person who is doing or saying things, that you feel are wrong. Child abuse comes in many different forms. Neglecting a child is also a form of abuse.

Neglect is the failure to provide for or meet a child's basic physical, emotional, educational, and medical needs. Parents or caregivers may leave a child in the care of a person who is known to be abusive, or they may leave a young child unattended. There are many forms of neglect.

In physical neglect, parents or caregivers may fail to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, supervision, and protection from potential harm.

In emotional neglect, parents or caregivers may fail to provide affection or love or other kinds of emotional support. Children may be ignored or rejected or prevented from interacting with other children or adults.

In medical neglect, parents or caregivers may not obtain appropriate care for the child, such as needed treatment for injuries or physical or mental health disorders. Parents may delay obtaining medical care when the child is ill, putting the child at risk of more severe illness and even death.

In educational neglect, parents or caregivers may not enrol the child in school or may not make sure the child attends school in a conventional setting, such as a public or private school, or in their home.

Report any form of child abuse or neglect to:

- Childline: 116
- Department of Social Development 24-hour Command Centre: 0800 428 428 (toll-free) – callers can speak to a social worker for assistance and counselling.
- Callers can also request a social worker from the Command Centre to contact them by dialling *120*7867# (free) from any cell phone.
- Child Welfare South Africa: 0861 424453 / 011 452-4110 / email: info@childwelfaresa.org.za.
- SAPS #CrimeStop: 08600 10111.

Child Protection Week Pledge from South African Police Services (SAPS) 2024



During Child Protection Week, the focus is on raising awareness about the need to protect children from abuse, exploitation, neglect, and all forms of violence. It's crucial that we ensure the most vulnerable members of our society do not suffer abuse. Minister of Department of Social Development, Ms Lindiwe Zulu, emphasized the importance of understanding the unique environment in which today's children are growing up.

Article 28(1)(2)(3) of the South African Constitution mandates SAPS to protect children from violence, exploitation, and abuse. This is not just a basic value but also an obligation for the police. The SAPS management salutes all officers who tirelessly protect children's rights without prejudice.

Responsibilities of SAPS Officials:

As police officials, it is your primary responsibility to ensure that the children's rights listed below are always prioritised and protected:

Protection from Harm: The government, including SAPS, must do everything to protect children from people who hurt them.

Protection from Violence: The government must help protect children from all kinds of physical and mental violence, injury, or abuse.

Special Attention: Children in trouble with the law have the right to special attention.

Protection in Conflict: Children have the right to be protected from situations of armed conflict.

Protection from Neglect: Children have the right to be protected against neglect, abuse, and punishment by parents and caregivers.

Right to Play: Children have the right to play and not to be forced into labour.

Protection from Sexual Exploitation: Children have the right to be protected against all forms of sexual exploitation and abuse.

Protection from Drugs: Children have the right to be protected against harmful substances and drugs, and from being used to make or sell drugs.

Together, we can ensure a safer environment for our children.

Protecting Children from Tobacco Industry Interference



World No Tobacco Day (WNTD) is observed annually on May 31st to raise awareness about the health risks of tobacco use and to advocate for effective policies to reduce tobacco consumption worldwide.

The 2024 WNTD theme focuses on stopping the tobacco industry from targeting children with harmful products. With this theme in mind, the National Cancer Registry (NCR), housed within the National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD), collaborated with the Cancer Association of South Africa (CANSA) on the 24th of May 2024 to educate learners of Royal Schools Alberton about the dangers of tobacco use.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), globally, an estimated 37 million children aged 13–15 years use tobacco. In many countries, the rate of e-cigarette use among adolescents exceeds that of adults. Despite significant progress in reducing tobacco use, the emergence of e-cigarettes and other new tobacco products present a grave threat to youth as well as to tobacco control.

Tobacco industries are intentionally designing products and utilising marketing strategies that appeal directly to children. By using child-friendly flavours such as cotton candy and bubble gum, combined with sleek and colourful designs that resemble toys, these industries aim to get young people addicted to these harmful products. These deceptive tactics highlight the urgent need for strong regulations to protect young people from a lifetime of harmful dependence.

Governments, public health organisations, civil society, as well as empowered youth can work together to create a future where the next generation is free from the dangers of tobacco addiction. By protecting our children from the harmful effects of tobacco, we are taking a crucial step towards reducing cancer rates and ensuring a healthier future for all.

Kind regards,
National Cancer Registry
National Institute for Communicable Diseases
Division of the National Health Laboratory Service

Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)



Time for an essential chat about Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)! Knowing the facts is key to staying healthy and making smart choices.

What Are STIs?

STIs are infections that are primarily spread through sexual contact. They can be caused by bacteria, viruses, or parasites. Some common STIs include:

Chlamydia

Gonorrhoea

HIV

Herpes

Human Papillomavirus (HPV)

Syphilis

Trichomoniasis.

How Do You Get Them?

You can contract an STI through unprotected sexual activity, including vaginal, anal, and oral sex. Sharing needles or coming into contact with infected blood can also spread some STIs.

Signs and Symptoms

STIs don't always show symptoms, but when they do, they might include:

- Unusual discharge from the genitals
- Pain or burning during urination
- Sores, bumps, or rashes on or around the genitals
- Pain during sex
- Unexplained fever or fatigue.

Remember: If you think you might have an STI, see a healthcare provider. Early detection and treatment are important.

What are the Symptoms of HIV?



By YouthWyze

Understanding the symptoms of HIV is essential for early detection and treatment. Here's what you need to know:

Acute HIV Infection (2-4 weeks after exposure):

- Flu-like symptoms such as fever, chills, and sore throat.
- Swollen lymph nodes.
- Rash.
- Muscle aches and joint pain.
- Night sweats.
- Mouth ulcers.

Chronic HIV Infection:

- The virus becomes less active, but it's still in the body.
- People may not have any symptoms, but the virus is still damaging the immune system.

Progression to AIDS (if untreated):

- Rapid weight loss.
- Recurring fever or profuse night sweats.
- Extreme and unexplained tiredness.
- Prolonged swelling of the lymph glands.
- Diarrhoea that lasts for more than a week.
- Sores of the mouth, anus, or genitals.
- Pneumonia.
- Red, brown, pink, or purplish blotches on or under the skin or inside the mouth, nose, or eyelids.
- Memory loss, depression, and other neurologic disorders.

Early detection through regular testing is key to managing HIV effectively. If you think you might be at risk, don't hesitate to get tested and consult a healthcare professional.

The Role of Counselling in HIV!



By YouthWyze

Counselling plays a vital role in both the prevention and management of HIV. Here's how:

Pre-Test Counselling: Before getting an HIV test, counselling can prepare individuals for the outcome, discuss the testing process, and provide emotional support. This helps in reducing anxiety and ensuring informed consent.

Post-Test Counselling: Regardless of the test result, counselling is essential. For those who test negative, counsellors provide advice on maintaining their negative status. For those who test positive, counsellors offer support, discuss treatment options, and connect them with healthcare services.


Ongoing Support: For individuals living with HIV, continuous counselling offers a safe space to discuss their feelings, cope with the diagnosis, and manage the psychological impact. It also reinforces adherence to treatment plans, which is crucial for keeping the virus under control.

At *YouthWyze*, we believe every young person deserves accurate info and supportive counselling on HIV. Let's create a safe, open space to prevent HIV and support those living with it.


Tips to Cut Your Risk for Top Two Cancers!

CHILDHOOD CANCER WARNING SIGNS


S
I
L
U
A
N




Seek medical help early for ongoing symptoms




White spot in the **eye**, new squint, sudden blindness or bulging eyeball




Lump on the stomach, pelvis, head, arms, legs, testicle or glands





Unexplained fever present for over two weeks, weight loss, fatigue, pale appearance, easy bruising & bleeding



Aching bones, joints, back and easy fractures



Neurological signs, a change in walk, balance or speech, regression, contiguous headaches with/without vomiting & enlarged head



www.cansa.org.za | Toll-free 0800 22 66 22

Research • Educate • Support

You can cut your risk for two of the top cancers most prevalent among SA men and women, by following our risk reduction tips.

Did You Know?

Colorectal cancer is the 2nd most prevalent cancer among men, and the 3rd most prevalent among women in South Africa. In South Africa, the risk of melanoma seems to be increasing in people under 40, especially women. Melanoma is the 4th most prevalent cancer among men and the 5th most prevalent among women in South Africa - National Cancer Registry (NCR) 2022.

Look After Your Colon

CANSA aims to educate all communities about the warning signs of cancer and the importance of eating the right kind of food - meals that are rich in fruit and vegetables, red meat intake is minimal and processed meat is cut out. It is also important to engage in physical activity and to avoid obesity. Drinking alcohol and using tobacco products increases personal risk of cancer and should be avoided.

4 Top Tips:

Be Alert to Change

Experiencing unfamiliar symptoms? Colorectal cancer is often misdiagnosed, and discomfort is usually experienced only when the cancer is at an advanced stage. Make sure you know what is ‘normal’ for your body and investigate the cause of changes. No-one knows your body like you do.

Screening Kit

If you are experiencing worrying symptoms, make use of this non-invasive screening tool. The faecal occult blood (FOB) home test kit, which detects hidden blood in the stool, is available at certain CANSA Care Centres – CANSA will provide a referral letter to your medical practitioner for further investigation, should the kit indicate blood in your stool. (Blood in the stool is not always visible to the naked eye).


Regular Cancer Screening


Be proactive about cancer screening especially if there is a family history of cancer. A colonoscopy is advised from the age of 50 (and repeated every 10yrs) for everyone, however, if abnormal symptoms are experienced or there is a family history of cancer, an earlier screening may be requested.


Make Smart Lifestyle Choices


Lead a balanced lifestyle


CHILDHOOD CANCER WARNING SIGNS


S —  **Seek** medical help early for ongoing symptoms


I —  **White spot in the eye**, new squint, sudden blindness or bulging eyeball



L —  **Lump** on the stomach, pelvis, head, arms, legs, testicle or glands







U —  **Unexplained** fever present for over two weeks, weight loss, fatigue, pale appearance, easy bruising & bleeding

A —  **Aching** bones, joints, back and easy fractures

N —  **Neurological signs**, a change in walk, balance or speech, regression, contiguous headaches with/without vomiting & enlarged head



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A people set apart!



By Boitumelo Mokoena

I care less about how the world conduct itself and do not expect them to live up to Biblical standards. However, I am most concerned about how we as believers conduct ourselves, more so those of us who presume leadership or teaching roles. Teachers and leaders will be held to a highest standard and will face accountability for their teachings and actions.

"My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive stricter judgment."- James 3:1.

Leaders tower high above the rest, first to those they lead and secondly to the outside world as they by default become the "face" of Christianity. It is for this reason that we can't behave as the outside world--except it ceases to shine, light can never be misinterpreted for darkness.

The church is not a building or confined to a denomination but is made up of followers of Christ all around the world.

We don't have rogue lone rangers in the kingdom and none of us are above the counsel of Scripture. It is either we are of Christ or not and if we profess to be of Christ then we need to uphold to Christian principles as prescribed in scripture.

In choosing to blend in, we dilute the gospel, lead many astray and misrepresent our beautiful unparalleled kingdom. Shining our lights is intentional, uncomfortable and takes courage. Shining our light is beyond quoting scripture and singing hymns, it is a lifestyle of boldness, a path less travelled and often unpopular.

Dear friends, in every place we find ourselves in, let us labour to SHINE!

Kindness doesn't Always matter



By Mehr Lee

There... I said it.

Don't get me wrong. Kindness is so important in many situations, but I'm hoping to raise you to recognize when kindness just won't cut it.

I do love quotes that circulate, like, "In a world where you can be anything... be kind."

It seems simple. But here's the truth, oftentimes kindness isn't enough.

You see, sometimes kindness is more inspirational than motivational.

Kindness helps create relationships but doesn't always foster them.

Kindness can make peace but will never be enough to keep it.

Kindness may soften barriers but won't break them.

Kindness might open the door, but baby girl, you may need more than kindness to keep that door open.

While I do want you to consider kindness first, I want you to consider the situation foremost.

Not every situation warrants your kindness, and not every person you meet deserves it.

You'll find yourself in situations where it's better to tuck away an open hand and lay down an iron fist.

There will be people that need to be met with a sharp tongue rather than a sweet word

I hope you learn to trust your gut and give yourself the allowance to choose accordingly. As long as you choose your words wisely and with good intention, you will never fall short.

That's called Integrity. And you should never compromise your integrity for the sake of kindness.

So yes, kindness matters... but not Always.

One Word Can Make All the Difference

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THE BIG 5 CANCERS AFFECTING WOMEN IN SA
#2 Cervical Cancer

DID YOU KNOW?
Cervical cancer is the 2nd most common cancer

Go for regular PAP SMEARS
Cervical cancer can be effectively treated if detected & diagnosed early
Pap Smear = reliable screening test for the early detection of cervical cancer - a swab of cervical cells

Women ages 18 - 25 who have ever been sexually active should have Pap smears every 3 years, or 2 years later after first sexual activity (whichever is later) and continue until age 70

Human Papilloma viruses (HPVs)
Almost all cervical cancers are caused by HPV - a common virus that is spread through skin-to-skin contact, body fluids and sexual intercourse.

Signs and symptoms

- Abnormal vaginal bleeding between periods
- Continuous vaginal discharges
- Menstrual periods becoming heavier and lasting longer than usual
- Vaginal bleeding or pain during sexual intercourse
- Increased urinary frequency
- Vaginal bleeding after menopause

Risk Factors

- Failure to always use protection during sexual intercourse
- Sexually transmitted infections
- Having many sexual partners and high-risk sexual activity
- Having first sexual intercourse at a young age
- Being overweight/obese with low physical activity levels
- Consumption of alcohol (could lead to high-risk sexual activity) and smoking

CANSA offers Pap smears at our CANSA Care Centres at an affordable rate

Toll Free 0800 22 66 22 | www.cansa.org.za

072 197 9305
071 867 3530

Instagram: @cansa_sa
Facebook: CANSA South Africa
Twitter: @cansa_sa
LinkedIn: CANSA South Africa

By Elize Joubert

That word, for cancer patients and their loved ones is HOPE.

Ingrid Rabie (49 yrs) is someone who understands the motivating power of hope.

In 2019, Ingrid consulted her GP and was misdiagnosed. The COVID pandemic followed suit and although Ingrid's concerning symptoms persisted, she was only correctly diagnosed with colorectal cancer in 2023.

For Ingrid, or anyone else living with cancer, the journey can be likened to the weaving of a fabric.

Every woven fabric consists of two layers: the warp - the long strong threads that form the basis and length of the weaving; and the weft - the shorter threads that criss-cross the warp and create the width, the colours and the pattern.

In Ingrid's pattern, there were the dark threads starting with the shock of the diagnosis; the late identification of the cancer at stage 3; and the initial fear that comes with hearing the word 'cancer'.

Then add not having a medical aid to help with the cost of treatment; and a post-operative infection that led to another operation and two stoma bags.

But there were also some lighter threads: starting with Ingrid's husband who insisted on getting her into treatment no matter what the cost.

Following on was the professional and caring hospital treatment she received during the scans, the biopsy, the quickly arranged robotic surgery; the good days; and the love, compassion, and encouragement she received.

Underneath all the experiences that created Ingrid's weft threads, the strong warp threads were holding everything together - those threads were HOPE...

Hope was in Ingrid's heart and gave her the determination to live. And uppermost was the hope that she would one day run around with her future grandchildren.

Ingrid's hope was bolstered daily by the support she received. Support, not just from those closest to her, but also from our CANSA support groups.

Says Ingrid, "Besides everyone who has held me up, I'd like to thank CANSA for their support groups for cancer patients, and also those who donate to CANSA for making these groups possible, because without them I wouldn't be able to celebrate life today".

CANSA recognises the value of support groups for cancer survivors, caregivers and loved ones.

We offer those affected by cancer the opportunity to become part of a caring community when they join their local CANSA Support Group, or any of our Online Support Groups, which are all listed on our website.

What's important for you to know is that you're a significant part of the support network – through your donations, which make the groups possible...

I can't thank you enough for this very special contribution that you make to keep hope alive. A contribution that tells cancer patients that they're not alone, allows the sharing of problems and solutions, and above all gives access to HOPE.

CANSA
Research • Educate • Support

THE BIG 5 CANCERS AFFECTING WOMEN IN SA
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What does Diabetes Support mean to you?



By Bridget McNulty

We are all so different (there's an understatement!) and we all want different kinds of diabetes support. What does diabetes support mean to you?

When we've asked about diabetes support from friends and family on South Africans with Diabetes before, the responses have been so varied.

Some people have family members reminding them to take medication, checking that they don't eat the wrong kind of food, and getting very involved in their day-to-day diabetes management.

Others have friends and family who are there when needed, but don't get very involved. And still others are managing diabetes pretty much solo.

What kind of diabetes support do you have? What kind do you want?

Family and friends' support

Those closest to us will probably have the best picture of what diabetes means to us, and how it affects our lives. Personally, I don't want too much involvement from my family and friends... I want them to know what to do in an emergency, of course, but aside from that I'm happy to be left to my own devices.

That said, it really means a lot to me when they take food considerations into account – offering a lower carb option for dinner, being flexible about food timing if it will make my life easier, that kind of thing.

And I will never forget one New Year's Eve when I snuck off to take my long-acting insulin injection in the kitchen late at night, and my dad walked in and saw me. He looked at me with such love and said, "You never get a break, do you?" It still makes me tear up to think of it...

Work support

Of course, friends and family are only one segment of life. For many of us, work colleagues are just as significant a relationship – particularly when it comes to our diabetes. How much you tell your colleagues is up to you (and your workplace environment) but it's obviously important for them to know what to do in an emergency. And it can be really helpful for them to understand just a little of what living with diabetes feels like, so that you can be given some allowances if you're having a hard blood sugar day.

Online support

And then we come to my particular favourite – online diabetes support! When I was first diagnosed with diabetes, I was so lonely largely because I didn't know anyone else with diabetes. I had no idea that I wasn't the only one in this big confusing mess...

But look at us now! South Africans with Diabetes has over 36,000 people sharing their experiences every day... I wish it was more, only because I can see what a difference it makes in my life when I take the time to connect.

Every time I spend time on our Facebook page, I feel less alone in this wild ride of living with diabetes. I feel connected, part of something bigger. And I think that's what diabetes support mean to me.

Culture is how things get done!



By Thulani Sibeko

Culture is shared. Culture is a manifestation of values, beliefs. Life was so simple and practical when we grew up in Soweto. For visitations, no advance warning or appointment was required.

And if you arrived (even without an appointment) and found the gate locked, you didn't turn back. Why would you, after travelling so far?

Culture is the system of mindsets of the people in a family, community, network or nation. Having also grown up in a community the mindsets in Sydenham-Durban, Eldorado Park and Ennerdale Johannesburg were exactly the same. No appointment required - show up and shout Hela I am here!

Instead, you would employ any of the three methods to get the unexpected house occupants to notice your arrival and come open for you:

- Shout the name of one of the house occupants.
- If you can reach the padlock, bang it against the gate to make a sound.
- Grab a small stone and throw it onto the roof of the house. Bathong, who came up with this pre-cellophane's idea?

The amazing thing is that I've never heard of anyone who used method 3 and broke a house window by mistake. Were these visitation practices a Soweto or Johannesburg thing, or they also happened in Mamelodi, Gugulethu, KwaMashu, Mdantsane, New Brighton, Seshego, Likazi, Galeshewe?

5 tips to get you on the track to discovering your professional purpose



By Nompumelelo Mbonane

Reflect on Your Values: Think about what matters most to you in your work and life. What principles do you hold dear? What kind of impact do you want to make in the world?

Identify Your Strengths: Consider your unique strengths, talents, and skills. What are you naturally good at, and what activities bring you joy and fulfillment?

Explore Your Passions: Pay attention to the activities and interests that energize you and make you come alive. What topics or causes are you passionate about?

Seek Feedback: Reach out to friends, mentors, and colleagues for their perspective on your strengths and areas of interest. Sometimes, others can offer valuable insights that we may overlook ourselves.

Experiment and Iterate: Don't be afraid to try new things and explore different career paths.

Your purpose may evolve over time, so stay open to new experiences and opportunities. Remember, discovering your professional purpose is a journey, not a destination. It may take time and self-reflection, but the clarity and fulfillment it brings to your career are well worth the effort.

Download my free e-book “5 Signs That You’re Due for A Career Pivot” here: <https://lnkd.in/dH-gbMJ4>

Find a career or field that you are passionate about, interests you!



By Dr. Gabrielle Wojtowitz

I am Proudly South African geotechnical engineer, wife and working mom. Three roles, 24 hours a day. It defines who I am.

After matriculating from Pretoria High School for Girls, I completed my BEng (Civil Engineering) at the University of Pretoria (UP). Thereafter having been a bursary student with Ninham Shand, I joined their Transportation team in Pretoria. A few months in I realised this field was not for me and started a post-graduate degree at UP (part time) in Geotechnical Engineering.

In October of that year, I was still not happy in my current position and met with my professor at UP. He mentioned a potential PhD in the United Kingdom (UK). I had never considered doing a PhD and after my final year research project, I swore I would never do research again. Within two months, I arrived in the freezing wet UK with two bags, a laptop and one jacket. The University of Southampton became my home. What an amazing experience! A PhD is not only about research, but one also learns valuable life skills such as self-motivation, self-management and self-determination. I met who would become my future husband the first weekend I arrived.

Three and half years later my funding ran out and I was still writing up. I desperately needed to find a job. It was 2010 and the UK had been hit hard by the recession. No-one was employing and the industry was severely struggling. After 3 months of no success, I needed an action plan. I entered a poster competition at the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) in London and won. This allowed me to talk to one of the judges who gave me a contact. After an interview I finally had a job as a junior geotechnical engineer for the innovative company BuroHappold, so we moved to the beautiful city of Bath. This experience showed me how important first impressions and networking are.

After over five years in the UK, we decided to move back (South Africa would always be home). Jobless and homeless, we took the long way back via Singapore, Australia, Thailand, Vietnam and Cambodia each with a backpack. I joined Aurecon's Ground Engineering team in 2012 where I am today. I serve on the SAICE Geotechnical Division committee and am the geotechnical division member for South African Bureau of Standards (SABS) Technical Committee TC60 (SANS 10400). I am an external examiner for the UP and the University of Cape Town (UCT) and am an invited lecturer for a part of the UCT Masters course. I have been mentored by some amazing engineers and professors who without their guidance and support I would not be the engineer I am today.

Along the way, there were one or two “not so good” mentors, but I moved away from them as soon as I could. At Aurecon, I head the Modelling Forum which I use as a platform for knowledge transfer and development of junior engineers. I have also published a number of papers. I believe that we open ourselves up to opportunities by being passionate in what we do and being involved. I love what I do, and I think that's key.

Advice:

Study further (never stop learning and developing); get good mentors (that are interested in you and your career); give back (join your institutes, councils; mentor your juniors, inspire the youth; working moms – try and have “me time” once a week (a yoga class, run, walk) it's important for your personal wellbeing and sanity; Love what you do if not make a change.



Why we need Sport in our Schools



By Mzukona Mantshontsho

South Africa is a society that has been led to believe that fat, any fat, is bad for you and should be avoided at all costs. But fats are vitally important for the day-to-day functioning of our bodies. The truth about fats is not a simple matter of good and bad, but that not all fats are equal.

These were the words of Dr. Jane Badham, a member of the Ministry of Health's Food Legislation Advisory Group, at a lecture entitled: "The magic bullet for weight loss".

Badham further added salt to wound by saying that the World Health Organisation had declared obesity a disease. So why are we as society failing to overcome the problem? Obesity is a global epidemic on the increase, but we still find dieticians, psychologists, and physical therapists working in isolation, instead of pooling their resources and working on a holistic approach to healthy living.

In addition, Badham said that being overweight is regarded as an issue of lack of discipline by society in general, and this has led to discrimination against obese people. Then they give up the fight.

The lack of understanding of the health risks of swinging from normal weight to obesity has led to the notion of dieting as a quick solution, as opposed to eating in a balanced way, and people relinquish control to these diets without questioning them. She argued that the actual relationship between food and its effects has not been placed into perspective when individuals decide to go on a diet. There is no honesty about the life-long changes they have to make, and people often lack the motivation to stay with these changes.

There's little acceptance of realistic goal-setting, so individuals believe in the 'magic bullet'. Badham said there's also a lack of product research available to individuals to enable them to make informed decisions about diets. No one knows if a particular diet can be used for life.

So, the answer is NO!!! The magic bullet for weight loss does not exist.

The winning strategy for Badham is not dieting, but **"E.A.T.W.E.L.L"**.

E stands for eating anything you enjoy,

A stands for having the right attitude,

T stands for the diet being totally the individuals choice,

W stands for weight loss,

E stands for exercise,

L stands for lifestyle adaptation and

L stands for life-long commitment.