

THE SPEKBOOM

2ND YEAR WINS VC'S 2015 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AWARD

QUOTE TO RE- MEMBER

"I think the environment should be put in the category of our national security. Defense of our resources is just as important as defense abroad. Otherwise what is there to defend?"

**Robert Redford,
1985**

Angel Ancha Bulunga has been a member of the student volunteer programme since her first year at Rhodes. She has served as one of the student leaders at Home of Joy for the past two years, and in that time she has spear headed a well-planned and directed approach to academic support activities at the Home. Angel is often the first student to raise her hand to offer to assist in any given situation, including playing an instrumental role in recruitment and training of new volunteers. Angel leads by example to her fellow volunteers. Her

vision for working towards a just and equitable society is never left in theory, but constantly applied to all situations. Angel applies critical thinking and genuine concern for social development in all her engagements, which prompts her to develop, critique and engage deeply with all aspects of community engagement, whether as a leader, volunteer and a citizen living in Grahamstown. As an Alan Gray Fellow, Angel has been instrumental in the establishment of Existential Conversations with Inkululeko at Ntsika High School. Angel has taken

seriously the call for young people to be part of driving the change they wish to see, leading her to propose what we hope will be the first university wide O-week community engagement drive in 2015. Thinking deeply about community engagement, Angel is working to conceptualize a means by which first years are challenged to consider the meaning of being educated in an African institution committed to social development.

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WHERE ARE OUR ALUMNI?



Abby Chinyimba

I joined an organization called Akros soon after graduating. They are a young organization that are involved in community surveillance in various projects such as malaria and WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) across several parts of Zambia. When I joined them, I was one of the first surveillance

officers they recruited for the WASH project and I was put in charge of rolling out community surveillance system using mobile phones in 4 districts of the country. Naturally, this entailed a great deal of time on the road, which was great as I got a chance to explore the vast beauty of the country on my trips. The experience at Akros set to really establish my skills in dealing with different stakeholders from the grassroots in the villages I was visiting to district level and even national level partners that were involved in the project. My foundation and understanding of the issues surrounding climate change were able to provide a different, often valuable perspective on some of the cross-cutting themes that were being discussed at the national level to coordinate various efforts.

Having spent a year with Akros, I move on to another NGO (non-governmental organization) called SNV. It is a Dutch-funded NGO

that works in various thematic areas from water, agriculture and climate change to sanitation and hygiene related issues, all at community level. I was again tasked with the responsibility of rolling out a water point mapping surveillance system that monitored the continuous availability and conditions of various water sources, allowing stakeholders to have information on these water sources in far-flung villages in near real time. In this position I have been working in 8 districts across the country and continue to provide additional technical support for other sub-projects within the organisation including input for upcoming projects on solid waste management.

That in summary is what I have been up to since graduating from Rhodes. I believe the world is still open for more experiences and once I have learnt what I need from this level I will be preparing to move to the next great opportunity.

Keitomesto Abu-Basuto

After finishing my Masters degree, submitting, I spent a year looking after my first born child. After which I started looking for a job. It was amazingly easy getting one because they were looking for someone equipped with the knowledge and skills I had, plus I think having Charlie as a supervisor helped. I have been working for an NGO in Zimbabwe called Southern Alliance for Indigenous Resources (SAFIRE) since January 2014 as an ecologist. SAFIRE is funded by big organisations like AU, USAID etc. The aim is to increase community resilience through the commercialisation of Non-Timber Forest Prod-

ucts (NTFPs). I am working with commercialisation of NTFPs, better management, their sustainable use, impact of any harvesting by companies will have on locals/rural people. I like working with rural people. When companies come I look at the viability of their proposal, quantities, and suggest a way of harvesting that is sustainable, making sure resources can reproduce and do not go extinct. I like what I do but I think the job is enjoying me more than I enjoy it. One of the important things I learnt while doing Masters at Rhodes is to always look at things in a multidisciplinary way. Everything I do I consider every angle from economic, social to ecological. With that combination I find it

easy to gather adequate information and make informed decisions. I am looking forward to doing a PhD with the department in the near future.



WHERE ARE OUR ALUMNI? (CONTD)



Katherine Edwards

Currently I am working at an Environmental Consulting firm in Durban called FutureWorks. I started working here in February and have been enjoying it so far. My boss lives in Knysna and I'm the only consultant in the Durban office so it's been a big learning curve having been thrown in the deep end, but I speak to my boss regularly over the phone, email or skype. Work wise, that has probably been the most challenging thing for me, attending meetings and doing site visits with no one really to guide me was a bit nerve-racking in the beginning, but it's probably made me learn a lot quicker than normal. I've always been a social person so being in an office by myself most days was a big adjustment for me, but I've learnt the discipline of just putting my head down and working.

When I was applying for jobs after I left Rhodes, I found it very demotivating after applying to so many companies/firms and never hearing back from any of them. I started to panic that I wouldn't get a job-people really underestimate how much perseverance and hard work it takes when applying for your first job. I kept a spreadsheet of all the

companies I applied for, whether I heard back from them and my rating of the company. Luckily FutureWorks for me was at the top of my list. Originally I never heard back from a lot of people until January after the Christmas holiday when a lot of the companies re-opened.

In the meantime I had spent some time driving around office blocks, dropping off my contact number and CV with any potential company-this also led to some impromptu interviews which I didn't expect, so at least next time I know to be more prepared! When I received my letter from Rhodes in late December/January I re-sent my CV to all the companies I had applied to previously to let them know I had passed etc and attached that letter, that was when I got an sms from my boss at 8am saying we will be having a telephone interview at 9am, and after 3 days I heard I got the job! I would suggest to anyone that they start applying way sooner than I did, it allows companies to consider and/or hire you before they close for December when they're all rushed to finish work and when they re-open in January they are just as busy. All those emails you get from Kathy with work opportunities-apply then and there for them and if you get rejected from somewhere, ask if they have any other contact for you.

I was lucky in a sense because I live on a farm, so my dad knows a lot of people through conservation and general farm stuff, so I contact them and majority were kind enough to reply with a list of contacts and companies that they would recommend. If you don't hear back from a company, but you really want to work for them-keep sending them

your CV when you have new documents to show them or just to reiterate that you're really keen to work there, I think it shows a lot that you are really interested and not just randomly selecting them as another company to tick off your list. But perseverance is key.

My future endeavors- if I get offered to stay on with FutureWorks (my contract is only 6 months) then I will certainly commit to that-this is a great company and I will then be looking for a place to live in Durban (at the moment I'm living from home, about 45 minute drive from work and commuting everyday-living out on a farm I knew I was going to have to spend some time commuting no matter where I worked). I think in the next 2 years I might apply to do Masters overseas, but I want to get some worthwhile work experience under my belt and start saving for that possibility. Otherwise a few friends and I are planning to travel together in a few years.

“ Work wise, that has probably been the most challenging thing for me, attending meetings and doing site visits with no one really to guide me was a bit nerve-racking in the beginning, but it's probably made me learn a lot quicker than normal.”



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: ELUXOLWENI CHILDREN'S YOUTH CARE CENTRE

A group of 10 students from the Environmental Science Honours class started a community engagement project at the Eluxolweni Children's Youth Care Centre in April 2015. The ten students involved were Sky Roberts, Michelle Nott, Zimkita Nkata, Nicola Hewitt, William Mponwana, Jasmine Chakoma, Afika Njwaxu, Sipumelele Dunywa, Amy-lee Greeves and Roxanne Starkey. Our aim was to plant a vegetable garden in the hope that the centre could use the produce to feed the children. Additionally, it was a way to educate the children about growing their own food and if maintained could produce vegetables for years to come. Five beds were made and inter-cropping was used in each bed. A variety

of vegetable were planted mainly from seed, a few of these include: beans, cabbage, lettuce, leeks, tomatoes, carrots, beetroot, butternut, onions and spinach. A compost heap was made so the excess vegetable waste in the kitchen could be put to good use. Additionally, the compost heap adds nutrients to the soil and reduces the emissions of methane if it was disposed of otherwise. The material used to make the compost heap was donated by Mohamed Moorad from Walala

Wasala Recycling Diminished Homes in Grahamstown. This month (September) an education session was held at the centre to educate the children about harvesting, watering and general maintenance of the garden. The vegetable garden is now complete and the progress so far has been remarkable.



Week 1



Week 3



Week 2



Week 4



Compost heap materials donated by Mahomed at Walala Wasala Recycle Demoslied Homes



SUGARLOAF HILL COMMUNITY CLEAN UP

On 5th May, staff and students from the department joined a community initiative to tackle the unsightly rubbish around Sugarloaf Hill. This event was organized by the Kowie Catchment Campaign and brought together a wide variety of Makana residents all in an effort to kick-start the big clean-up. More events like this are on the cards. Watch this space!

By Kat Painter



TREE PLANTING AT FINGO LIBRARY

A few people in the honours class took over the Trees for Life project's aims of planting trees in the township as part of the required community engagement. Fingo library was identified as a meeting place of locals, as well as a place in desperate need of greening.

We planned interactive sessions to be held with local children as a means to teach them about trees, get them excited about planting trees and encourage them to look after the trees once they're planted. Our goal is to plant 6 trees on or before the 26th of September, well after spring has sprung, in order to maximise their chance of survival.

Running alongside the tree planting initiative, we have put in motion the Rhodes Goes Green initiative which encourages everyone in the University who has taken a local or international flight to donate money to the RU Green Fund. This money is specifically earmarked for Trees for Life to buy and plant trees.





WELL DONE TRACEY!

Tracey Potts, environmental science Masters student, participated in the 42nd Annual US Open/ ISKA World Martial Arts Championships, held at Disney World's Coronado Springs Resort, Orlando, Florida, USA. 5000 participants from more than 65 countries competed over 2 days in July 2015.

Tracey and her family were members of the South African Sport Martial Arts team which consisted of 68 members. The SA team is made up of Protea, Presidents and Development team members. Tracey, her husband Steve and son Brody were awarded their Protea colours. Below is a summary of their achievements.

Shihan Steve Potts (5th Dan) – Black Belt Class “AA” Division: 2nd Place in Points Fighting; 2nd Place in Clash Sparring; 5th Place in Self-Defence and Finalist in Traditional

Forms.

Sensei Tracey Potts (1st Dan) – Black Belt Class A Division: 1st Place in both Continuous Sparring and Clash Sparring; 2nd Place in Points Sparring; 4th Place in Traditional Weapons Kata, 5th Place in Self-Defence and Finalist in Traditional Forms.

Sempai Brody Steyn (Black Belt, 2nd Kyu) – Black Belt Class A Division: 1st Place in Clash Sparring; 2nd Place in an Exhibition Bout; 3rd Places for both Continuous and Points Sparring; 5th Place in Self-Defence and Finalist Placings in both Traditional and Traditional Weapons Forms. Along with the above-mentioned individual placings, The Black Shadows, South Africa’s top ranked Synchronised Kata team placed 2nd in the Open Hand and Weapons Synchronised Forms overall.



Black Shadows: Sensei Tracey Potts, Sempai Marius du Toit and Marco Grobler



Shihan Steve Potts, Sensei Tracey & Sempai Brody

WELL DONE AMY-LEE!

Amy-Lee Greaves won the prize of a R300 Bargain Books gift voucher for best presentation at the department’s 2015 Annual Research Forum. She spoke to us about herself.

I believe that every event in my life has shaped me into the person I am today. I am an only child to a single parent mother and I think that this has taught me to be independent and grateful for everything I have. I was born and raised in the city of Durban, Kwa-Zulu Natal. I love both playing and watching sport because sport can teach you important life skills, like team work, and it has the ability to unite people. I love

my family as they are my support structure and source of encouragement for me to achieve excellence in everything I do. I love good food – who doesn’t? I love my heritage – it is what makes me unique and I hope to embrace it everywhere I go. I think that random is beautiful and I love the fact that I am not perfect. I dislike most insects – especially the ones that can fly towards you! I dislike dishonest people – I think that people should be treated with the dignity and respect that they deserve. I dislike the absence of morals in society – I think ethics are so important, especially when dealing with people and the environment around you. I

don’t like conforming to societal norms and I think it is okay to be different – life is too short to wear matching socks. I admire my mother and see her as the greatest positive influence in my life. The sacrifices she has made has allowed me to be where I am today. She always encourages me to remain strong, be courageous in all that I do and not forget the values I have been raised with.



2015 ANNUAL SCHOOL'S ENVIRO QUIZ



On the 16th of September the Department of Environmental Science and the Honours class of 2015, hosted the annual Schools Quiz Evening. The event started in 2008 as part of the Departments' community engagement initiative and has become an event on the calendar of most of the schools in Grahamstown. This year ten schools participated in the event with each school being represented by three learners each from Grade 11.

Prior to the hosting of the event the students decided to run a training day where participants from each school could come for a day at the department. The idea was to show young scholars what varsity was like and get them used to the kind of question/answer dialog for the Quiz even-

ing. Only a few schools took part in the training day and thoroughly enjoyed their time on campus.

This year the Quiz evening was a great success. Schools were divided into their teams and the games began. The event consisted of four rounds of questioning, ranging from history and current affairs to geography and climate, where students were asked to answer multiple choice and true/false questions. After the rounds of questioning there were four teams ahead of the pack who went into the rapid rounds.

Teams were given a buzzer and fastest finger first ruled the game. The overall standings were:

1st place went to Victoria Girls High, 2nd place to Graeme College, 3rd place to DSG, 4th place to Ntsika High and 5th (tied) to Nathaniel Nyaluza and Kingswood. The prizes were R3000, R2000 and R1000 to the 1st, 2nd and 3rd teams respectively. Fourth place received R500 and the tied 5th received R250 each. A big thank you to Coastal and Environmental Services (CES) of Grahamstown for sponsoring the prize money. Another thank you goes out to the Amaphiko Dance Project for the evening's entertainment.



N O S I G O E S T O I N D I A



Charlie Shackelton, Georgina Cundill and myself went on an amazing trip to India late August. The trip was divided into a stay in Bangalore (Karnataka state) and Alleppey in the Kerala state. Charlie and I travelled five days earlier than George. There were two reasons for this trip. The first was to meet Nitin Rai who is a researcher from ATREE (Ashoka trust for research in ecology and the environment) working on the same Lantana project (the Kimberly project) as Charlie and Nosi. This project is being done in four countries: South Africa, Madagascar, Australia and India. The second reason, which was why Georgina came along, was to meet with Ashish who is an off campus student based in India.

The project topic is “A weed by any other name? Comparing local knowledge and uses of environmental weeds around the Indian ocean” and is funded by the Australian research council. The broad objectives of this project are: (i) When do plants become weeds; (ii) How are weeds classified according to embedded knowledge systems; and (iii) How do people use environmental weeds in their everyday livelihood and cultural activities?

On the second day Charlie and myself, together with Nitin and two people from ATREE, travelled to ATREE’s research accommodation at BRT (Biligirirangana swamy temple wildlife sanctuary) situated at the Western Ghats. There I enjoyed different food that was aromatic, healthy and tasty. We were taken around the reserve for sight-seeing and to see how much Lantana is out there. On the way back we came across three elephants -

the male started charging towards the car but luckily we got away in good time. The second day Nitin took us around the reserve, also explaining how he had collected his data from the local communities. This is where

I discovered my phobia for leeches. Lunch was served on the side of mountain with a beautiful view of the Tibetans area. The day ended off with a visit to the Ranganatha temple situated at the edge of a cliff overlooking northern parts of the sanctuary and snacking on Vada (a fritter-type snack) from a vendor.

On the way back from BRT to Bangalore a detour was taken in order that I could go to Mysore where I visited the Chamundeshwari temple on the famous Chamundi hill and the beautiful palace of Mysore which was the official residence and seat of the Maharajas of Mysore (the royal family of Mysore). After arriving back in Bangalor, George joined us and gave a presentation at ATREE on the research she has been working on focusing on co-management between communities and protected areas.



The Mysore Palace



Raganatha Temple



Chamundeshwari Temple

NOSI GOES TO INDIA CONT...

The following day all three of us took an overnight train to the Southern part of India, Kerala state. We met Ashish in a small town called Alleppey which is an important tourist destination. The next morning was spent in a house boat on the lake where Charlie, George and Ashish were working on improving research methods and looking for a way forward. Lunch was served next to a rice field with beautiful scenery. There were meetings held with the villagers to pilot PRA (participatory rural appraisal) methods for Ashish's data collection. It was interesting how people around the lake used the lake as a place to wash clothes, bath and fish.

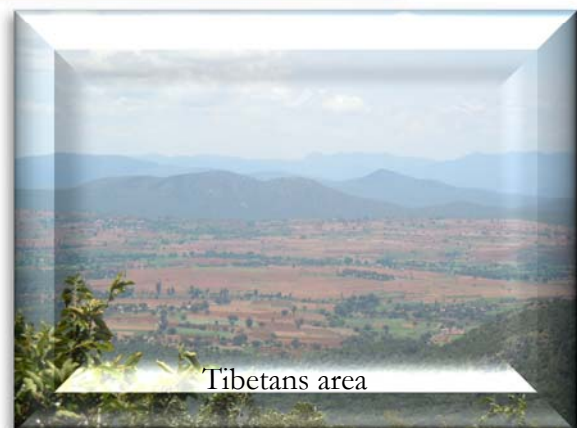
The last three days of the visit, after Charlie had left for South Africa, George and I were taken to Periyar, which is a very touristy town. We went for a walk in the buffer zone of the periyar national park and also went on a boat ride for wildlife viewing (I must admit I was part of the viewing for a couple of tourists). From there we all travelled to Kochi which was the last stop before flying back.



House boat



Pilot with locals



Tibetans area

LEGENDS HALF MARATHON

This marathon took place in East London on Saturday 3rd October and three representatives from our dept and Geography participated and came first in each category:

Joana Bezera (1st Rhodes DES Postdoc)

Rebecca Powell (1st Geog PhD student)

Jessica Cockburn (1st DES PhD student)



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