



BULEMBU BEAT

*Faith**Hope**Love*

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RACE WITH A REASON

Our Bulembu adventure race team's passion for staying active and enjoying the outdoors met a great purpose when they realised their participation could raise funds for a brand new prosthetic leg for one of their sisters – Phephile Khumalo. It led them to take part in a 24-hour, 120km adventure race in Parys, South Africa!

After much planning, training and preparation, the team left Bulembu bright and early the day before the event. Seeing Rhinos and various other wildlife at the famous Alzu one stop, and a late lunch stop in Pretoria were some of the highlights of the roadtrip. En-route the team was also informed of the fantastic blessing that a donor was going to match every donation that was made, which was very exciting for everyone.

We arrived at the venue in the dark, to a warm welcome but freezing temperatures...only to

realise the next morning that we were mere metres away from the Vaal River...explaining it all! After taking bicycles at the drop-off point, warming up at a nice big bonfire, dinner and packing supply boxes, everyone turned in for the night – in a double layer of clothing, inside a sleeping bag, and covered with a duvet!

At 6am the next morning the team was up and at 'em for registration. The main event areas was abuzz as everyone was checking equipment and making final preparations. At around 08h20 all teams were at the starting line and there was a lot of excitement in the air. Before we knew it, the countdown started, and at 08h30 sharp the race got underway!

The first leg of the race was a 7km trek (hike). It went great and the team made it to the first transition in good time. From there they tackled the second leg - a 20km kayak on the Vaal River, which included navigating through a rapid! Kayaking on a cold river for a few hours meant that the biggest challenge was staying dry and warm – despite beautiful sunny weather and clear skies. At the second transition, they had to carry their kayaks to the equipment truck before having opportunity to have a snack and refill water bladders. The team were going at a slower pace than they'd hoped, but their spirits remained high. The team then took off on the third leg of the race – a 16km trek, which basically started with a cross-river swim, hiking a short loop, and then crossing the river again. After their second river crossing, dusk was already settling in, but they continued strong. Despite a short detour and getting covered in black-jacks from trekking through vegetation on the route, they completed trek to the third and final transition point just before 8pm. They thoroughly enjoyed having a change of clothes, hot drink, quick meal, snack & water replenishment! By then news had also reached us that the fundraiser goal was exceeded, and we were able to share it with the team. They really loved hearing that, and it was a great way for them to start the final leg of the race. So at 9:30pm they set out on the 76km cycle on corrugated-iron-type dirt roads in freezing cold temperatures!

The team was doing well, and they were headed for the 19-hour finish they were aiming at. However, at around 3:20am the team made the call to the organisers to be collected. It was simply too cold, and the team was battling staying warm. Klaus then called us as well, and we got ready to head to the main event area to welcome them back. The team was about 20km from the finish, and the outside temperature where they were collected was -3 degrees Celcius (26.6 Fahrenheit)!



Once the team had warmed up, had some proper sustenance and hot showers, they enjoyed a nice nap. After breakfast, the team was honoured at the prize giving for their inspirational spirit, and special mention was made of the reason they took part in the race and the fact that the goal was exceeded. We headed back to Bulembu later that day with tired bodies but full hearts!

We're so proud of our Bulembu adventurers. The team and all of us in Bulembu would like to thank each and every person who donated, prayed, sent messages of encouragement, provided supplies and were in any way part of getting the team to and through the race. Because of YOU the goal for Race With A Reason was not only reached, but EXCEEDED. Now we look forward to keeping you updated of the progress as Phephile journeys toward a brand new prosthetic leg and whole new lease on life!

by Michelle le Roux

FORM 5 STUDENTS SHARE

Two Bulembu Christian High School Form 5 students were asked to share about their school experience during Covid 19. This is what they had to say.

Tell us about yourself.

Machawe: My name is Machawe Mabuza. I am 19 years old. I have been in Bulembu for 14 years approximately.

Hlengiwe: my name is Hlengiwe Magongo and I'm 18 years old. I am currently in form 5 and doing 7 subjects at school. And my best subjects are literature, biology and math.

How is being in your final year especially during this pandemic?

Machawe: Being in form 5 has been a shock for a lot of people but for me I really enjoy being there. Being a form five student enlightens me, it means I'm about to bridge the gap from where I am now and where I want to be in the future. I feel like I have reached the beginning of my destination. That helps me to want to achieve more in life because I have already pushed this far.

Hlengiwe: So far, it's been a good year but also challenging at the same time because at the beginning of the year we were doing tutorials, where we had to teach ourselves at home. We would receive study packs from the teachers to write on our own. So that really was the struggle because we had to do things alone. Some of the things we were asked we had to go on the actual ground to dig answers for ourselves.

Are you excited about being in form 5?

Machawe: I am thrilled. This is more of a stepping stone to my future. Since the emergency of this life threatening Covid 19, I have been doubting myself in terms of results, asking myself questions about whether I am going to make it or not. But I believe that I will make it, at the end of the day I can't blame

covid 19 for my failure. There are things that you need to do on your own, don't expect the teacher to be there for you always. You have to do the ground work now, so that in the future you achieve what you want, because I believe that as a form five student, I should be doing things on my own since probably next year I'll be enrolled in varsity. I need to be therefore independent in my thinking.

What has covid 19 taught you?

Machawe: It has taught me to be independent in my thinking and also have in mind that the world out there needs independent people. So we have to start now!

What do you find a challenging and exciting during this time?

Machawe: Going back to school has been something that I have been looking forward to. Meeting with my friends, brothers and sisters, getting to chat. That has been really exciting for me. What is challenging is that since the syllabus is compressed, the adaptation isn't that easy. I feel like everything is done in a rush, like we are speeding through things and that's the scary part for me, is it going to be enough.

In all the years, did you ever think you would have to wear masks and observe social distancing?

Machawe: To be honest, I never thought that it would come, so it was really a shock but definitely we have to adapt to the changes of life. Because change is what we are waiting for, it what we seek, so we can't run away from it, it's inevitable. As much as Covid 19 is a suppressing things we have to learn to accept it.

Hlengiwe: honestly speaking, I never thought this moment would come, as I always thought that life would continue being what it was, but to my amazement it changed. But I'm not complaining because I'm learning to adapt in the situation.

What are your future plans?

Machawe: I have 3 careers which I believe I want to embark on. First being a business analyst. Followed by business law, then newspaper editing. So, I really want to venture much into the business world. I believe that I have those conceptual skills. I am enterprising, I am a go-getter, and I strive for things. So, I believe those are my future ambitions, exploring those avenues. That is where I'm focusing, have the zeal and the passion for it.

Hlengiwe: As for me I really think it's a different story all together because when I was in primary I always believed that I wanted to be a teacher, but as I was growing up I realized that it was changing. Right now, I want to be a counsellor. I would love to counsel people and also, I see myself being a motivational speaker. I want to motivate and elevate people into reaching their full potential in life. I want to help in enriching them and equipping them and in the process add to my personal growth.

Thank you both for sharing with us, it's been a pleasure and we wish you all the best!

by Nonduduzo Mamba

BRING ME SUNSHINE!

How many of you know how blessed we often are in Bulembu with glorious sunshine? Well now we will be in more ways than one here in the village thanks to our latest development, and it will be helping Bulembu and saving the planet at the same time! Did you guess it?

Brand new solar panels have been installed for the provision of a good deal of extra power, to run the village on a dramatically reduced electric bill and therefore benefitting more than just the environment. Can you imagine the amount of power required to

run a whole town? We are pleased that these costs will significantly drop, but that the village will benefit from the clean solar energy and the reduced air pollution, so this is definitely a win-win situation! Richard Tucker, project overseer said, 'The solar panels will put power into the grid reducing our overall costs and those savings will go to the childcare', meaning that eventually our children will directly benefit by being provided for. So with that said, the next time the sun shines in Bulembu we'll be even more thankful! *by Rachel Smart*



LEARNER DRIVERS



Five of our Bulembu young adults, David Mavuso, Ayanda Ngubeni, Banele Nhlengetfwa, Mpendulo Mangwe & Colane Maziya have recently had the wonderful opportunity to take their first official driving lessons with a qualified instructor and they look so happy going up and down the town! It's such a wonderful sight, they're getting a lot of attention! Two weeks previously, Sifiso Shabangu, who was also raised here and is now older and an experienced driver, gave his time to help them get started and then their professional

lessons with their instructor began on 20 May 2021. David Mavuso said happily, "It is interesting, getting to know the car and gaining a lot of knowledge. So far so good!"

There are bound to be challenges and stretching moments with the lessons as for most it's their first time doing proper driving lessons. The downside of it for all is the driving up and down the bumpy and difficult Pigg's Peak road to arrange the

documentation, but they are extremely motivated to keep going as their primary goal is getting their driver's license since almost every job out there requires them to have one. It brings joy to everyone here to see these youngsters furthering their skills little by little behind the wheel, to steadily get them that bit further on their life's journey. Well done, we are all cheering you on!

by Rachel Smart



EDUCATORS MEASURING THE IMPACT ...with Mr. Hungwe

Mr. Hungwe, Geography teacher and Sport coach at Bulembu Christian academy was asked to share about his teaching experience during the Covid 19 Pandemic. Here is what he had to say.

How long have you been in Bulembu?

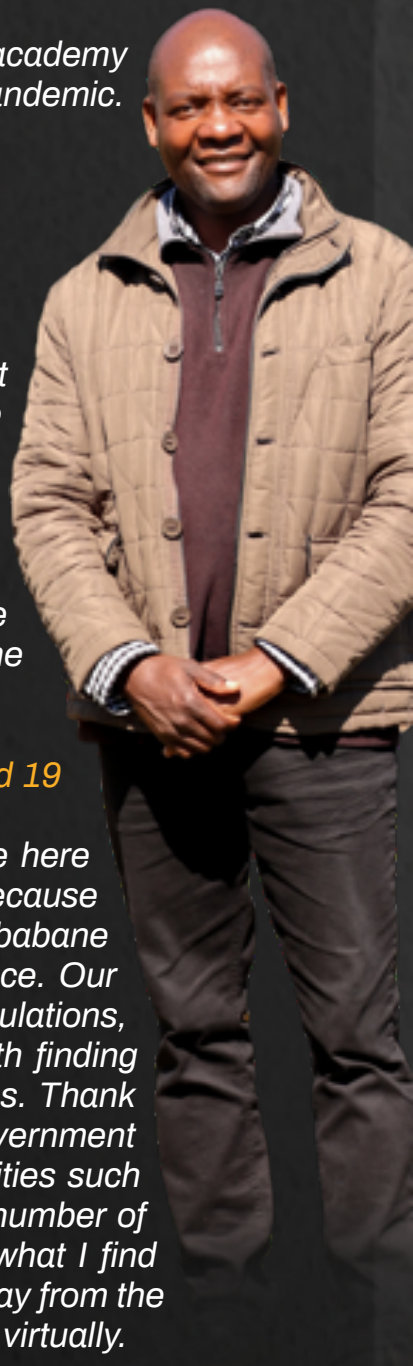
It will be 5 years now, as I came here 27 January 2016.

How have these two years been as a teacher?

It has been two challenging years in many ways, since we had to adjust everything that we were doing in the school due to covid 19. There were lockdowns, so we had to change our teaching methods to send study packs home for quite some time without face-to-face interaction with the learners. That was different and nobody thought 2 to 3 months down the line we would have to continue that. It was a challenge that brought into question teaching methods, to make us ask, 'Is face to face method the only way?' I think Covid also brought in another dimension of learning, the opportunity for virtual study online.

What do you find challenging and exciting about teaching during this covid 19 pandemic?

What I find challenging is the fear of the unknown that the virus may be here and also the fear that we might pass the virus to the children. This is because we as teachers travel more than the students and visit cities such as Mbabane which are epicentres of the disease. We also have challenges with space. Our classrooms were meant to house a portion of learners. With the new regulations, desks have to be a metre apart, so there are challenges at schools with finding adequate space to meet the Ministry of education and health regulations. Thank the Lord for the teachers. The load has been lifted off them since the government came up with a compressed syllabus to regain the lost time. Many activities such as sports have to be shelved for now as learning becomes priority. The number of lessons for the teachers rose here so that's a challenge for them. But what I find exciting is the dimension of using more technology in learning. Moving away from the traditional chalkboard, whiteboard. People and education are moving fast virtually.



In all the years you have lived did you ever think that there would be a moment like this where you would have to adjust to changes such as masks and observing social distancing between you and your learners?

It never occurred to me that it would come, but you see some of these things are just interruptions that you have to go through that is maybe God's way of trying to fix things. The mask is not an easy thing to wear. It's not anything that we would imagine. Yes we saw these masks in the clinics and hospitals and in our minds we thought that maybe they are for those guys, but little did we know that it would be a new normal for everyone.

What are you trying to achieve with the children this year academically?

Generally my thrust in my teaching is not necessarily to teach to finish the syllabus or to teach just so the children can pass. There is so much to education outside that. So much that when I plan my lessons I ask myself how I am going to introduce the topic, what questions I am going to be throwing out throughout the lessons, and I want my learners to learn some things that would benefit them in life that may have nothing to do with geography. To me, education should not be tied to the syllabus. If we were to strictly teach according to the syllabus we would then produce children who can't think outside the box. They are not exposed to the world outside. So we want to go the extra mile beyond the syllabus and school the learners on life issues. I always tell my learners that we don't just learn geography as people think, we also learn English, the expressions. So when I teach my learners I want them to learn the geographical concepts, fine, but they should also learn something else outside the geography.

What has covid 19 taught you as an individual?

It has taught me that as person I have very little control over what happens around me. God is in control and outside that as people we are vulnerable and find ourselves planning. For instance, we were planning many things in late 2019 for 2020. Come February 2020, the complexity of everything changed. There are some things that were totally shelved, even now can't be done because of this divine interruption. God sees the end from the beginning and the beginning from the end, there are positives. From a geographical point of view, because industries were shut down, traffic was reduced in many places and so pollution levels went down. This is a big thing. To me as a geographer it is a plus because we are grappling with global warming and climate change issues. It has also taught me to be flexible and versatile. We've been taught to innovate. I also think the world will be better now in terms of education going forward since covid has opened the window to the fact that we don't necessarily need four walls, but we can educate ourselves.

by Nonduduzo Mamba

FURTHER EDUCATION FUND *beneficiary celebrates his Bachelor's degree*



Many of you may now be aware that there is a new and wonderfully effective way to sponsor our children which is a transformational key to their lives - this is the Bulembu Further Education Fund, and with your help, it is succeeding! One of Bulembu's young adults, Njabulo Vilakati has been blessed to be one of those who have been sponsored and benefitted directly from this program. Njabulo said 'When I first came to Bulembu it was 2008. I had been living a life without hope, life without knowing what's going to happen and life full of uncertainty. Through

Bulembu I have been able to discover the gifts and talents God has given me and the ministry aspect of Bulembu has played a huge role in my life,'

Njabulo went on to graduate from Bulembu Christian Academy and showed promise in his academic studies. Since we now have the Further Education Fund set up, the ministry was able to provide the much-needed funds to pay for his tertiary education thanks to the generosity of supporters. Without this it would not have been possible but we are very happy to announce that Njabulo completed his studies and through hard work earned a Bachelor of Commerce Degree majoring in Economics and Risk Management. We congratulate Njabulo and we hope that you, our readers might take a moment to visit our page <https://www.bulembu.org/donate/further-education/> to see how you may be able to help others like him take their next huge leap into a bright future! Well done, Njabulo!

by Rachel Smart



PRAYER REQUESTS

Bulembu children, staff and community – Health & protection

Childcare team – Protection, health, strength, encouragement & joy

High School graduates – Patience and courage as many await responses regarding applications for further education

For creativity and refreshment as church staff adjust to services re-opening