



# Hillcrest AIDS Centre Trust



## Welcome to HACT's Newsletter!

It gives us great pleasure to produce our very first online newsletter. The newsletter replaces our quarterly report and will be issued bi-monthly. In honour of this special edition, we would like to dedicate our theme to the very special women in our **Granny Support Groups**.

This project, which this year celebrates its ten year anniversary, involves 51 granny support groups over eight communities in the Valley of 1000 Hills region, with 2000 grannies involved in total. The ultimate goal of the project is to empower and equip grandmothers to be better able to care and provide for their orphaned grandchildren, by promoting entrepreneurship, encouraging income generating projects, improving skills and increasing earning potential.

These amazing ladies, affectionately known as Gogos (IsiZulu meaning Granny) face some very serious issues when not only dealing with the trauma of losing a child to HIV/AIDS but then taking on the heavy responsibility of looking after, caring and providing for their orphaned grandchildren - some as many as twenty!

23 percent of children in KwaZulu Natal have lost one or both parents - which is the highest rate of orphan-hood in South Africa. There are 4 million orphans in South Africa, with 2.5 million of these being orphaned due to HIV/AIDS. HIV/AIDS has killed the middle population - the parent population - leaving behind a generation of orphans who are being cared for and raised by their grandmothers.

Despite the enormity of the challenges they face, our Grandmothers come together in

solidarity to share, pray and find solutions as a supportive team. In this edition of HACT'S first online newsletter, we follow the stories of *Lamilwe* of the *Asisodwa Widows Organisation* in Molweni and the *Gogo Group of the Year* from KwaNyuswa who not only achieve what some would consider a triumphant feat in the face of extreme difficulty, but in some cases a true miracle!



## Gogo of the Year

Sixty five-year old Lamilwe of Molweni's ***Asisodwa Widows Organisation***, one of HACT's gogo support groups, grew up in great hardship on the South Coast of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN).

Her story is typical of many of the Gogos involved in the Granny Support Programme, but Lamilwe has a very special element to her story - last year she was crowned **Gogo of the Year**.

Read more about Lamliwe's amazing story [here](#).

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## Gogo Group of the Year

Rebekka Stredwick, a HACT volunteer, recently travelled with "Mama Cwengi" of HACT, and met with some of the Grannies of KwaNyuswa's granny support group. These incredible women come together on a regular basis for support and prayer and through their unified efforts have embarked on many self-started income generating projects including sewing commissions, bead-work and more recently breadmaking. To read the full story, click [here](#).



[Donate to Granny Support Groups](#)



## The Gogolympics 2016!

Training has already begun for the upcoming Gogolympics taking place at **Molweni Sports Ground** on **Friday 22nd April 2016**. This is our 6th Annual Gogolympics which anticipates 2000 Grannies participating in a funfilled day of sporting activity and competition.

We appeal to all those wishing to support this event to either donate sporting goods (see our [wishlist](#)) or to sponsor a Gogo's attendance on the day.

[Click here](#) for more information on Gogolympics 2016.

Email us to sponsor sporting equipment we need

Sponsor a Gogo to attend the Gogolympics 2016

## Some Thank-You's..



### Ooba Cooks for us!

A BIG thank you to Shireen, Diann, Debi and Susanne of Ooba who cooked a healthy and sumptuous dinner for our respite unit patients. All were delighted by the delicious meal which was lovingly prepared - thank you so very much from all of us at HACT. Your loyalty and generosity is greatly appreciated!



### Durban Metro Entertains

Patients in the respite unit, along with HACT staff, were delighted by an entertaining afternoon hosted by Durban Metro police. Inspector Fourie and Captain Keogh, along with "Fancy" the trained explosives dog, informed and educated everyone about personal safety and tips on warding off criminal activity. Thank you for a wonderful presentation!



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