

# Gay'lam

The blood that binds us together



SANBS does  
the **tango** with  
*Chris Jafftha*



**SANBS**  
South African National Blood Services

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The mission of the South African National Blood Service is to provide all patients with sufficient, safe, quality blood products and medical services related to blood transfusions in an equitable and cost-effective manner.

The SANBS is a non-profit organisation, an incorporated association not for gain.

SANBS receives no funding from Government. With 27 branches and 86 permanent collection sites, SANBS manages the blood supply and provides products and services to all South African provinces except the Western Cape.

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# Gaz'lam

noun - /gaz-lam/  
Zulu word for "blood relatives"  
or "brotherhood"



Jackie Thomson  
Acting CEO

Complements of the new season! May 2018 bring all the goodness to you.

This year, SANBS will emphasise patient blood management ensuring that every patient gets the right product at the right time for the right reasons and the right quality. Key focus areas also include financial sustainability and blood donor retention as the demand for blood increases.

To our blood donors, may you never forget how significant you are and the priceless value you add to the patients.

We will also prioritise the health of blood donors with the introduction of iron replacement therapy. Going forward, only quantitative haemoglobin (iron levels) will be tested and this will also be aligned to a donor care program. If we identify that

someone is ill through testing, we will try and link them with the necessary healthcare or assistance.

Furthermore, SANBS will concentrate on the future and the possibilities of looking at new therapeutic products as well as introducing an exciting and innovative electronic donor app.

To our blood donors, may you never forget how significant you are and the priceless value you add to the patients and the doctors. Many people over the holidays would not have had family members with them without blood donation.

Let's make 2018 an awesome year. 🩸

Jackie  
Acting CEO





Become a real hero, donate blood.

🌐 @theSANBS    📱 /SANBS    📧 theSANBS    🌐 sanbs.org.za



# SANBS talks to new **Dancing with the Stars** host *Chris* Jafftha

As a SANBS brand ambassador for three years, what highlights would you like to share?

The highlights for me have been meeting donors who have reached certain milestones. Recently I met a donor who had donated 350 times! What an honour it was.

Donation runs in your family's veins, with your father Fabian having donated more than 70 times. What role did he play in your involvement?

My dad has always been a role model not only to me but to all those around him. He always sets an example, makes it cool and fun, and adds a lot of joy ... it's hard not to follow in those footsteps.

I work as hard as I do as an ambassador because I'm able to leverage the platform I have to be a voice and make a tangible difference ... that is why I signed up. I also have my mom to thank for that, as she aligns my brand with what I believe in. SANBS was a no-brainer.

We know you as a presenter, actor, model and overall good guy. What are you currently busy with and where can we see you in action?

I am very proud to say that I will be co-hosting one of the world's biggest reality TV shows, *Dancing with the Stars*, South Africa. I will be joined by the wonderful radio and television presenter Tracey Lange. The show kicks off on M-Net on DSTV channel 101 on Sunday 4 Feb. Make sure you tune in as you don't want to miss all the action.



**Chris Jafftha**

What life-saving message do you have for fellow South Africans and prospective blood donors?

Everyone's trying to figure out his or her purpose, but it's so easy. We are here to help each other, love each other and encourage each other. The vehicle you choose to do this is a little trickier, but it doesn't mean you can't fulfil your purpose.

Be the best version of yourself and you'll fulfill your purpose every day, because others will benefit from your example.

Donating blood is a small act that costs a little time and petrol, but you are literally saving up to three lives every time you donate. ❤️







# Vonic's angels give her wings

*Vonic Johnson is a brave little fighter. She has weathered many storms and come through them stronger and more determined to be all she can be in life. She is overwhelmingly grateful to the special people who have given her life and will continue to do so. Here, Vonic shares her story in the words of a speech she delivered to her blood-giving angels.*

My name is Vonic Johnson and I am 10 years old and I am from Bloemfontein. I am here today because of blood donors. I do not think that people realise everyday how treasured their blood is. When I was three years old, I was diagnosed with eye cancer. I was too young to remember, but I know that I

lost my eye because of the disease. I am not broken-hearted because of the loss, because through the grace of God, I am still alive.

When I was eight years old, the cancer came back. I could feel that something was wrong with my arm. It was painful and I couldn't

concentrate at school. During the second lunch break, I remember it like yesterday, my arm was very painful. I didn't want to inform my teacher because I wanted to be brave.

After a long wait at Pelonomi Hospital, we were sent to Universitas Hospital without any answers. That's where Professor Stones informed us that the cancer had spread to my arm. I was heartbroken, but never afraid. I made a decision that I would never give up. After the operation to remove the cancer, I woke up with plaster around my arm. It was extremely painful and I cried a lot, but my mother



was always next to me. I was very sick and everybody was concerned about me. I remember the doctors mentioning that I needed a blood transfusion - one bag of blood and the next day another bag of blood. That was not painful - I felt it flowing into my veins and I was very thankful to know that it would help me.

I would like to thank all the blood donors. Your blood gave me the opportunity to study. To be able to live.

During my stay in hospital, I could only think of one thing: I wanted to go back to school. I wanted to be with all my friends. I wanted to study. I wanted to be out of the hospital! I had to fight for a second time in my life, fight to win against cancer. There was a lot of pain, a lot of tears and a lot of prayers. There were so many people praying for me and who supported me. I knew that God had huge plans for me and I am privileged to say that I beat cancer for the second time. God is great.

I would like to thank all the blood donors. Your blood gave me the opportunity to

study. To be able to live. I love school, I love reading. With one eye, I won the reading competition at school. Nothing will stop my light from shining. I also came second in the IR Teen Miss Sunshine model competition - who knows, one day I might be a famous model.

After school, I would like to study to become a professor because I want to help other people. Nothing would mean more to me than becoming a doctor. One day you will walk into my consulting room and that is all because of blood donors who saved my life. There are not enough words to praise blood donors, but I will make you proud with my life. 💧



# Brave new world for a brave young soul



10 minutes of playing soccer that I had to stop.'

Thulani called on a doctor friend, who came to the house to do a check-up. 'She wouldn't tell us anything but went outside to make a few calls,' Mpumelelo remembers. 'We knew that something was wrong.'

missing out on precious activities such as school, church, time with family and simply just heading for the soccer pitch with friends. But he responded well to his medication and to the 40+ blood transfusions he had to have. He made a full recovery and went back to school in 2014.

'Life is back to normal and I would say this cancer journey was a blessing in disguise,'

Disease is the furthest thing from the mind of an active, sporty and outwardly healthy youngster enjoying his high school experience and heading for a bright future. But, in June 2013, just before mid-year exams, the dreaded spectre of illness visited 15-year-old Mpumelelo Ncube with a vengeance. But, in June 2013, just before mid-year exams, the dreaded spectre of illness visited 15-year-old Mpumelelo Ncube with a vengeance.

First, he remembers, the strange symptoms. 'I started experiencing gum problems, so my dad, Thulani, took me to the dentist to have my teeth cleaned,' he explains. 'The dentist noticed lumps under my jaw and told us to get them checked. The real fear set in the next day, when I was so exhausted after just

The doctor called the next day to say that Mpumelelo should be rushed to hospital for FNA tests, which the young Ncube recalls, was a painful ordeal. 'When the results came in, the doctor told us he had good

news and bad news,' he says. 'I had acute leukemia, but it was in its early stages, meaning I had a good chance of surviving.'

Intensive chemotherapy was administered at Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital, the drip running from Monday to Monday, Friday to Friday or Sunday to Sunday. He also had to take 28 pills in the morning and at night. 'The pills had to be crushed because I was terrified of swallowing them,' he says. Mpumelelo spent the better part of a year in hospital,

Today, he expresses his gratitude to the many blood donors who played a part in his return to health by supporting SANBS blood drives at his school as a peer promoter, and by helping to spread the message as a brand ambassador.

'Life is back to normal and I would say this cancer journey was a blessing in disguise,' he says happily. 'I'm trying my best to achieve my dream, which is to become a pilot. I would also love to have my own music studio one day.'

With dreams that ambitious, Mpumelelo is certain to be a positive influence on other youngsters and on society, and that speaks volumes for the power of the blood donor community. ♦

# Indomitable spirit and life-giving blood

## an odds-beating combo

*If there's one gift in the Legemaate household that keeps on giving it is blood. Janet and her husband were no strangers to donation, having signed on during university, but the realisation of its significance really hit home only when their son, Matthew, was born.*

Here, Janet shares the family's story ...

The Merriam-Webster dictionary describes gratitude as 'the state of being grateful, thankfulness and to express gratitude for support'. We have tried

extremely hard to keep this foremost in our minds as we have navigated the last nineteen and a half years.

Matthew's story began on 7 January 1998, when, at a couple of hours old, he was identified as having a heart

condition, yet unknown. He was cyanosed (blue) in his extremities and was battling to breathe. He spent the first 24 hours of his life in the neonatal ICU, where the doctors did not expect him to make it through his first night. He was airlifted to a hospital in Johannesburg the next morning. We didn't know at the time that he had been resuscitated en route.

In Johannesburg, we found out that Matthew had been born with Tetralogy of Fallots and severe pulmonary atresia. He basically had a three-chambered instead of four-chambered heart. On top of this, his pulmonary trunk, the artery taking the deoxygenated blood from the heart to the lungs, was disconnected from the heart as there was a piece missing, including the pulmonary valve. Matthew's heart and lungs were, therefore, not connected as they should have been and did not allow blood to flow correctly from his heart to his lungs so that it could be oxygenated and sent to the rest of his body.

On our drive to Johannesburg, we received a phone call





from the doctors asking for telephonic permission to perform open heart surgery. On autopilot, we arrived at the hospital just in time to see him being wheeled to theatre.

Those first seven weeks of Matthew's life could so easily have broken us, but rather they built our faith, increased our understanding of what medical professionals put into their careers, and making us realise that there is always a need to pay it forward.

## Coming home

We were overjoyed when Matthew came home after seven weeks, even though he was on oxygen 24/7. At the time, we knew he would probably need further surgery, but had no idea that his story would continue to this day. We had made a decision though that he must live as normal a life as possible and experience as much as he could of what life had to offer.

Further surgery came at 15 months of age and, being the little fighter he was, Matthew was up and on the go within days.

The first 10 years of his life were filled with open heart surgeries, cardio-catherisations and other interventions to try alleviate his symptoms and make life easier for him. Invariably there were complications, but we always did our utmost to remain positive and to make sure that every opportunity to make memories was used. At 13, Matthew was placed on permanent oxygen, but

he started battling. Moving around his school became more difficult and he would have bursts of energy and then crash exhausted. The doctors told us that the likelihood of his surviving any further surgical procedure was so small that it was not worth it.

## Transplant research triggers passion

We researched transplantation and had Matthew added to the heart and bilateral lung transplant list. During this time, we realised how few transplants are done compared to the number of people waiting for an organ. This triggered our

The joy we felt when Matthew came home recently and we realised that he has a future was indescribable.

passion as a family to create awareness of all aspects of organ and tissue donation and anything related.

We joined forces with the Organ Donor Foundation ([www.odf.org.za](http://www.odf.org.za)) to help raise awareness and Matthew's initial Facebook page – 'Matthew's journey: Come along for the drive' (<https://www.facebook.com/MatthewsJourneycomealongfor>

thedrive) was born. The page helps people to understand just what a difference 'Talking about, registering as and sharing your decision to be an organ donor' can make in the lives of all awaiting transplant patients.

In July 2017, we started a website ([www.hero777.co.za](http://www.hero777.co.za)) and another Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/hero777aware>) to again help raise awareness about organ and tissue donation.

By that time, we noticed that Matthew had started to deteriorate quickly, developing more symptoms and having greater difficulty breathing. We decided to spend time together as a family, having fun, and continue to give Matthew something to look forward to. He busied himself with his bucket list drive to register 50 000 new organ and tissue donors through the hero777 website.

Then one evening, the call came: 'We have a potential donor'. The whole experience was surreal, bringing joy and sadness at the same time. Our gratefulness to the family of the angel donor was immense as their gift would give our son a chance to live a normal life, one he had waited almost 20 years for.

The next 36 hours were critical and frenetic, with his chest being measured, hospital arrangements being made and family preparing themselves for what lay ahead.

Just before Matthew was wheeled into theatre, he told me: 'I'm scared but I love you, I love you, I love you.' If he did not make it, he

wanted those to be his last words to us.

Matthew was, in many ways, a unique case for the doctors. His many surgeries had caused his heart, lungs and vessels in his chest to adhere to the chest wall or to be in the wrong place. It also meant that when his lungs were removed, the surgeons expected a high level of bleeding that would need to be managed. This made preparation for transplantation more difficult.

But fantastic news ... Matthew made it through is now doing really well. He lives now due to the donor family, the skill of the doctors and medical staff, and the many units of blood, platelets and plasma that he received as he bled profusely during and after surgery.

## Joyful end to a long journey

Over the years, we've seen more ICUs than we care to think about, but Matthew has constantly confounded the doctors. His motto has always been 'B positive' and he lives life accordingly. He loves rugby, cars, wildlife and photography, and he is South Africa's most ardent armchair supporter during international competitions. He firmly believes that God has a plan for his life.

We are often asked 'How do you do it?' In all honesty, we know no other way. We've felt extreme anxiety, heartache, sometimes hopelessness, but also great thankfulness, love and support. Our belief in God has been the biggest factor that has helped us navigate the years.

The joy we felt when Matthew came home recently and we realised that he has a future was indescribable. He is in isolation for the next few months, depending on how his body adjusts to the medication, but he can look forward to being reintegrated into society. 🍷





# His first steps were made possible by

*Buhle Nkosi - Blood Donor*

   [sanbs.org.za](https://sanbs.org.za)

Donate today.  
Your blood saves lives.





# Spotlight shines on **blood matters** at Congress

The South African sun shone as brightly as ever over Sun City as it hosted the 34<sup>th</sup> South African National Blood Transfusion Services congress during August.

The congress is a forum for showcasing achievements, solving problems, sharing ideas and generally broadening the knowledge base of blood transfusion in South Africa, Africa and around the world.



There was a strong display of SANBS expertise, with the team promoting numerous innovations, including world-class testing facilities.

The topics explored at this year's event included strategies for finding and maintaining rare donors, blood bank automation and a look at why some group O donors tend to become inactive and how to draw them back into the fold.

SANBS's 10-year review of HIV-positive blood and its stats on HIV prevalence in its donor community were also highlighted during the presentation sessions.

Outside of the conference rooms, there was a strong display of SANBS expertise, with the team promoting

numerous innovations, including world-class testing facilities, award-winning marketing initiatives and overall leadership in the world of blood transfusion.

As all South Africans know, no-one does expertise in blood transfusion better than SANBS. 📌



# Special awards honour selfless heroes

SANBS donors don't do it for the glory or the fame. Their only motive for donating blood is a selfless desire to help others and be the solution to a stranger's problem.

That does not mean SANBS cannot acknowledge their efforts, time and dedication. Every SANBS branch hosts an annual Donor for Life Awards ceremony celebrating these distinguished individuals. Donors are invited to the functions the year after they reach a specific donation milestone and the ceremonies are always sparkling, feel-good affairs.

Just ask acting SANBS CEO, Dr Jackie Thomson, a haematologist by profession, who recently

attended one of the Pretoria events. 'Tonight I have the opportunity to thank the people who have literally saved thousands of my patients,' she told guests.

A highlight for Jackie and everyone present was when Bokang Mosia, an 11-year-old cancer survivor, and his parents, Zandi and Thembinkosi, shared their heart-warming journey of how life-saving blood donors helped him overcome the disease.

The awards functions help to accentuate the important role regular donation plays in the South African healthcare system.

SANBS salutes every person who received an award in

2017 and looks forward to recognising many more in the years to come. 📌



Zizo Tshwete



Zandi, Bokang and Thembinkosi Mosia



Dr Jackie Thomson

# Rabies Hyperimmune Plasma Donation Process

## Step 1



A donor decides to get involved in the process.

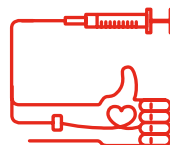
## Step 2



The donor must meet criteria, is assessed



and is given a rabies vaccine. The donor will also be required to sign a consent form for each vaccination.



The donor will then receive his or her first immunisation.

## Step 3



After seven days the donor will receive a second immunisation.

## Step 4

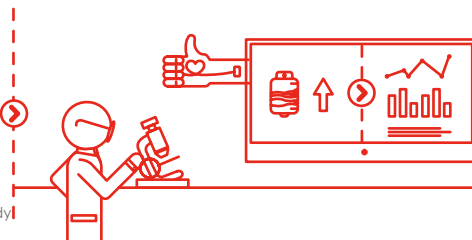


The third vaccination will take place 21 to 28 days after the first immunisation.

## Step 5



Four weeks after the third immunisation the donor's antibody level will be tested.

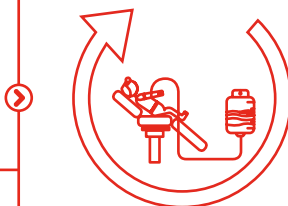


## Step 6



If the antibodies are high enough, the donor's plasma will be collected via plasmapheresis.

## Step 7

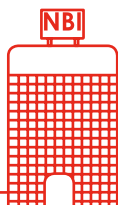


These donors are able to donate plasma once every two weeks and ongoing antibody tests will be conducted to ensure that appropriate levels are maintained.

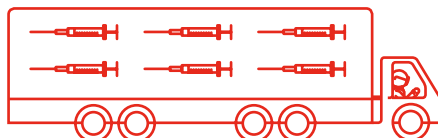
## Step 8



The donated plasma is sent to the National Bioproducts Institute where it is made into Rabies immunoglobulins.



## Step 9



These immunoglobulins are administered to patients who have possibly been exposed to rabies.





# 40 Mpumzi Mququ – years of service & counting

**Q; Tell us about your journey with SANBS began.**

A; The recruitment process itself was rather interesting. I think the CEO at the time was Gary Du Toit and he travelled with Rob Wilkinson who was the principal technologist. They travelled all the way from East London to Umthatha to recruit black technicians to be trained

as medical technicians for blood transfusion.

That's how I was recruited to blood transfusion. They tracked me down, found me, interviewed me and I was given a day to start in East London on the 11th of July 1977. I arrived and the training started straight away, I was the only one being trained at the time and the training was for 3 months before I was deployed

back to Mthatha as a technician. All of this was totally unplanned as I was planning to go to the University of Fort Hare but I ended up working for the Border transfusion services.

**Q; How was your experience in the training?**

A; At the time there was no formal training, so it would be on the job training for 3 months and then I would go and work under supervision but in no time I was on my own. Then I found out that the Border Blood Transfusion Service was going to host a National Blood Transfusion Congress and I said to my colleague: "...you know we should be going there." So we dressed up and pitched at the congress uninvited, we attended the formal presentation sessions. That's where we learnt that it's possible to receive formal training plus an opportunity to be a qualified technician. I then pursued a qualification later after the blessing from the CEO.

**Q; What are some of the highlights in the 40 years of service?**



Mpumzi Mququ

## The first highlight of course was qualifying as a medical technologist specialising in blood transfusion

A; The first highlight of course was qualifying as a medical technologist specialising in blood transfusion and then the second highlight was when I joined the senior management staff of the Border Blood Transfusion Service in 2001. The third highlight was enrolling and completing my MBA at the end of 2005. The organisation restructured and some of the senior managers took a package and I received an opportunity to apply for a regional manager post in KZN.

**Q; What are some of the innovations that you have seen unfold in your career**

A; There are many, we only used to test for Hepatitis B and Syphilis but we did not test for HIV because there was no HIV in the 80's when I started. The tests were done manually and we used to use microwell plates and capillary tubes, these were tiny tubes that you would put on a plate and then you would dispense a drop of blood on a microwell plate and would use these capillaries to suck up the droplets of blood and each drop represented a specimen from the donor. Even back then we would test each unit of donated blood. It was such a sensitive test

but could also be very subjective depending on what you see in the capillary tube. Sometimes you would find that it would read someone as positive when they are negative. Then there was the introduction of the Iliza test and the Mthatha blood bank stopped doing tests as these were only done in East London.

The processing of blood itself was done manually. You would take 8 blood bags, weigh them and place them into the centrifuge. It would spin the blood, separating the plasma from the heavier particles after which we would squeeze the plasma into one litre bottles. There were no measurements so if you felt that it was enough you would tie the tubing, seal it and then you would cut it with scissors. The unit of blood would be kept for a duration of 28 days in the fridge with the introduction of an interconnecting pack.



Mpumzi Mququ in his younger years

After a while the expiry period was extended to 42 days. We used to use glass bottles back then and the blood was sucked out through negative pressure.

**Q: What else are your passions?**

A: I'm actually passionate about buildings and structures and I've actually built some myself. I started being fascinated by structures when I had a house of my own in Mthatha then I started building the boundary wall, I subscribed to a magazine called ABC and would also go and observe where there was building happening. I managed to build my own garage because when they were building my house I didn't have enough money to build it so in my own time I dug out the foundations. The only thing I'm unable to do is roofing. I have also built a two bedroom cottage for my mother.

**Q: Would you be willing to help in a community service project like building a school?**

A: Yes definitely.

**Q: So which city in the world has the most beautiful buildings in your opinion?**

A: I'm fascinated by the old buildings in London as I'm not really into the modern buildings. In South Africa there's actually an area in East London called Cambridge where they

still have those building styles in some of the older solid houses.

**Q: What has been your greatest achievement in this 40 years**

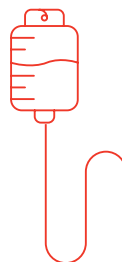
A: I have managed to keep my family intact. I have been married for 36 years. Another achievement is my oldest son he is an advocate in Mthatha and I believe he is doing well.

**Q: Chiefs or Pirates**

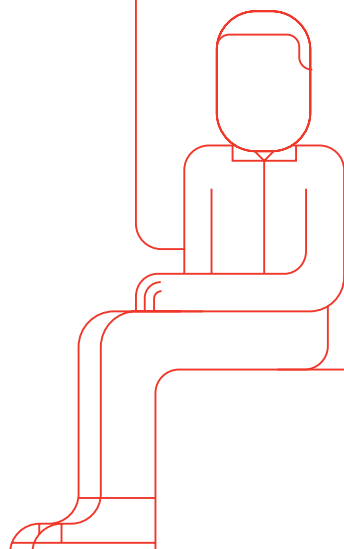
A: I'd like to say that I am Chiefs supporter, but I don't really keep up with what is happening in the soccer world. My favourite sports are rugby and athletics, my favourite rugby team is the Sharks and with athletics I'm fascinated by short distances, I suppose it's because those are the sports I took part in when I was in school. In athletics I did 100m, 200m, and 200m hurdles. In my 20's I also played table tennis which I still enjoy.

**Q: Musical influences, AKA or Cassper Nyovest?**

A: You know I'm not going to know those people "LOL" I am a Jazz person. I'm into South African Jazz and American jazz, the blues kind of thing. I like the Glen Miller, Hugh Masekela and Jimmy Dlodlu. 🍷



**Mpumzi at the Long Service awards To celebrate his 40 years of service**





## Sponsor support the

# lifeblood of the People's Race

It's not every day that an organisation can claim to have been up close and personal with 42 000 joyful 'joggers', but 5 November was such a day for SANBS.

The team took to the streets of Soweto to commandeer a water table during the running of the 2017 Old Mutual Soweto Marathon and found it the ideal opportunity to raise awareness of blood donations, while spurring on the city's sportsmen and women.

The SANBS station, on Klipspruit Valley Road, provided much-needed sustenance for the athletes

and a super, spirit-filled day for the volunteers, says SANBS call centre supervisor who tended the water table, William Gallacher. 'It was an incredible day and wonderful to be part of a marathon with so much camaraderie.'

SANBS Board chairperson, Getty Simelane, a keen long-distance runner herself, says the sight of the SANBS marketing team at the event appropriately dubbed 'the People's Race' filled her with pride. 'Our people remain in touch with what happens in our city and are happy to be visible and show those who participate in running, that

the SANBS brand cares and can be counted on when it matters.'

It is certain that many of those participating the marathon are blood donors, but perhaps more remarkable is that that several will undoubtedly have been on the receiving end of life-saving SANBS blood at some stage. This fits in perfectly with the SANBS brand message, which centres on giving people experiences, opportunities and the potential to achieve incredible things, such as conquering an iconic race such as the Soweto Marathon. 📌



# I make the team!

## 29 JANUARY – 16 APRIL

[varsitycup.co.za](http://varsitycup.co.za)

**BE A DONOR  
AND PLEDGE FOR  
YOUR TEAM!**



**SANBS**

Every blood drive and every donor centre will offer donors the opportunity to pledge their donation on behalf of their favourite FNB Varsity Cup team, irrespective of where they live or where they donate.

**LIVE ON SUPERSPORT**



**#MakeTheTeam**





# New teammates convert rugby players to tackle blood shortages

South African rugby fans will tell you their blood runs green and gold, but when it really counts, they all know that the tried and tested red variety is what really saves the day.

To drive home the message, SANBS, Western Province Blood Transfusion Service and the country's most prestigious university rugby tournament, the FNB Varsity Cup have become blood brothers.

They have formed a partnership that will promote the gift of blood donation throughout the 2018 season from 29 January to 16 April. The sponsorship will increase awareness of the importance of regular blood donations and donors' vital role as a cornerstone of the South African healthcare system.

Not only will the university students be given the opportunity to vote for their team of choice, but blood donors will participate as well, with every blood drive and donor centre inviting donors to pledge their donation to their favourite Varsity Cup and Varsity Shield teams,

irrespective of where they live or where they donate.

Follow your team's progress in the rugby and in the blood donation stakes during every televised match on SuperSport as well as on 5FM and social media. Don't miss out - #maketheteam. 📺



# Media Connection

## Breaking News

The media can be an extremely powerful and effective ally and SANBS looks to its many contacts to beat the blood-donation drum when stocks run low and awareness needs awakening.

To this end, the organisation recently hosted a media breakfast in Durban to garner support from KwaZulu-Natal media, particularly radio, for the message that 'blood is life'. The event, at Coastlands Hotel in Musgrave, Durban, presented the donor world through two different sets of eyes.

Shantha Nair, president of the KwaDukuza SAI Centre, told the audience about the difference SAI has made in local communities

through education and blood donation, and about her progression from regular donor to active promoter of blood donor clinics.

She lauded the media for its role in the success of her first clinic as president of the organisation, which attracted 118 community members, 105 of whom were bled. Her second clinic fared even better, attracting 163 people and producing 45 new donors.

By the end of that year, thanks to media appeals for donors, 520 people had donated, and this figure was surpassed in 2017. Now that's #liquidlove.

Shantha singled out Stanger Weekly, Dolphin Coast Times and Xpress Times as being instrumental in this achievement.

Also taking to the podium was Janet Legemaate, whose son, Matthew, recently received a double lung and a heart transplant.



Janet shared her family's torrid and emotional journey through nineteen and a half years, starting with Matthew's first open heart surgery when he was a mere 36 hours old (read Matthew's heartwrenching story on page 11 of this edition of Gaz'lam).

More than one guest wiped away a tear listening to Janet's account, but the overall feeling after address was one of awe at the resilience of the human spirit and the power of positivity.

If the journalists were seeking a good news story that day, they certainly didn't leave empty-handed. 💧





Mohamed

Khensani

Jordan

Sisanda

Johan

Mbali

Lerato

**AS ONE OF OUR 800 000 DONORS A YEAR,  
EVERY DROP YOU DONATE SAVES LIVES. SO THANK YOU.  
YOU ARE A TRUE HERO.**



# Calling all bright sparks

Is your thinking cap on at the right angle? Is your brain in top gear? Is your mind as sharp as Trevor Noah's wit?

We all know that blood donors are smart, but now's the time to truly prove it, with the Gaz'Lam tricky teaser test.

Good luck...

1. There are three houses. One is red, one is blue, and one is white. If the red house is to the left of the house in the middle, and the blue house is to the right of the house in the middle. Where is the white house?
2. A plane crashes on the border of the South Africa and Zimbabwe. Where do they bury the survivors?
3. You are in a hut and it is pitch black. You have one match on you. Which do you light first - the newspaper, the lamp, the candle or the fire?
4. Mike is a butcher. He is 1.8m tall. What does he weigh?
5. In a year, there are 12 months. Seven months have 31 days. How many months have 28 days?
6. Thabo's mother had four children. She named the first Monday, the second Tuesday and the third Wednesday. What is the name of the fourth child?
7. A family lives in a large block of flats, 10 floors high. Every day the son takes the lift from the family's flat on the 10th floor to the ground floor and goes to school. When he returns in the afternoon, he uses the lift to get to the fifth floor, and then uses the stairs for the remaining five floors. Why?
8. You are driving a bus. At the first stop, two women get on. At the second stop, three men get on and one woman gets off. At the third stop, three children and their mom get on, and a man gets off. The bus is grey and it is raining outside. What colour is the bus driver's hair?
9. Imagine that you are in a boat in the middle of the sea. Suddenly, you are surrounded by hungry sharks, just waiting to feed on you. How can you put an end to this?
10. When you have me, you immediately feel like sharing me. But if you do share me, you do not have me anymore. What am I?
11. What can you hold without ever touching or using your hands?

## ANSWERS

1. In Washington DC
2. You do not bury survivors
3. You light the match first
4. Meat
5. They all do
6. Jimmy, because Jimmy's mother had four children
7. Because he can't reach the buttons higher than five
8. Your hair colour
9. Stop imagining
10. Secret
11. Your breath

# Healthy

## TIPS

### Reduce your risk of prostate cancer

Professionals estimate that 80 per cent of all cancers can be averted by making healthy lifestyle adoptions. There are things you should avoid consuming such as saturated and trans fats, which may fuel prostate cancer growth and integrate protective foods, such as soy, green tea and tomatoes, into your diet. Soy comprises isoflavones with certain anti-cancer activity. Green tea is rich in polyphenols that prevent the formation of cancer-causing compounds and block the growth of prostate cancer cells. When looking at fruit or veggie

options to consider tomatoes rank as one of the best which is considered to be a link to reduce prostate cancer.

### Prioritize preventive screenings

A lot of the medical conditions can be identified in the early stages by attaining preventative screenings and vaccinating. The best option is to ask your doctor for all the suggested screenings for you and to do those.

### Eliminate “White foods” from your diet

White flour, white sugar and other processed foods are not only empty of vitamins and minerals, but they no longer have any of their natural fibre. The downside to this is that they drive up blood sugar levels, which contribute to gaining weight, diabetes and a host of other snags. It is highly recommended that one evades breads and baked goods made with white flour, sugar loaded sodas and snack foods. In place of these one should opt for eating fibre-rich fruits, vegetables, legumes and whole grains.



# Doctor in the house

## Therapeutic apheresis – exchange programme with a difference



Sr Nomeva Running the Therapeutic Apheresis machine

### Q: What is therapeutic apheresis?

Certain disease processes affect mainly the blood. These can occur either in the cellular part of blood (red cells or white cells) or in the plasma. For certain diseases, therapeutic apheresis helps by separating the patient's blood into its components, removing part or all of the diseased component. The healthy component is then

returned to the patient along with a replacement fluid to compensate for the volume removed.

Plasma exchange allows for plasma (containing the disease-causing agent, such as proteins, lipids, antibodies) to be drawn off and replacement fluid to be added to the returning red and white blood cells. Red cell exchange removes a patient's red cells and

replaces them with donor red cells and is done in cases of severe malaria and complications of sickle-cell disease. Stem cell collections are for patients needing a stem cell transplant, normally those with specific cancers at specific stages.

Special blood collections are made for research to improve the health of South Africans.



**Q: Why is therapeutic apheresis necessary?**

Therapeutic apheresis is often performed in life-threatening conditions, eg Thrombotic Thrombocytopenic Purpura (TTP), which has a 90% mortality rate if left untreated. Red cell exchange has succeeded in greatly improving the survival rates for severe malaria where other treatments have failed and the patient has multi-organ failure.

Stem cell transplantation also improves the chances of living longer for patients with blood cancers.

**Q : Why does SANBS perform the process and who else is involved?**

As the licensed blood supplier in South Africa, SANBS is obliged to provide high-quality clinical services associated with blood transfusion as well as good-quality blood products.

Many other blood establishments in the world offer therapeutic apheresis services and SANBS has partnered with some to further develop the quality of the service. For example, the Dutch blood service, SANQUIN, has partnered with SANBS to assist with certifying SANBS staff performing therapeutic apheresis. SANBS is currently the only such service in South Africa whose employees boast international certification.

Many other companies and individual hospital units in South Africa provide some of the procedure types.



**Therapeutic Apheresis**

**Q: More than 80 different diagnoses make use of these services - what are the most common conditions?**

TTP is the most common. It affects red cells platelets and organs such as the heart, kidneys and brain. It occurs commonly in people living with HIV who are not on antiretrovirals.

Neuromyelitisoptica is another application, which occurs when transplanted kidneys are rejected by the body and affects the brain

and spinal cord. When this is caused by an antibody in the plasma, plasma exchange can wash away the offending antibody.

**Q: How important is therapeutic apheresis?**

For many of the diseases, evidence points to plasma exchange as part of first-line or second-line treatment. SANBS provides this service to patients in a sustainable manner, which underlines SANBS's status as a pillar of healthcare in South Africa. 📌



# Red-blooded attack on the scourge of rabies

Those who have watched Stephen King's 'Cujo' know only too well that rabies is the stuff of horror films.



The statistics confirm this, with more than 55 000 people dying of rabies every year, mostly in Asia and Africa. Some 40% of humans who are bitten by suspected rabid animals are children under the age of 15.

The disease, which is preventable but is 100% fatal once symptoms emerge, again highlights the importance of blood supplies. Because of its severity, vaccines and treatment need to be widely and continually available, especially for those who are the most vulnerable, including children and those who handle animals. As in many situations,

donor blood means the difference between life and death. SANBS collects the crucial ingredient - rabies hyperimmune plasma – from those who have been vaccinated against rabies.

## VIP campaign in overdrive at Onderstepoort

Among them are many students of the University of Pretoria's Veterinary Faculty, where SANBS recently launched a VIP donor drive. The educational event and pre-testing were held at the university's Onderstepoort campus, where experts in rabies and communicable diseases, Professor Lucille

Blumberg and Doctor Jackie Weyer, captivated the students with their expertise in the field.

Pam Larkin from the National Bioproducts Institute (NBI) then explained that the plasma is sent to the NBI to be made into the final products used to combat the disease in people who have been exposed to an infected animal.

SANBS tested the students on site and the interest in donation was so positive that it led to the establishment of a permanent hyperimmune plasma blood drive at Onderstepoort.

## Give and take

Hyperimmune plasma is collected through plasmapheresis, a give-and-take procedure that separates the liquid into its components. The plasma is collected, while the red and white blood cells are returned to the donor's body.

Although the National Institute for Communicable Diseases estimates that there are only about 10 confirmed cases of rabies in South Africa a year, it is best to be prepared. The good news is that there is a role for you even if you have not been vaccinated against rabies, as SANBS will administer the necessary vaccinations to build up the antibodies in your plasma to the required levels.

You can then donate as frequently as every two weeks, depending on your antibody level. It takes no longer than 45 minutes, but it will undoubtedly be the key to a long life for someone else. 🩸





# Putting specialised skills to the test

*Hundreds of thousands of South Africans are alive today because of the blood they have received from selfless blood donors. SANBS is unequivocally associated with blood safety and world-class testing. But more goes on at the state-of-the-art SANBS laboratories in Johannesburg and Durban than meets the eye.*

At SANBS specialised testing is an integral part of the work done. In this issue we focus on human leucocyte antigen (HLA) typing.

## **HLA serology typing**

It is all about saving lives, naturally, as a link between some HLA types and certain diseases has been researched and documented. Class I typing by serology can be performed to determine whether the patient has the antigen and, therefore, is at risk of contracting the disease.

The Tissue Immunology and Paternity Laboratory has a close partnership with the Sunflower Fund and the South African Bone Marrow Registry (SABMR).

The Sunflower Fund creates awareness, educates the community and raises funds to subsidise the costs of laboratory testing. Blood samples are collected from donors and subjected to HLA class I typing (locus A + B). The test results are then released to the SABMR, which captures and includes the typings on the register.

## **HLA molecular class I and II typing**

Molecular typing is a powerful tool to further tissue type patients requiring solid organ and bone marrow transplantation.

Potential donors with HLA matched to a patient at a serological level are further typed to confirm HLA compatibility and ascertain HLA class II type. HLA antibody screening and identification

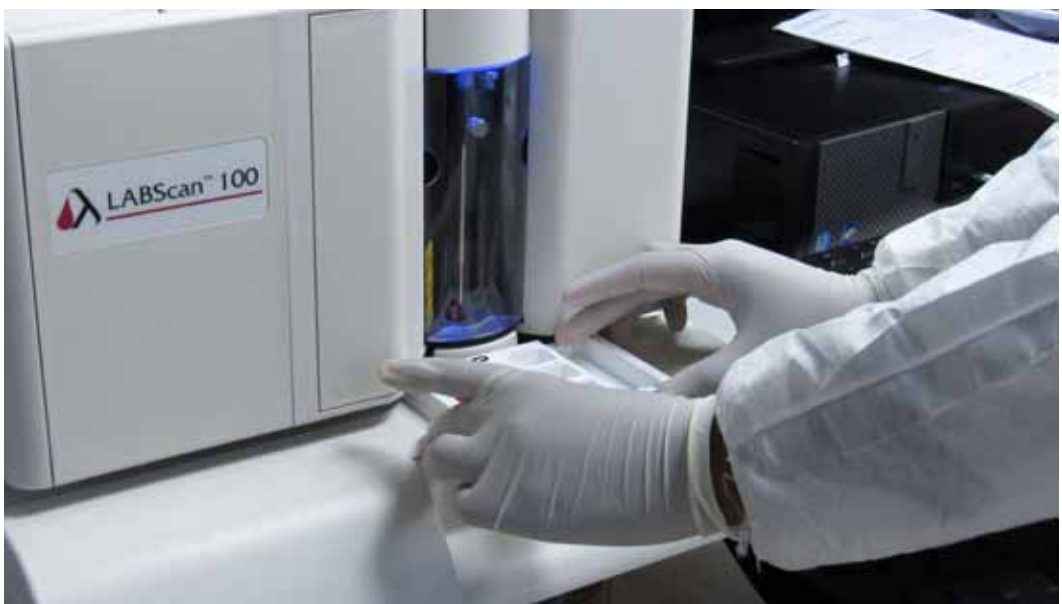
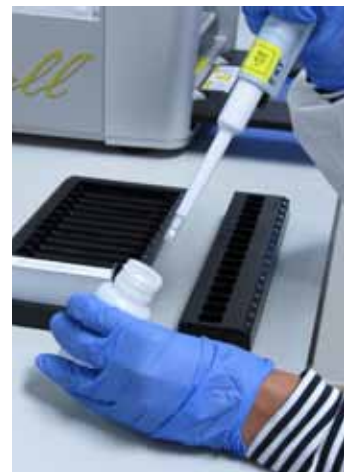
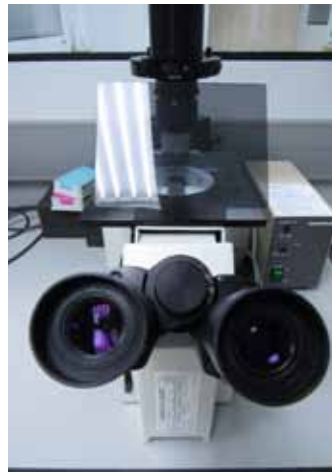
Renal patients are tested regularly for the presence



of HLA antibodies produced by sensitising factors such as transfusions and pregnancies.

There are two types of donors for these patients: the related living donor (RLD) and the cadaver donor - a person who is brain-dead and whose family has given permission for the use of his/her organs.

Patients awaiting solid organ transplantation regularly submit samples to the laboratory to monitor their antibody status and for inclusion on the transplant list. All patients awaiting transplantation are cross-matched against cadaver lymphocytes and patients who are negative for T and B cell crossmatches are then considered for transplantation. The decision on whom to transplant rests with the nephrologist and surgeon. 🩸





# Teacher Nana puts her best *best foot* forward for blood donation

It takes more than an SANBS team, a comfortable chair, juice and a biscuit for a successful blood drive. It demands the commitment of enthusiastic volunteers; volunteers such as Nana Ngobese, life orientation teacher at Ndlela High School near Piet Retief, Mpumalanga.

Nana is one of those special people who drums up

support for donation among the youngster generation. She makes sure the pupils know when the blood drive is happening and ensures that they are prepared. On the day, she arrives in comfortable shoes so that she can run from class to class shepherding her donor army to and from SANBS.

We can't survive without blood and I feel it is my duty to do what I can to help



Nana Ngobese with her donor pupils.

A substantial amount of the blood collected every year comes from schoolchildren, so the work of the many 'Nanas' out there is critical to ensuring a sustainable blood supply. Academic pressures and tight schedules aside, Nana and people like her go beyond the call of duty to keep blood flowing in.

She is very clear about the reasons for her dedication. 'We can't survive without blood and I feel it is my duty to do what I can to help,' she states.

Thanks to Nana, whose reputation has spread to community blood drives in the area as well, the blood drives at Ndlela potentially saved 850 lives in 2017.

Nana, you are a true champion. We applaud you. 📌



## A HEALTHIER COMMUNITY THRIVES WITH A HEALTHIER BLOOD AND PLASMA SUPPLY



At Abbott, we understand the vital role each blood and plasma service has on the health system. That is why we have been committed to the safety of the world's blood and plasma supply for over 40 years. Moving forward, we are partnering with our customers to help them achieve measurably better healthcare performance and innovate the products and services they provide to the healthcare community.

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**CHOOSE TRANSFORMATION**

# Bleeding in Bethlehem for a great cause

The stage was set, the players were ready for action and fun was guaranteed. There is nothing quite like the 'Night in Blood' extravaganza to inject excitement into the quiet Free State town of Bethlehem, and 17 October 2017 lived up to expectations, reports Bethlehem branch donor relations practitioner, Rochelle van der Merwe.

'The initiative took place with an atmosphere of fun and competition, while educating our youth and community about blood donation,' she explains. 'Six high schools participated and 41 donations were made on the day. Through the initiative we strengthened our relationships with the schools and we are looking forward to more sustainable blood drives in 2018.'

The Blood Donor Centre in the Metropolitan Centre proved the perfect venue, with red carpet rolled out and an arena created where visitors could sit and enjoy the spectacle. Information was readily available and a special quiz was hosted throughout the day for visitors to qualify for a lucky draw.

As the evening approached, the pace accelerated, with enjoyable activities, competitions and gifts

sponsored by Metropolitan Centre. Some of the centre's shops joined in the spirit and stayed open late to accommodate the patrons.

Every contribution in terms of time, energy and blood

make a difference in someone's life, says Rochelle. Our stakeholders gave generously, demonstrating their commitment to saving lives. We thank everyone who shared in this wonderful event." 📌



A SANBS selfie framed a great night for these Bethlehem Comprehensive School donors.



Leaving no blood on the dance floor were (from left): Edward Mokoena and Sipho Tshabang from Bethlehem Comprehensive School, Thami Morobi and Amoré Marx from Maluti Hoogland School and Warren Faulds from Witteberg High School.





## Deep rural ZITHULELE HOSPITAL Contributes to blood donation

Don't you just love it when a plan comes together! What a busy blood drive the SANBS Mthatha team had at Zithulele Hospital when they collected 31 units on 7 November.

*Zithulele Hospital is situated in the deep rural areas of the Transkei in the Eastern Cape. It was started in 1956 as a mission of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa.*

The first clinic was opened in late 1956 and still exists, now as renovated accommodation, on the church grounds. In September 1961 the first hospital was opened and later that year a separate TB hospital too. Today the hospital is run by the Department of Health of the Eastern Cape.

A mix of characters has staffed Zithulele Hospital. After the dedicated missionaries left, the hospital

struggled to attract staff and for periods, especially in the 1980s, was without any doctors. Since July 2004, Zithulele has been allocated community service (post-internship year) doctors. They helped improve the standards and enthusiasm levels substantially.

In July 2005 the current senior doctors arrived with long term plans for building the hospital up into a centre of excellence in rural health care. They now have over

60 professional nurses and a total staff number of over 300.

Earlier this year, Dr John Mitchell approached the SANBS East London Branch to organise a blood drive at the hospital. After a meeting between the branch's Donor Relations Practitioner, René Vice, Dr Mitchell and the Clinical Manager, Dr Ben Gaunt, the first blood drive ever at the hospital took place on 7 November.

The blood drive was promoted with much enthusiasm and the medical team is to be congratulated on helping collect 31 units of blood on the day, with 20 units being from new blood donors!

In the meantime, the neighbouring Madwaleni Hospital also took up the challenge and brought in 31 units of blood during their drive on 5 December.

The SANBS team in Mthatha will be visiting both hospitals on a regular basis in future and will even set up a competition to see which of their 'blood drive hosting' hospitals will collect the most units of blood in 2018! 🩸



Elaine Dippenaar



Kara Boshoff



It was also Dr John Mitchell's birthday on the day of our blood drive! Here he shows that he also did his part on the day.

I am **proud  
2b**



an  
**organ  
& tissue  
donor**

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It's saving a nation.**



Donate blood. Your blood saves lives.

