

# Association for Persons with Disabilities **Free State**

Issue 2

Newsletter



*An Interview with*  
**Natus van Niekerk**

# From Our Side

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October is the most beautiful month! Lovely things are happening at the Association for Persons with Disabilities as well! We had wonderful support from the community with Casual Day and received a lot of donations.

Our Jean Webber Home residents are heroes in their own league. 5 of the residents have done Business Enterprise Development and are busy starting their own businesses. Some of our residents are employed in the open labour market and are contributing to society.

We have residents working on our premises as security officers at the main gate, at reception and at our coffee shop.

Some of the other residents are taking initiative and are involved in fundraising and in gardening on our premises.

Please come and visit our coffee shop and have a nice cup of coffee with us.

Take care,

*Jackie Malan*

# Natus van Niekerk



*One of the first people you meet when you visit the Association for Persons with Disabilities—Free State in Park Road, Bloemfontein, is receptionist Natus van Niekerk. We chatted to him over a cup of coffee to find out more about the man who doctors claimed would never be able to lead a normal life.*

## ***Tell us about yourself***

I grew up in the small farming community of Excelsior in the Free State. Due to serious complications after birth I became disabled. Despite numerous tests and seeing different specialists, the doctors felt that I would never be able to walk, talk or lead a normal life and that I would be completely dependent on others having to care for me.

## ***What are some of your greatest accomplishments?***

While growing up on the farm I learned to speak Sesotho fluently—a skill I have been able to use to empower myself.

In school I participated in sports for disabled people and won gold medals in it and I successfully completed my minimum schooling career.

I have been able to work at the Association for Persons with Disabilities—Free State since 1996. I am working in reception which requires different skills like working on the switch board and computer. I really enjoy my work, and this has given me a lot of satisfaction in my life.



# Natus van Niekerk

## ***What challenges have you had to overcome?***

I have always viewed challenges, not as stumbling blocks, but as stepping stones to overcome the restraints of my disability and to teach myself to adapt to new circumstances and to enjoy life to the fullest!

## ***What are you grateful for?***

First of all, I am very grateful to my mom who never gave up on me. When I was a baby she would spend hours helping me to sit up straight and to eventually walk.

She invested in numerous therapy and exercise programmes to help me with my speech and mobility impairment. It is because of her hard work that I am able lead a reasonably normal life today.

Secondly, I am very grateful for having wonderful friends who support and encourage me to never give up.

And, thirdly, I am extremely grateful to the Association for Persons with Disabilities—Free State and the Jean Webber Home for giving me the opportunities to grow and invest in myself as a person with disabilities.

## ***What would you like people to know about persons with disabilities?***

There's an English saying which says: "Disability doesn't mean inability."

People with disabilities can work hard and play an important role in any work environment. The fact that we are disabled doesn't mean that we are stupid.

We have a lot to offer and ask little in return; except giving us the recognition we deserve.

# Conference Facilities



## Conference Facilities

We offer air-conditioned and well equipped conference facilities for business functions, special events, team building and meetings.

- Seats ± 65 delegates
- Bathroom Facilities
- Available Parking
- Projector with Projector Screen
- Tables and Chairs
- Tea & Coffee Facilities, ect.

# Goodwill Coffee Shop



## Goodwill Coffee Shop

One of the exciting new ways to generate an income is the opening of our Goodwill Store where the public can donate items and everybody can buy a bargain.

We firmly believe that the best way to survive is to invest in sustainable projects like this.

Please come and visit us and enjoy a good cup of coffee!

# Our Sponsors

## A big thank you!

We want to thank the following sponsors for their generosity and support this month. You surely make a difference in the lives of those with disabilities!



Please **support** us

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