

# UWD Newsletter

## Having fun whilst raising awareness

“You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself any direction you choose. You're on your own. And you know what you know. And YOU are the one who'll decide where to go.” - Dr Seuss.

Wearing funky, odd socks on our feet, we were off into the wide world on Wednesday, 22 March 2023. Our mission was to raise awareness for Down syndrome, seeing that World Down syndrome day was on the 21<sup>st</sup> of March. We handed out flyers, green ribbons and cards that were hand-made with love.

World Down syndrome theme for 2023 is – With us, not for us.

In other words, empower us with skills, knowledge and especially opportunities, don't just do things for us. We hope and pray that all our supporters



### SPECIAL EVENTS/ FUNDRAISERS COMING UP:

- Art exhibition and Book launch – 26 April
- Limited edition bird book competition
- Wine auction – 26 May
- Birdwatcher morning with Peter Ginn – 10 June

- Cycle tour – 3-4 Nov

### ONGOING PROJECTS:

- Coffee shop
- Weekly cookie and quiche orders
- Frozen meals



and friends will help us to realise this

theme in 2023 and beyond. (More

photos of this exciting day on page 2.)

## ...having fun whilst raising awareness for Down syndrome



## 25 years young!

This year Up with Downs proudly celebrates its 25<sup>th</sup> birthday. Like raising a child, at times it feels like the years went by in the blink of an eye and sometimes it feels like a hard, slow upward journey; but a journey that is always worth while. What started as a little school with 4 children and one facilitator in a garage, is now a centre with 4 entities. There is a school where 29 learners and

young adults work on basic academic - and life skills; a Training Centre where 15 adults spend their mornings baking, cooking, doing woodwork and crafts, brushing up on academic skills, etc.; a hostel which is a home away from home for 6 learners; and the latest addition, the Adult home where 10 adults have their

forever place in the sun. Up with Downs is the established organisation it is now through the hard work and dedication of many staff members (past and present) as well as parents, but the lady with the vision and drive to make a dream a reality is the director of Up with Downs, Janet Seegmuller. So, we will all raise our glasses and cheers her efforts; and we

## Hope church visit

Hope Church visited us on the 27<sup>th</sup> of March, handing out Easter eggs and invitations to celebrate Easter with them.

It is always an exciting time for all when the big lemur arrives with the friendly people in the red T-shirts. Thank you to the Hope church team for sharing their love and Easter eggs and for your support.



will also cheers this great organisation and celebrate this milestone – 25 years!

# Fantastic visit to Vitalvet



On Monday, the 13<sup>th</sup> of March the Blue and Orange classes visited the new Vitalvet Animal hospital in Knysna road, George. The learners were given a full tour of the facilities – even the operating theatre. They were shown

how to wash hands effectively, prep for surgery, and then move through doors without touching anything. With great interest, the learners looked at blood samples under the microscope and also some x-rays to identify

different parts of the body. Thank you to Doctor Awie de Villiers for arranging the visit, to sister Hollie for being our tour guide, and for the team at Vitalvet for making this outing a memorable and educational one.



## Gifts from the VLV

When Johanna from the *Vroue Landbou Vereniging* phoned and said they would like to donate a wild peach tree, we obviously said yes and scouted for the best place to plant it. In true 'Afrikaanse boerevrou' style, they arrived on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of March with flowers, cupcakes and a tree. Learners and staff

gathered in the playground for this special event. With everyone's help, the tree was planted in record time. The learners and staff were all treated to the most gorgeous proteas and a scrumptious cupcake. We would like to thank these ladies (and a husband) for spoiling us and gifting us with something as precious as a tree.



## A splashing good time at Eljada



they had! From amazing full-length relays to tube racing and let us not forget the teams forming trains and running in the water. Eljada was well prepared with a delicious lunch, beverages, cupcakes, and watermelon. There was also a good crowd of supporters as well as a strong group of lifeguards on duty. At the end of the gala all the competitors ended the day with dancing in the sun. Can't wait for our next invitation Eljada!

On 24 February our swimmers swam at the annual Eljada

Gala in the beautiful hot Oudtshoorn and what great fun

## Our 4<sup>th</sup> Redberry fun run



On the 18<sup>th</sup> of March, the Redberry Farm once again hosted a fun run, donating the income to us. Thank you!

## Autism workshop

Our staff and parents were very fortunate to attend a workshop presented by two of our parents, Jannie and Cheryl van der Westhuizen. Both are experts in their own fields relating to autism – Jannie, a psychiatrist who has a passion for adolescents and young adults with autism; and Cheryl a qualified physiotherapist specialising in neurodevelopment. The Van der Westhuisens aptly titled the workshop – 'Back to basics'. Jannie focused on what autism is and how it is diagnosed. He explained it as follow: autism falls under the neurodevelopment disorder umbrella, and this is a big umbrella. Autism is a spectrum disorder and we have a very wide range on this spectrum. The above make it hard to diagnose but

there are things to look out for. The 3 pillars are: 1. Language and speech development 2. Social behaviour and communication 3. Stereotypical behaviour. Jannie feels we should add a 4<sup>th</sup> pillar, one that currently falls under the stereotypical behaviour pillar – and that is Sensory processing disorder. Cheryl then talked us through the different aspects of sensory processing disorder – which senses are affected and how. This was both fascinating and informative. I leave you with something Jannie said that is not only true for individuals with autism but can be applied to all individuals – We see behaviour but that is only the outcome of a lot of input. If we want to understand or rectify the behaviour, we have to look at the input.



# Observing the masters at work



It was a very excited group of learners and adults who entered the Francois Ferreira academy on Friday, the 17<sup>th</sup> of March. "It looks like the Master Chef kitchen!" they said and when Chef Cheri-Lynn told them they were going to make cookies, the excitement grew even more. The Blue class as well as 3 adults were welcomed with a glass of juice and listened attentively to

Chef Cheri explaining how things worked at the academy. She explained which courses they offer and talked about what it takes to be a good chef. After this, the group moved over to the demo kitchen where Chef Cheri made the cookie dough, with the learners' input, and then each learner had the opportunity to make their own jam filled, thumbprint cookie.

After a long theory session, the academy's first year students entered the kitchen area and started preparing ingredients for the Saturday's public cooking class. Our learners were fortunate enough to observe them in action. We would like to thank Chef Cheri-Lynne for her time, patience and love - we know spending a whole morning with us can't be

easy because chefs are always very busy - and thank you to the Francois Ferreira academy for having us, it was a brilliant and enriching experience. If you haven't visited the academy, do yourself a favour and pop in at their *Apprentice restaurant* for a scrumptious meal or a coffee and a little treat.