



FINDING MATCHES ON THE MAP:

First-ever inter-continental
stem cell drive underway

SABMR 
ANNUAL REPORT
2023/24

CONTENTS

1. A WORD FROM OUR CEO AND MEDICAL DIRECTOR

Dr Charlotte Ingram

2. A LETTER FROM OUR CHAIRPERSON

Ms Juthika Hariram

3. UPDATE FROM THE CLINICAL GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE AND MEDICAL AND ETHICS REVIEW PANEL

Dr Pieter De Witt and Dr Bukhosi Mtukushe

4. MESSAGE FROM OUR DEPUTY DIRECTOR

Jane Ward

5. SABMR BOARD MEMBERS

Introductions

6. DEPARTMENTAL UPDATES

- Sustainability
- Donor recruitment
- Patient service update

7. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

8. SABMR FACT SHEET

9. FINANCIAL GOVERNANCE

10. COVER STORY

Matches On the Map

11. DONOR STORY

Inge MacMillan

12. PATIENT STORY

Vivek Abraham

13. DONOR STORY

Sharan Ramsaru

14. MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

15. THANK YOU'S

EDITOR

Jane Ward

CONTRIBUTORS

Dr Charlotte Ingram, Juthika Hariram,
Kamiel Singh, Nadia Chalkley,
Zaahier Isaacs, Marzelle Bothma,
Marike Van Wyk, Gaelen Naidoo,
Robin Lewis, Jolandie Lewis,
Vivek Abraham, Inge MacMillan,
Sharan Ramsaru

CREATIVE DIRECTION

Unity Ruiters

WRITING

Unity Ruiters & Brigitte Taim

Meropa Communications

GRAPHIC DESIGN AND LAYOUT

Kelly Najib



Dr Charlotte Ingram

MEDICAL DIRECTORS LETTER

SABMR 

While the past year presented many financial challenges to the to The South African Bone Marrow Registry (SABMR), the Registry emerged from these as an ongoing sustainable organisation with new opportunities and strategies to face the year ahead.

During the SABMR strategic planning session held in in the last quarter of the financial year, two primary business goals were identified. These goals being, expanding the donor pool and ensuring financial sustainability.

The main objective of increasing the number of donors and securing the future of a bone marrow registry is to expand the pool of potential donors and increase the diversity of donors to meet the growing demand for suitable matches. By actively seeking to recruit a more extensive and diverse group of potential donors, the Registry aims to enhance the chances of finding suitable matches for patients in need of bone marrow transplants. Not only does this expansion increase the Registry's capacity, but it also contributes to the overall sustainability of the transplant community and that of the registry.

Ensuring financial sustainability is crucial for any organisation, as it sets the foundation for long-term viability and success. This goal involves creating a sustainable business model that balances revenue generation with responsible financial management.

The Registry, a not for profit organisation therefore remains driven by two key outcomes i.e. giving patients hope at a second chance at life and growing an ethnically diverse donor registry in support of our vision and mission. How we do this has undergone a major overall and we look forward to embracing and delivering on our new strategy.

We would like to thank all our partners, sponsors / funders and the SABMR Board members for your ongoing support over the past year so generously enabling the SABMR to keep this service going. We remain in trust of your ongoing support during the 2024/5 year ahead.

The Annual Report provides a platform for our partners, staff and stakeholders to acquire knowledge on the developments, achievements and challenges faced by the SABMR over the past year. We trust you will find this integrated report informative and of high standard – our purpose remains to find matched donors for patients in need of bone marrow stem cell transplantation who do not have a matched related donor.

It is a reminder of what the Registry stands for i.e. a collaborative effort to achieve the best for our patients and at the same time add value to every single donor on our registry without which we could never have achieved our vision and mission.

It would be remiss of me if I do not thank and express my appreciation to our staff. Our frontline staff are the unsung heroes and heroines. A special acknowledgement goes to our Deputy Director Jane Ward and her management team who worked tirelessly over the year. Our support staff must also be thanked and acknowledged for adapting quickly to a changed work environment and continuing to deliver especially during times of financial constraints and challenging exchange rates.

Additionally, our stem cell donors that donated stem cells and our regular donors must be acknowledged and thanked as they also reacted positively to our calls.



Juthika Harriram

CHAIRPERSON'S LETTER

SABMR

I officially assumed my position of Chairperson of the SABMR this year after taking up the role of interim-chairperson at the end of November 2022.

It has been nothing short of amazing to witness the inspiring work the SABMR has done in the last year under the leadership of Dr Charlotte Ingram.

Although I have walked a long road with the SABMR since my stem cell donation in 2011, I am still in awe of the team, who go above and beyond their daily duties despite the difficult economic climate we find ourselves in.

This year, the Registry once again managed to exceed its target for donor recruitment, which is a testament to the hard work they put in every single day.

What is most exciting is that the donor pool is not only growing but diversifying each year meaning that every patient referred to the SABMR has a better chance of finding a match.

For a long time, the Registry's donor pool has not been representative of the South African population, which has made it challenging to find suitable matching donors for patients from certain ethnic backgrounds. However, great inroads have been made this year with 30% more donors of colour being added to the Registry.

I would like to congratulate the team on achieving this milestone. Getting more donors of colour to sign up, is no small feat; it requires changing deeply held perceptions about stem cell donation and breaking down barriers. Although we have access over 42 million donors worldwide through the World Marrow Donor Association's Search and Match Service, South Africa's genetic make-up is diverse. How great wouldn't it be to be able to find suitable donors for all our patients in our own country? A goal that we will continue to work towards.

I would like to implore anyone who is eligible and healthy enough to become a donor to join the Registry. By choosing to become a stem cell donor, you are making an extraordinary difference in someone's life. It's not only about a second chance at life for the patient, but also giving their families the precious gift of more time together.

Every smile, every hug, every shared laugh and every tear of joy becomes a cherished memory, because of someone's selfless act. This generosity creates a ripple of hope and love that extends far beyond the patient to everyone who loves them.

Thank you for considering this incredible opportunity to touch lives in the most profound way.

Clinical Governance Committee update by Dr Pieter De Witt

The Clinical Governance Committee (CGC) has seen significant changes in its composition, with many new members joining after the resignation of several experienced members in 2023.

Despite these changes, the committee remains firmly dedicated to supporting patients and upholding the highest standards of donor safety.

The diverse expertise of the current members, representing various clinical areas related to transplant, has been instrumental in maintaining the CGC's robust performance.

Even during challenging financial times, the committee has successfully supported a commendable number of patients, underscoring our collective dedication to the mission of the SABMR.

Medical and Ethics Review Panel update by Dr Bukhosi Mtukushe

As Chair of the Medical and Ethics Review Panel (MERP) at the SABMR, I oversee the clinical evaluation of funding requests for the Registry's Patient Assistance Programme (PAP).

This role involves assessing the need for assistance from transplant centres across the country and balancing these requests with limited available funds. The goal is to maximise public benefit in bone marrow transplantation, especially where access to matched unrelated donors is critical.

The highlight for me has been approving as many deserving requests as possible, knowing we are making a meaningful impact. A particular memorable moment was when a generous funder exceeded our budget expectations, allowing us to support additional patients. This experience taught me that a genuine intent to help should never be hindered by perceived obstacles.



**Donate to the SABMR's
Patient Assistance
Programme**

Scan the code below





Jane Ward

A MESSAGE FROM OUR DEPUTY DIRECTOR



Despite its challenges, the last financial year has been memorable for the SABMR. We continued to bring hope and a second chance at life to patients and their families, making a positive impact in their lives.

The following are noteworthy highlights from our donor and patient services department:

- 40+ related patients and relatives were assisted from Africa and abroad.
 - Four donors were brought to Cape Town for PBSC collection
 - 35+ related families were assisted with verification typing.
- Seven SABMR donors donated for both local and international patients.
 - 100+ preliminary searches and 20+ local patients received stem cell transplants, were facilitated by the Patient Services Department.

Retaining and renewing accreditations

In May 2023, the SABMR had an onsite audit to renew its WMDA accreditation. The audit went off smoothly with no non-conformances and we retained our accreditation. A big thank you to Moneeb Waggie and Meredith Mouton from Quality Assurance for managing the audit, as well as the rest of the staff who assisted. Our Bioethics status was also successfully renewed with the WITS Bioethics Committee.

Staff changes and updates

After five years with the SABMR, Moneeb Waggie retired. Moneeb has been instrumental in maintaining our accreditation with two paper audits and one on-site audit. We are going to miss him tremendously and wish him well in his retirement.

We also welcomed a new staff member from the Department of Science and Innovation, Elvis Mulaudzi, who is an intern in our Patient Services Department.

An interactive and engaging team building was hosted at Hinthunt Escape Games at the V&A Waterfront in May 2023. The teams almost made it out of the rooms before the timer went off, and gave everyone the opportunity to share findings, ideas and thoughts in a pressured, yet fun environment.

Public awareness

With the help of Black Bean Productions, we were able to create an awareness video that has been posted to our social media channels. Over 75 000 people have been reached on Facebook.

In memoriam

It was with sadness that one of the SABMR's founding members, Prof Ernette du Toit, passed away on 22 October 2023. Her exceptional contributions to the Registry are profoundly appreciated and her legacy will always be an integral part of the SABMR's history.

A heartfelt thank you to all our staff members! Their invaluable contributions have been essential in enabling us to assist patients, recruit donors and secure funding for all our activities throughout the past financial year.

BOARD MEMBERS



Ms Juthika Hariram
Chairperson



Dr Charlotte Ingram
Medical Director & CEO



Jane Ward
Deputy Director



Dr Fareed Omar



Mr David Cohen



Dr Pieter De Witt



Dr Bukhosi Mtukushe



Dr Karin van den Berg



Dr Lucille Singh



Dr Thandeka Nkabi



Mr Steward Land



Mathhigonolo Mogapi

Sustainability Feedback – by Kamiel Singh – Head of Sustainability and National Operations

The Sustainability Department would like to express its immense gratitude to all the supportive funders who enabled us to sustain our life-saving initiatives year-on-year.

Our teams in Cape Town, Johannesburg and Durban orchestrated highly successful fundraising events for the Patient Assistance Programme (PAP) and Donor Recruitment initiatives respectively.

From Siphokazi Dyasi's spirited representation at Beaulieu College's Colour Run in Gauteng to the festive cheer brought about by father Christmas and his trusty elf at Cape Town's beloved Christmas-themed Open Air Movie night, and the expertly organised golf day by Kapil Premchand and Phumlani Shabalala in KwaZulu-Natal – each event showcased dedication and true community spirit.

Nationally, our inaugural Save a Life Raffle, which featured luxurious hotel stays and a generator inverter as prizes, garnered widespread participation. We managed to raise R135 000 through this initiative alone, which has been ploughed back into our PAP and will assist in saving many more lives.

Furthermore, we commend the remarkable achievement of our SABMR ambassador Christine Roos, who fearlessly conquered the 35 km False Bay crossing in 11 hours to raise funds and awareness for the SABMR. She again demonstrated unparalleled determination in the face of enormous challenges, including jelly fish stings to the body, not to mention the icy cold waters of the Atlantic Ocean. Through her valiant effort she managed to raise R56 000 for the SABMR. Her unwavering commitment to the Registry serves as an inspiration to us all!

The team and I look forward to an exciting and successful year ahead, and saving many more lives together.



Donor Recruitment aims high and scores - by Head of Donor Recruitment Nadia Chalkley

The SABMR Donor Recruitment division has achieved significant success in recruiting new donors, exceeded targets despite limited capacity and the continuously changing circumstances they faced. This accomplishment is particularly impressive considering that they are a relatively new team, working together for the first time. The division's ability to self-manage and host successful drives both on and off-line was crucial to their success.

Key partnerships with entities such as CAN (Cancer Association Namibia), Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT), Pathcare (depot locations for kit completion) and Courier IT (logistic and courier support) played an instrumental role in their achievement.

Since opening up applications to Namibian citizens through the partnership with CAN in 2023, the SABMR has recruited 810 eligible and active donors to the database. .

This would not have been possible without the support from Pathcare, CAN and local media. As we work toward diversifying the Registry, we hope that the inclusion of Namibian citizens on the donor database will give patients a better chance of finding suitable matches

Despite tough economic times, applicants from Southern Africa remain focused on saving lives, and we hope that our continued engagement with sport affiliations will help grow the number of donors, thereby creating a more diverse pool.

Educational institutions, such as student campuses remain prime areas for recruiting younger donors. A community service-learning agreement with the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT), has enabled the SABMR to work with students from the Health Sciences faculty to promote sign ups among peers through drives, not only on-campus, but also within communities they reside.

A message from CPUT champion and biomedical sciences lecturer, Rizqa Siebritz-Williams



"CPUT and the SABMR began working together in 2023 to bring awareness to bone marrow stem cell donation through a series of face-to-face campus presentations.

The awareness drive brought together the SABMR, CHOC, Vitanova, Western Province Blood Service and Save Seven Lives (ODF), among others. This has now become an annual project, which has empowered haematology students to go out and spread awareness around the importance of bone marrow stem cell donation in their respective communities.

In addition to the drive in 2024, we invited Sophia Okonofua, Executive Director of Black Donors Save Lives to address students about the importance of having access to a diverse donor population. The students thoroughly enjoyed her presentation and we would welcome her back any time. As a lecturer, I appreciate the efforts and hard work that Nadia and her team put into making this project possible and hope to build on it well into the future."

SABMR partnership with Tafelzucht Football Club – facilitated by Donor Recruitment Officer Gaelen Naidoo



SABMR joined hands with Tafelzucht FC, a local soccer team from Tafelsig in Mitchells Plain in an effort to raise awareness about stem cell donation and the SABMR among communities of colour through sport.

Sports have the uncanny ability to bring people together from different backgrounds and ethnicities as very few other things can.

We provided the team with new SABMR branded soccer kit on the 23rd of August 2023 at Steven Reagan Sports Field. More than 20 donors signed up on the day, we also educated hundreds on stem cell donation and debunked many myths and fears about the donation process. Our donor drive led to more online applications and a feature in the Plainsman – a local newspaper, which reached hundreds of households.

This year, we plan on going bigger and better by hosting a SABMR Soccer Tournament that would hopefully attract hundreds of soccer fans.

DONOR RECRUITMENT IN NUMBERS



2463

Total Donors
Signed Up



40

National Donor
Drives



↑ 23.15%

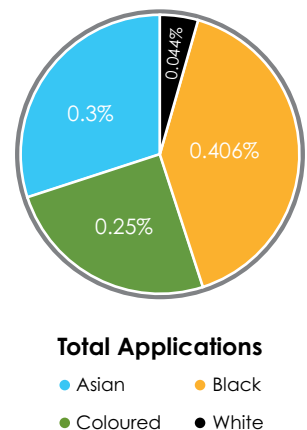
Target
Exceeded By

2023 has seen a 6.6% increase in transplants of Caucasian patients compared to the previous year. Recruitment of ethnic donors has increased significantly with consistent targeted drives and awareness, however, donor availability amongst donors of colour remains a variable that needs a stronger commitment at recruitment.

Below is an overview of our Patient Assistance Programme for the last financial year

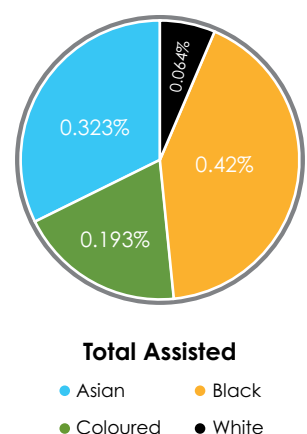
Summary of received applications: Total applications from inception to March 2024

TOTAL PAP applications since inception		01 April 2018 to 31 March 2021	01 April 2018 to 31 March 2022	01 April 2018 to 31 March 2023	01 April 2018 to 31 March 2024	Total
NOT SUBMITTED	Not suitable Donors	8	0	2	1	11
	Medical Aid; Died, Incomplete or Withdrawn	2	3	0		5
SUBMITTED	Response received	24	22	12	13	71
	Response awaited				4	4
Total		34	25	14	18	91



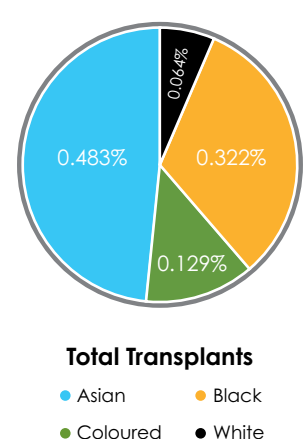
Total assisted patients, funds spent in the search of a matched donor:

Total Assisted	01 April 2018 to 31 March 2021	01 April 2018 to 31 March 2022	01 April 2018 to 31 March 2023	01 April 2018 to 31 March 2024	Total	%
Asian	1	1		2	4	6.4%
Black	8	10	4	4	26	42%
Coloured	4	4	3	1	12	19.3%
White	7	6	1	6	20	32.3%
Total	20	21	8	13	62	100%



Summary of transplants - Actual

Total Assisted	01 April 2018 to 31 March 2021	01 April 2018 to 31 March 2022	01 April 2018 to 31 March 2023	01 April 2018 to 31 March 2024	Total	%
Asian	1	1			2	6.4%
Black	5	3	1	1	10	32.2%
Coloured	3	1			4	12.9%
White	4	5	3	3	15	48.3%
Total	13	10	4	1	31	100%



13TH IDRC AND WMDA MEETINGS, HANAU GERMANY JUNE 2023



From left to right, Jane Ward, Deputy Director SABMR, Zaahier Isaacs, Head of Patient Services, Marike Van Wyk and Dr Charlotte Ingram, SABMR CEO and Medical Director at the 13th IDRC and WMDA Meetings held in Hanau, Germany.

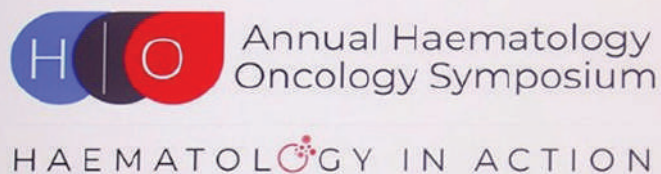


Marike van Wyk had the privilege of representing the SABMR and the Local Organising Committee of the 14th IDRC & WMDA Meetings at the 13th edition of this event. More than 200 industry experts from across the globe gathered in Hanau, Germany to share their expertise in stemcell registration and transplantation.

Dr Charlotte Ingram, Jane Ward and Zaahier Isaacs attended the lectures and workshops while Marike was tasked with promoting the 14th IDRC Conference that was hosted by the SABMR in June 2024.

Conference delegates were treated to a taste of South Africa through cuisine, locally crafted art and visuals, enticing them to attend the Cape Town leg of the event.

A big thank you to WMDA and DKMS for hosting the team in Hanau.



The Haematology Oncology Symposium, attended by Dr Charlotte Ingram and Zaahier Isaacs, covered a wide range of in-depth academic discussions focusing on local haematology cases. These included High grade B-Cell lymphoma, Mantle cell lymphoma, Hodgkin's lymphoma, Acute lymphoblastic leukaemia, Myelodysplastic syndromes and various aspects of thrombosis.

The outgoing president of the South African Clinical Haematology Society, Dr Hannes Koornhof, acknowledged and saluted the phenomenal contributions of several South African haematology giants, namely Prof Moosa Patel, Dr Mike Du Toit, Dr Fatima Bassa, Dr Cecile Du Toit and Prof Nicolas Novitzky. The latter delivered a superb address on the advancement of the field of clinical haematology which received a standing ovation as most of them have trained under the mentorship of Prof Novitzky.

The conference served as a testament to the resilience and dedication of South African haematologists and oncologists in their pursuit of excellence in patient care. It was a celebration of the progress made and a call to action for continued collaboration, innovation and advocacy.



WMDA MID-TERM MEETINGS AND THE ONE FORUM, 1-4 NOVEMBER 2023

Jane Ward received a grant from the NMDP to attend the mid-term WMDA Conference held during November in 2023.

Some of the key sessions covered:

Pillar 1: Evaluation of the proof of concept and decision on future timelines.

Pillar 2: Educational sessions for search coordinators on Hap-E and Atlas matching.

Pillar 3: SPEAR reporting.

Pillar 4: Understanding the goals and challenges of WMDA IT standards.

During the general meeting Ward presented on the upcoming 14th International Donor Registry Conference hosted by the SABMR.

Other interesting topics that were covered in the One Forum session, included:

- Coordinating the Future: Mismatched Unrelated Donor
- Transplants in the Modern Era
- Donor Mobilisation: GSF Data, Side Effects and Adverse Reactions and Management Strategies

The conference ended on a high note with patient meeting their donor face-to-face for the very first time since their successful transplant meeting the patients they helped for the first time face-to-face.

LOCAL DONORS FOR INTERNATIONAL PATIENTS

AS OF 31 DECEMBER 2023*

AUSTRALIA	2	
AUSTRIA	2	
CANADA	1	
FRANCE	1	
GERMANY	4	
INDIA	1	
ITALY	3	
NEW ZEALAND	2	
NETHERLANDS	2	
PORTUGAL	1	
SPAIN	2	
SWEDEN	2	
SWITZERLAND	2	
UK	8	
USA	9	

DONORS FOR



FACT SHEET

DONORS – Summary for 2023

Number of Registered Donors:		78 767		
Gender	HLA-ABCD ⁺	18 542	23.5%	↑ 2.8%
	HLA-ABDR	25 267	32.1%	↓ 0.6%
	HLA-AB	34 958	44.4%	↓ 2.2%
Gender	Female	49 239	62.5%	↑ 0.1%
	Male	29 528	37.5%	↓ 0.1%
Ethnicity	Asian/Indian	8 141	10.3%	
	Black	8 659	11%	↑ 0.7%
	Coloured	6 708	8.5%	↑ 0.2%
	White	51 377	65.2%	↓ 0.8%
	Other/Unknown	3 882	4.9%	↓ 0.2%
Total:		78 767	100%	

DONORS – Recruitment/Attrition

New Donors added in 2023:		2 613		
New Donors added in 2023:	Asian/Indian	226	8.7%	↓ 5.8%
	Black	716	27.4%	↑ 14.0%
	Coloured	298	11.4%	↓ 5.6%
	White	1 330	50.9%	↓ 2.6%
	Other/Unknown	43	1.7%	
Total:		2 613	100%	
Donors deleted in 2023:		2 018		
Donors deleted in 2023:	Age limit reached	1 843	91.3%	↑ 4.7%
	Medical reason	32	1.6%	↓ 0.2%
	Death	1	0.1%	↓ 0.1%
	Unable to trace	45	2.2%	↓ 4.3%
	Emigrated	35	1.7%	↑ 0.1%
	Personal request	35	1.7%	↑ 0.1%
	Following HSC donation	11	0.6%	↑ 0.2%
	Other reasons	16	0.8%	↑ 0.2%
	Total:	2 018	100%	

SOUTH AFRICAN PATIENTS



SERVICES - South African Patients

New Preliminary Searches in 2023: 112

Asian/Indian	9	8.0%	↑ 2.2%
Black	38	33.9%	↓ 7.8%
Coloured	23	20.5%	↑ 3.2%
White	36	32.1%	↑ 2.6%
Other/Unknown	6	5.4%	↓ 0.4%
Total:	112	100%	

New Activated Searches in 2023: 29

	Not Expedited	Expedited	
Asian/Indian	0	0	0.0%
Black	5	0	17.2%
Coloured	4	1	17.2%
White	8	10	62.1%
Other/Unknown	1	0	3.5%
Total:	18	11	100%

Patients Transplanted in 2023: 22

SABMR donor	5
International donor	17

Beneficiaries of the SABMR Patient Assistance Programme to date: 14

SERVICES – International Patients

Activated Searches	149
Transplanted with SABMR donor	7
Family Donor Assistance	4
Typing Requests (Family assists)	37

Level of typing of registered SABMR Donors

Ethnicity	# of Donors	% HLA-ABDR Typed	
Asian/Indian	5 305	65.2%	↑ 1.6%
Black	8 050	93%	↑ 0.5%
Coloured	153	76.8%	↑ 1.5%
White	24 095	46.9%	↑ 2.1%
Other/Unknown	1 206	31.1%	↑ 0.8%
TOTAL:	38 809	49.3%	↓ 4.1%

SABMR Donors requested on behalf of Patients

Requested for DR/Extended typing: 81

Requested for verification typing: 107

South African Patients	10
International Patients	97

HSC donations in 2023: 9

South African Patients	5
International Patients	4

DLI donations in 2023: 1

South African Patients	0
International Patients	1

Cord donations in 2023: 0

ASSETS

	2024	2023
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS	1,784,551	493,591
OTHER CURRENT ASSETS	8,290,901	8,861,006
LONG -TERM INVESTMENTS	4,780,355	6,891,325
PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT	139,488	347,397
CURRENT LIABILITIES	14,665,249	9,937,542
NET ASSETS	330,046	6,655,777

FUNDING SOURCES

PROGRAMME SERVICES	5,924,423	2,024,931
GRANTS AND DONATIONS	3,373,520	6,806,282
INVESTMENT INCOME	311,445	647,473
OTHER GAINS (INCL. INVESTMENT FAIR VALUE GAINS)	352,413	480,615

OPERATING AND VALUE DISTRIBUTION

MANAGEMENT, PUBLIC LIASON AND FUNDRAISING	13,083,157	13,990,227
DONOR RECRUITMENT	1,792,517	3,199,195
PATIENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME	1,390,653	1,947,441
REGISTRY DEVELOPMENT	21,205	119,882
STAFF RECRUITMENT	-	-

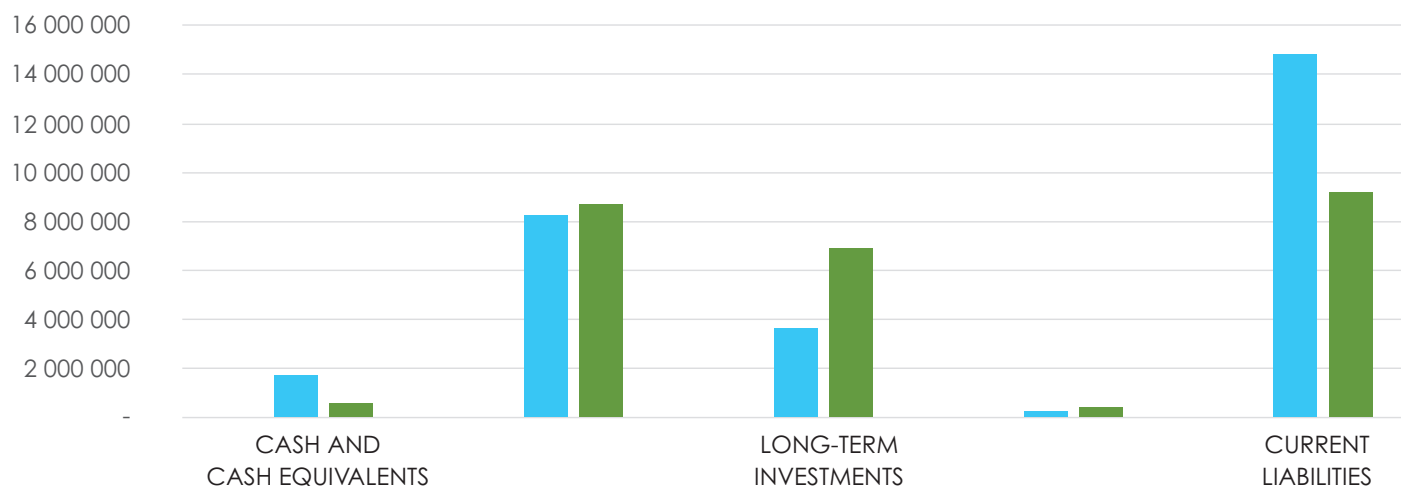
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR

(6,325,731)

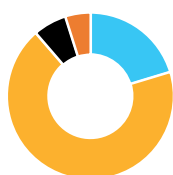
(9,297,444)

ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

2024 • 2023

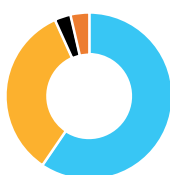


2023 FUNDING SOURCES



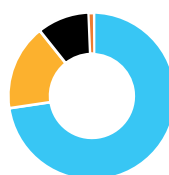
■ PROGRAMME SERVICES
■ GRANTS AND DONATIONS
■ INVESTMENT INCOME
■ OTHER GAINS (INCL. INVESTMENT FAIR VALUE GAINS)

2024 FUNDING SOURCES



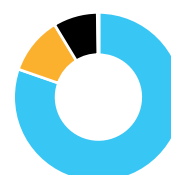
■ PROGRAMME SERVICES
■ GRANTS AND DONATIONS
■ INVESTMENT INCOME
■ OTHER GAINS (INCL. INVESTMENT FAIR VALUE GAINS)

2023 VALUE DISTRIBUTION



■ MANAGEMENT, PUBLIC LIASON AND FUNDRAISING
■ DONOR RECRUITMENT
■ PATIENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME
■ REGISTRY DEVELOPMENT
■ STAFF RECRUITMENT

2024 VALUE DISTRIBUTION



■ MANAGEMENT, PUBLIC LIASON AND FUNDRAISING
■ DONOR RECRUITMENT
■ PATIENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME
■ REGISTRY DEVELOPMENT
■ STAFF RECRUITMENT

DONOR & PATIENT STORIES

- > Matches on the map
- > Inge MacMillan
- > Vivek Abraham
- > Sharan Ramsaru

finding **MATCHES**
& **SAVING** lives



MATCHES ON THE MAP

On Saturday, 16 September 2023, which marked World Marrow Donor Day (WMDD), Robin and Jolandie Lewis embarked on the first ever inter-continental tour to raise awareness for stem cell donation.

The Mpumalanga couple left the life they knew behind and set off in their custom-built motorhome, dubbed “Betsy” on a 10-year, 64-country journey spanning three continents.

Their aim – to sign up as many stem cell donors as possible through their Matches on the Map campaign.

This husband-and-wife duo were inspired to take on the expedition, following a successful stem cell transplant after Robin was diagnosed with Fanconi Anaemia – a genetic DNA repair disorder that may lead to bone marrow failure, leukaemia and or solid cancerous tumours.

While Robin thankfully found a match, there are countless other patients who aren't as lucky. Finding a suitable donor is often likened to finding a needle in a haystack. The couple hopes to help make it easier for patients who find themselves in a similar situation to find a donor.

Robin says the journey took at least five years of meticulous planning, along with a host of challenges.

“For years leading up to it, we had to adjust our careers, mindset and the way we live to make the expedition a reality. The first two weeks into the journey were loaded with excitement and uncertainty. We were adamant to hit the road on WMDD and in the process had used up all of our savings to make it happen. As a result, we had an extremely tight budget and stress levels were at an all-time high as we entered our first border crossing on our second day of travels.

Eswatini would be our ‘deep-end’, and we had to adapt to this new nomadic lifestyle. Finding opportunities to set up stem cell donor recruitment drives, as well as suitable trading events to make an income was a major challenge at first, but we were highly motivated to succeed, and soon helping hands and interested community members started assisting us. They had given us a platform to share information with staff, team members and even helped in setting up recruitment drives at various businesses and locations.”

“After years of dreaming, planning and hard work, there was no looking back and our accomplishment in kicking off the project and completing our vehicle was all the motivation we needed. It was difficult to leave those that were close to us behind, but necessary to achieve our goals.”



By the end of March 2024, the pair had already been on the road for six months and clocked around 53 000 km. Following their trip to Eswatini, Robin, Jolandie and Betsy, made their way back to South Africa, visiting various cities along the coast.

One of the most frequently asked questions is how the pair manage to live in such close quarters, but the duo says they have learned to adapt.

Robin says his isolation period before and after his transplant helped greatly in this respect.

"Outside of the many hours that went into designing the truck in such a manner that was comfortable for Jolandie and I, we have been preparing – mentally and physically – to live in a small space, since experiencing isolation during my stem cell transplant in the small hospital room. Of course there were teething problems in the beginning, but after six months of being on the road, these have all been sorted out."

The journey to date has not been without mechanical breakdowns, nor the stress of wondering where the next income opportunity will present itself or where they would find accommodation, but Robin says it has been very fulfilling.

"The best part of the journey has been meeting other people who have survived stem cell transplants. We have met two Fanconi Anaemia patients, as well as other families that have been affected by these type of diseases. We even had the opportunity to meet donors along the way. We've signed up 572 potential stem cell donors thus far and our hope is to soon find our first match for a patient.

Robin says without the help from communities in the towns and cities they have visited, none of what they achieved so far would have been possible.

"There are many communities that have meant a great deal to us and gone out of their way to assist with promoting Matches on the Map, giving us a safe place to park and sleep, and often supplying us with homecooked meals. We've even had teams assist us with mechanical breakdowns and town mayors taking out the time to learn more about our journey. Of course you will run into a few sceptics, but the positive experiences by far outweigh the negative."

As for Betsy, Robin says she has proven her worth.

“There is no other motorhome that could do what she does. Betsy is also different because she runs on cooking oil. She has been amazing! As long as we look after her, she looks after us. She has had some hiccups on the road, but these were necessary in order to prepare and repair anything that would put the journey in jeopardy when we enter the rest of Africa. South Africa is a good test-run, but she has proven she can conquer all types of terrains, even where many warned us it would be impossible. Breakdowns do happen and they are frustrating, but it allows us the opportunity to not only improve on the build, but grow our knowledge and capabilities.”

Continued public support

The Matches on the Map journey is self-funded by Robin and Jolandie. While they seek out opportunities for hosting markets and sell hand-made goods, they do rely on corporates, sponsors and the public to help them along their journey.

Robin says continued support is vital.

“The public can assist us by sharing our project with friends, family and colleagues. Inviting us to recruitment opportunities en route, connecting us with possible campsites and stopovers, supplying us with used cooking oil, subscribing to our socials and becoming a Matches on the Map Patreon member: <https://www.patreon.com/MatchesontheMap>.”

We've teamed up with the SABMR and set up a Backabuddy account to cover operational expenses. This account also supports the SABMR's sample testing fees and contributes to the Fanconi Cancer Fund, aiding research into FA and cancer treatment and prevention. You can find more information and support us at: <https://www.backabuddy.co.za/campaign/matches-on-the-map>

“We would like to thank those that have in some way, shape or form assisted our efforts in either signing up as a stem cell donor, being willing to, or supporting our project through motivation and generosity. A kind word goes a long way, and makes the challenges easier to overcome!”

Statistics



572

**Donors
Signed Up**



38

**Donor
Drives**



10

**Education & Awareness
Talks**



53 000km

**Kilometres
Driven**



INGE MACMILLAN



I got to be part of a miracle

Inge MacMillan and her husband signed up at a donor recruitment drive at a local high school in Johannesburg in 2021, but never thought she would be someone's perfect match just two years later. Mac Millan says she never dreamed that she would one day be able to save the life of another.

"To me, it feels like divine intervention. When my husband and I heard of little Mighty Mack's story, we wanted to help by signing up as donors. Receiving that all-important call from the South African Bone Marrow Registry is a moment that I will never forget.

An overwhelming sense of joy and responsibility came over me. Joy, because this gave new meaning to a loss I had recently experienced, and responsibility, because I now had to do everything I could to make sure that this patient gets the very best chance at life."

"You often hear of miracles happening, but you don't often get to be a part of one."

Two months later, following several tests, which declared her in good health, her stem cells were harvested.

"All the procedures and tests were explained to me in great detail and everyone made me feel comfortable every step of the way. I had an entire team of doctors, support staff and nurses who guided me through the process. They are the real heroes in this story."

Inge's stem cell harvest took place in November 2023. She says other than a bit of fatigue the day after the procedure, her world seemed a little brighter.

"I was allowed to send an anonymous letter to the patient via the SABMR to wish them well during the transplant. Never realising that I would receive a response back. It still brings me to tears every time I read their letter. Can you imagine being on the receivingend? I now feel part of the SABMR community and hope to be able to motivate everyone who is eligible to sign up and make a difference."





VIVEK ABRAHAM

At the age of nine, Vivek Abraham, was diagnosed with Stage 4 non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma an aggressive form of blood cancer, which had started to spread throughout his body. He underwent chemotherapy at the Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital, and thankfully, the cancer went into sustained remission in 2007.

The following 12 years, Vivek was as healthy as can be, but halfway through medical school the cancer resurfaced. Vivek says it was his mother's intuition at a dinner one evening that led to the discovery of his relapse.

"She looked at me after supper one evening and asked me to check my temperature, since I didn't look alright to her. What I thought was the onset of flu, turned out to be the beginning of the most gruelling health journey I'd ever had to endure."

Vivek's symptoms, which included a high fever, chills, dry cough and small lumps on his neck were the exact same as when he was a child.

He relapsed in October 2020 and required several rounds of chemotherapy. Ultimately, only a stem cell transplant would save his life.

"Waiting for a match was not only a test of my faith in humanity, but it also forced me to reflect on the role I had played in the lives of those around me. I was overjoyed upon receiving the news that the SABMR had found a 10/10 or 100% donor match. It instilled in me the hope to keep going."

His matched unrelated donor came from Germany, and the stem cells were flown to the Mother City within hours as part of a globally coordinated effort for transplantation in January 2021.

He says life after the transplant was a true test of stamina and resilience as he navigated recovery from chemotherapy, dealing with all the side effects of the transplant and trying to complete his medical studies.

"I had the herculean task of picking up the pieces of my life. Rebuilding my physical strength, while integrating into a new class at university. The challenge appeared overwhelming until I changed my perspective and chose to see the opportunity it presented instead. I was granted life along with its intricate tapestry of challenges and emotions.

The chance to feel the sun and the pleasant chill of the breeze against my skin. To sing again, to hear music and even make my own. To fall in love, to endure heartbreak, to triumph and to fail. It was wonderful to be alive!"

Vivek graduated as a medical doctor in December 2023.

He says his illness has allowed him to see perspectives from both sides of the healthcare curtain.

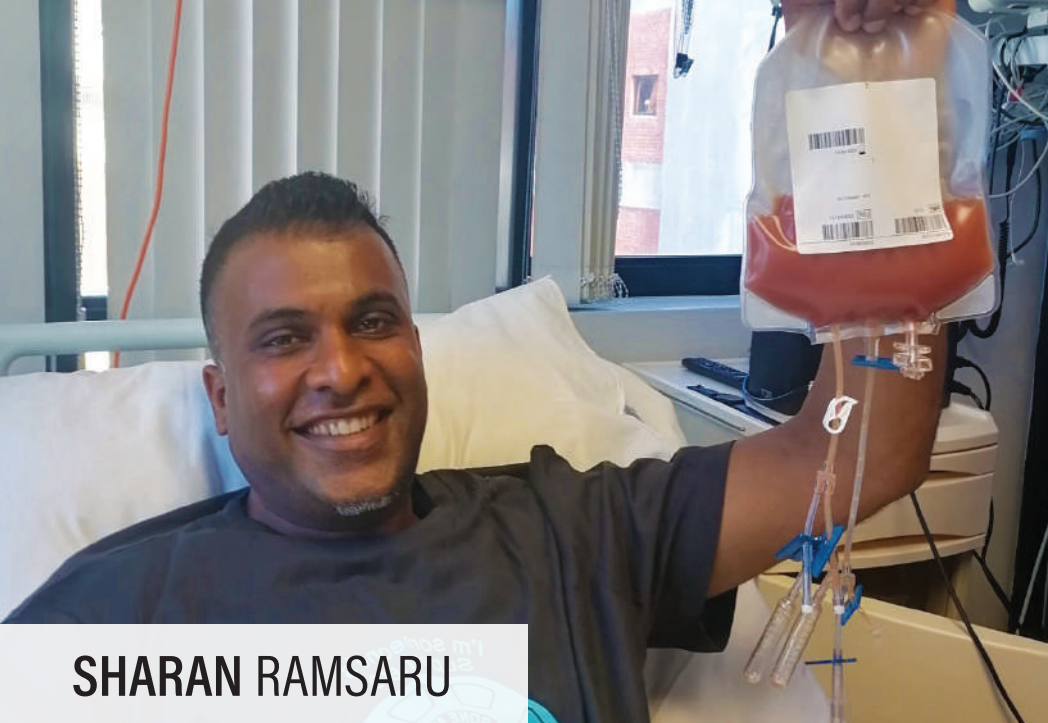
"Knowing what it's like being a patient, I'm driven to be a doctor who treats empathetically and holistically. The SABMR managed my donor search and transplant logistics from beginning to end, and has graciously acted as the intermediary for communication with my donor, whom I will soon have the privilege of meeting after three years of anticipation."

As a South African, I was lucky to find a match from a donor in a foreign country, but it fills my heart with sadness knowing that the pool of donors in our homeland remains small. While it is true that none of our futures are certain, let us not deny those who currently suffer and will continue to suffer from life-altering blood cancers a future.

"I urge every person who reads this, especially my fellow peers of colour, to sign up to become a stem cell donor, and gift another with the hope of life, and all the beauty that comes with it."

"When many act from their hearts, the waves coalesce, and our world is enveloped in the force that has driven us all this far – hope. It's the hope that guides us towards a future where we learn from our shared mistakes, striving to improve and evolve. In this future, each person, much like myself, is granted a gift so invaluable that words fail to fully capture it: the gift of another opportunity."





SHARAN RAMSARU



Transforming personal tragedy into lifesaving action

To honour loved ones who had passed of cancer, Sharan Ramsaru, a 40-year-old Service Owner in the IT Industry from Tongaat in KwaZulu-Natal was determined to make a difference in the lives of those affected by this dreaded illness.

In 2019, he made good on this promise and signed up as a donor at a stem cell drive held at his workplace. He convinced his family and work colleagues to do the same. Little did he know that four years later he would donate his stem cells to save a patient's life.

He says receiving the call from the SABMR was the best news!

"It felt so good to know that I could be part of saving someone's life and I was eager to do whatever was required. While my family was a little hesitant of the procedure at first, they were 100% behind me once I educated them on the stem cell donation process. They agreed that the reward far outweighed the slight discomfort that I would experience."

Sharan says he was well-informed by doctors and taken care of by the SABMR throughout the entire procedure, which included medical examinations and further testing to ensure that he was indeed fit to donate. In the five days leading up to the procedure, he had to give himself daily injections to boost his stem cell count, which wasn't fun, but he kept his sights on the end-goal.

During the procedure, his thoughts turned to the loved ones he had lost. "I was doing this in memory of them as their individual battles with cancer inspired me. I've always wanted to give back or provide relief to anyone in need. I am truly honoured to have had the opportunity to impact someone else's life in such a profound way."

The father of one says he hopes his stem cell donation will inspire others to sign up and give patients a fighting chance for survival.

"Being able to give someone else a tomorrow is a truly fulfilling experience. I hope that by telling my story more people will consider becoming a stem cell donor and give another a second chance at life."



SABMR chief executive, Charlotte Ingram, with Rachel Ancer and her donor, Madga Lewandowska.

HEALTH CARE

Stem cell recipient, 14, meets Polish donor

Meropa Communications continued to manage the public relations portfolio on behalf of the Registry in the last financial year.

Education and awareness took centre stage over the last 12 months with a big focus placed on community media to boost donor sign ups and raise funds. While the advertising value equivalent (AVE), used to cost editorial coverage, might not be as high as that of mainstream media, community media ensured exposure at grassroots level.

Some of the media highlights include a special first-time in-person meeting between a South African patient and her Polish donor. Rachel Ancer met her donor, Madga Lewandowska in Cape Town for the first time, six-years post-transplant. The meeting was covered widely by the media.

The SABMR partnered with Numinous Expeditions to help drive their Matches on the Map campaign. Husband and wife duo, Robin and Jolandie Lewis embarked on the first-ever intercontinental stem cell drive in their custom-built truck, named Betsy.

The pair, who set off on 21 September, to coincide with World Marrow Donor Day 2023, aim to visit 64 countries across Africa, Asia and Europe over the next 10 years in an effort to sign up as many stem cell donors as possible. Robin is a former transplant survivor and has made it his mission to help find matches for patients. The story continues to garner national and international media attention.



IOL

Search IOL

NEWS

ELECTIONS 2024

BUSINESS

LIFESTYLE

ENTERTAINMENT

SPORT

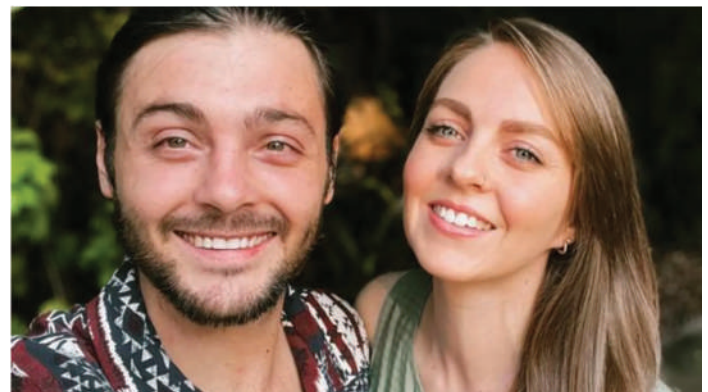
TRAVEL

OPINION

NEWS

SATURDAY STAR NEWS

Mpumalanga couple off on first inter-continental drive for stem cell donations

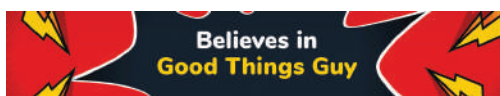


Robin Lewis and his wife, Jolandie, following his stem cell transplant in 2018. Robin was diagnosed with Fanconi Anemia, a genetic DNA repair disorder that can lead to bone marrow failure, leukaemia and or solid tumours in the body. Pictures: Supplied.

Published Jul 1, 2023

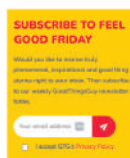
Written by

Norman Cloete



Local Filmmaker Produces Video in 4 South African Languages to Boost Stem Cell Donations

BY THOMAS LUTHE-HANSEN • 17 APRIL 2023



Local filmmaker and creative director, Sam Suter and her team at Black Bean Productions, assisted the SABMR by creating an emotional two-minute short film, which aims to raise awareness for stem cell donation among South Africans. Suter was inspired to create awareness after the loss of her mother who failed to find a matching stem cell donor in time. The video, which has been translated into four languages, attracted more than 75 000 views on the SABMR's social media channels and was covered extensively in the media.

SA Beenmurgregister

Vrou swem 33 km ter bewustmaking

Denique Smith

Christine Roos (32), ambassadeur van die SA Beenmurgregister (SABMR), sal volgende week die uitmergelende 33 km-Valsbaai-kruising, wat die "Everest of Cape Swims" genoem word, aandurf om geld in te samel en bewustmaking te kweek vir die register.

Die oopwaterswem, wat dikwels vergelyk word met die wêreldbekende Engelse Kanaal-kruising weens sy moeilikheidsgraad, is nog net deur 14 swemmers voltooi.

Christine sal Maandag (20 November) die ysigte water tussen Millers Point en Rooiels trotseer, wat na raming tussen tien en 'n half en 12 ure sal neem om te voltooi.

Swemmers word dikwels gekonfronteer met verskeie elemente tydens die oopwaterswem, insluitend sterk en onvoorspelbare strome, ysigte winde en teenstrydige watertemperature. Die Valsbaai-kus is ook bekend vir grootwaaie.

Roos, wat van Benoni afkomstig is en die Blouberg-kruising (Grootbaai na Robbeneiland) in 2021 voltooi het, sê die Valsbaai-kruising is seker die grootste uitdaging wat sy nog ooit getoëkom het. Maar sy sê dat sy die afgelope twee jaar hard daarvoor geoef het. Sy beoog om ten minste R50 000 in te samel vir die register se pasiëntbystand-program.

"Ek verstaan die omvang van hierdie uitdaging, maar dit is niks in vergelyking met wat pasiënte en hul gesinne moet verduur om 'n bykomende skenker te vind as gevolg van 'n lewensgevaarlike bloedversteuring en om nie die behandeling te kan bekostig nie."

Roos het in swembaddens en damme rondom Gauteng en die



Christine Roos het onlangs 'n seeswem-oefenkamp in Langebaan aan die Weskus voltooi om vir haar oopwaterswem voor te berei.

Vaalrivier geoef en het onlangs 'n see-swemkamp in Langebaan aan die Weskus voltooi.

Ter voorbereiding vir die ysigte Valsbaai-kus het sy in die winter buite geoef in watertemperature van tussen 11 °C en 14 °C. Die watertemperatuur vir die komende swem moet 'n minimum van 16 °C wees vir die geleentheid om te begin.

Christine sê sy het alles in haar vermoë gedoen om te verseker dat sy geroed is en hoop dat die aanpak van hierdie baie moeilike swem ander sal inspireer om te skenk en by die register aan te sluit om moontlik iemand se lewe te red.

"Hierdie swem is al geruime tyd op my emmerskopiesie. Dit is oorweldigend en ek twyfel dikwels. Dit is egter in hierdie oomblikke dat ek myself regtig druk om te fokus op die opleiding en

hoekom ek dit doen. Ek voel hoe groter die impak wat ek maak, hoe meer kan ek mense aanmoedig om aan te sluit om stamselskenkers te word en die gang van iemand se lewe te verander."

Die swemvenster vir die Valsbaai-kruising is van 19 tot 27 November 2023. Daar is 'n paar faktore wat in ag geneem moet word voordat die byeenkoms voortgaan, soos weerstoestande en watertemperatuur.

"n BackaBuddy-skarefinansieringsbladsy is opgestel om geld in te samel vir die SABMR se pasiëntbystand-program en sal tot 10 Desember 2023 duur om die teiken te bereik. Om te skenk, besoek www.backabuddy.co.za/champion/project/everest-of-cape-swims.

Indien jy nie 'n finansiële hydrae kan maak nie, oorweeg dit om as stamselskenker te registreer via www.sabmr.co.za.

Long-time donor and champion of the SABMR, Christine Roos, took on the gruelling False Bay Crossing swim, dubbed the Everest of Cape Swims, in a bid to raise awareness and funds for the Registry. The 33 km swim in the icy Atlantic Ocean took just over 11 hours and 24 minutes to complete. She faced a few obstacles including jelly fish stings to her body and face, fatigue and costume malfunctions, but was determined to finish! In the end, she managed to raise R56 000 for the Patient Assistance Programme. Christine is one of only 15 people in the world to complete the swim. The story was published in both community and mainstream media including broadcast.

Swimmer completes gruelling False Bay Crossing after a two-year wait

She is one of only 15 people in the world to complete the 33km swim.

© January 13, 2024

Lebohang Pita 2 minutes read



Christine Roos completed the False Bay crossing in November.

Marathon swimmer Christine Roos described her successful swim across False Bay on November 19 as brutal but beautiful.

Over the last year, Meropa secured more than R5 million in unweighted editorial coverage, consisting of 288 media hits across print, online and broadcast with an average monthly audience reach of 16 million.

PUBLICITY OVERVIEW APRIL 2023 - MARCH 2024



R5.08 million

Total Publicity
Achieved



16 million

Average Monthly
Audience Reached



228

Clippings
Total

A MESSAGE OF THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS, SPONSORS AND DONORS



Over the last year, we managed to exceed our donor recruitment target by 600 despite a very difficult economic climate. This achievement brings us closer to the Registry's goal of 100 000 registered donors on our database.

This success would not have been possible without the continued support and generous donations from our donors, sponsors and partners. Your contributions are crucial to the Registry and enables us to continue our lifesaving work.

With your ongoing support, we have made a meaningful impact on the lives of numerous patients and their families. Because of you, we have reached more communities, spread our message further and increased awareness about the importance of stem cell donation, as evidenced by the number of additional donors added to our database this year. Education and awareness are essential in securing the donors we so desperately need.

Your commitment not only sustains our operations, but also brings the possibility of lifesaving matches closer to those in need. Your partnership has a profound impact, and we cannot thank you enough.

Together, we are making a tangible difference in the lives of patients and their loved ones.

Let's aim for 100 000 donors by 2025!

DR CHARLOTTE INGRAM
CEO AND MEDICAL DIRECTOR



Ambience Band
Ann Kreitzer Will Trust
Aspen
Cell C
Cobra Experience
El Darfer Trust
Diago/Johnny Walker

Flemmings Family Foundation
Frank Raubenbach
HC Adamstein Will Trust
JP Dumini/ Highveld Lions
Melbro Wholesale
PUMA

Proshop Kennilworth
Rachel du Toit Charitable Trust
Royale International
Sota Joinery
Singer Group

Spar Groote Schuur
Wildner Foundation
Whats on in Cape Town
Woodstock Brewery
Zolani Mahola



SABMR 
SOUTH AFRICAN BONE MARROW REGISTRY

Help Robin and Jolandie find matches on the map. **Donate to the campaign**

Scan the code below

