



Participants at a one-day training course for doctors on emergency treatment of severe burns.

Training doctors on burns

Members of the Phoenix Burns Project participated in the organisation and teaching of a one-day course for doctors on the "Emergency Management of Severe Burns". The course, which was held at the premises of the Child Accident Prevention Society of Southern Africa on 7 December, was attended by 12 doctors.

The course is offered by the Department of Emergency Medicine at the University of Cape Town on behalf of the Burn Society of South Africa.

Phoenix's Dr Roux Martinez was one of four instructors for the course. Phoenix also supported various aspects of the course administration and contributed a teaching assistant. Dr Martinez said: "We were asked to assist with this course and we gladly agreed because we believe that the training of doctors to manage severe burns is completely in keeping with our vision to mitigate the effects of burn injuries in children."

Back on track for Phoenix

Our generous supporter Peter Walsh has announced that he will again run the Comrades Marathon in June 2009 for Phoenix. Peter made this announcement at a Phoenix fundraising function in Cape Town on 6 November (see page 3).

In June 2008, Peter ran the Comrades Marathon and raised close to R60 000 for Phoenix. He completed the 89-km uphill race from Durban to Pietermaritzburg in 10 hours and 20 minutes, winning a bronze medal. This was quite a remarkable achievement given that this was Peter's first Comrades Marathon and that he made his decision to run the Marathon less than two months before race day.

In making his announcement, Peter said that for his next race he will start his training much earlier and will set his fundraising target at triple the amount raised in 2008 — R180 000.

Peter lives in Observatory, Cape Town. He is married and has two daughters. He learned about Phoenix from his father, Jasper, who serves on Phoenix's advisory committee.

Next year's race will take place on 24 May. It will be a downhill race from Pietermaritzburg to Durban. We wish Peter all the best for his preparations for the Comrades Marathon 2009 and thank him for his ongoing support of Phoenix. Please support Peter by making your pledge as early as possible.

Pledges can be made through Phoenix at admin@pbp.org.za or by phoning Gail Simmermacher at 082 932 9504



We wish all burn survivors, their care givers and families, as well as all our generous donors, friends supporters and donors a blessed Christmas and a peaceful and safe holiday season. Thank you for all that you have done to support Phoenix in 2008. May 2009 be a very happy year for you.



Peter Walsh and daughter Georgia

A mother tells her story

A gas explosion on a camping trip changed the lives of the Nesper family forever. In her new book, *Een voet voor die ander* (currently available only in Afrikaans), **Erica Nesper** recalls her journey as the mother of a burnt child. She explains here why she wrote the book.

When my 9-year-old daughter and husband suffered severe burns in a freak accident, our family's existence went from normal to nightmare within seconds.

Nothing can really prepare one for a traumatic event such as this, and yet we are all born with the ability to cope with, come to terms with and move on from trauma. Each of us has strengths and weaknesses, and these are highlighted during times of trouble.

Some people are able to stay utterly calm during a crisis, while others tend to panic. It is even more distressing when it is your own child who has suffered trauma, but at the same time, there is all the more pressure to stay strong. My way of dealing with the fact that my daughter's chances for survival were very slim was to cry profusely at first, and then to shut off emotionally. I became

numb and businesslike, suppressing my feelings and fears, because they were simply too painful. I focussed on getting things done, staying in the present.

Having a strong support network during a crisis cannot be over-emphasised. In my case it was my saving grace. The day-to-day domestic details (including financial assistance) were taken care of, making it possible for me to focus my energy on those in hospital, who needed every ounce of it.

The other sanity saver, for me, was to keep a diary. Even though I appeared calm and positive on the outside, my mind was everything but calm. Every evening I sat down at my computer and just emptied out my bucket of fears, pain and anger, and recorded the progress and setbacks experienced each step of the way. This helped me to 'store' the events and feelings outside my head, which cleared my mind and allowed me to stay sane most of the time.

Nine months after the accident, my daughter returned to school — scarred, changed, stronger — and I sat down again at my computer to piece together the entries in my journal to form a coherent account of our journey thus far, just for close family and friends. Having already



Erica Nesper and the cover of her book.

published one book, many people encouraged me to publish a book about what had happened to us.

I had mixed feelings about publishing the book — but so many people told me how our story had inspired them, gave them courage and helped them come to terms with losses, that I finally went ahead with it.

My hope is that the book will help those who are going through dark times, and that it will give hope to those who need it most.

Een voet voor die ander can be ordered from the author by e-mail erica@adept.co.za or visit www.aniek.co.za

After the fire

Imagine returning home from work to find that all your possessions have been lost in a fire. This is a stark reality every year for hundreds of people who live in Cape

Town's many informal settlements.

Responding to the needs of some of those left with nothing after a fire, we are distributing



Phoenix Fire Recovery Kits.

These kits come in a sturdy 100-litre plastic container filled with a large number of basic household items and basic foodstuffs.

Each Fire Recovery Kit costs approximately R1500. Please support this by sponsoring a Fire Recovery Kit, or by inviting your church, school or work colleagues to contribute to one or more kits.

For further information, please e-mail admin@pfbp.org.za or phone Gail Simmermacher at 082 932 9504

PHOENIX FIRE MONITOR

Shack fires reported in Cape Town newspapers
31 August 2008 to 30 November 2008

- 20 November** **Imizamo Yethu in Hout Bay**
fire destroys 200 shacks, 1 000 left homeless
- 3 November** **Tafelsig informal settlement**
three small children and mother pregnant with twins die, shack destroyed
- 20 October** **KTC informal settlement**
35 shacks destroyed, 100 left homeless
- Violet Cottage informal settlement in Athlone**
25 shacks destroyed, 100 left homeless
- 19 October** **Athlone**
4 adults die in fire, 40 shacks destroyed, 160 homeless
- 15 September** **Kosovo informal settlement in Philippi**
14 shacks destroyed, 60 people left homeless
- 31 August** **Wallacedene informal settlement**
1 adult dies, 6 shacks destroyed, 24 homeless
- Bloekombos informal settlement**
2 adults die, one shack destroyed
- New Crossroads informal settlement**
5-year old girl dies, shacks destroyed, 30 people left homeless

TOTAL: 14 DEATHS, OVER 1450 HOMELESS

These are only cases reported in the press. No official statistics are made available. The figures above therefore represent only a minimum of shack-fire related destruction.

WINING AND DINING WITH PHOENIX



Kelvin Grove is all set to host the Phoenix dinner. The flower arrangement represents the rising Phoenix.



Dr Peter Martinez (right) presents Peter Walsh with a token of Phoenix's appreciation. In June, Peter Walsh raised R60,000 for Phoenix by running the Comrades Marathon. At the dinner he announced that he will again run the Comrades in 2009 to raise funds for Phoenix.



Erica Nesar introduces the background to her book *Een voet voor die ander*, which was launched at the Phoenix dinner.



Carolyn Cripps delivers the evening's keynote address.



Michael Simmermacher, son of Phoenix's project coordinator Gail and for the evening her able assistant, handles the credit card machine – sponsored for the night by Nexion Solutions – as Tanya Bisset of Smith & Nephew makes a donation to Phoenix.

Phoenix hosted its second fundraising dinner at Kelvin Grove in Newlands among old and new friends.

Carolyn Cripps OBE, founder of Britain's The Children's Fire and Burn Trust and now Phoenix's UK representative, delivered the keynote address. During the event, author Erica Nesar launched her book *Een voet voor die ander*, which recounts her experience as the mother of a child burn survivor. Both speakers were introduced by Professor Jenny Thomas of Red Cross Children's Hospital. Fine Music Radio presenter Rodney Trudgeon compèred the event.

Phoenix's project coordinator Gail Simmermacher, who organised the dinner, said that more events were being planned for next year. She hoped that these would also include "something less formal, which can include whole families".



Michèle Twomey and Karen Fernandez in conversation as Dawn Demes looks on. Michèle is a member of the Phoenix committee; Karen and Dawn volunteer for Phoenix by distributing food to caregivers of burnt children at Red Cross Children's Hospital.



Peter Walsh, David Waight, Fr Andrew Cox and Gerry Gordon before the Phoenix dinner. David and Gerry are members of the Phoenix committee, whose members serve the organisation on a voluntary basis.



José Gorgulho, Archbishop Lawrence Henry and Schalk Visser were among the guests at the Phoenix dinner.

If you would like to receive invitations to future Phoenix events, please contact Gail at 082 032 9504 or e-mail gail@pbp.org.za

Join the Phoenix group on Facebook (simply type Phoenix Burns Project into the search engine).

Phoenix in the UK

Following her designation as Phoenix's UK representative in October, Carolyn Cripps has set about raising awareness of the plight of child burn survivors and the work of the Phoenix Burns Project in Britain.

There are strong links between South Africa and Britain. Many British residents have close family or business ties with South Africa, and there is a very large South African expatriate community living in Britain. "A lot of people in the UK have an affinity for South Africa, and would like to support worthwhile causes in one way or another. Having a local representative in the UK allows us to reach these people," says Carolyn.

In one of her first initiatives, Phoenix was selected as one of the beneficiaries of a very well attended Christmas Charity Fair.

Phoenix's contact details in the UK are:

Phoenix Burns Project, 47 Elms Road, London SW4 9EP
Tel: +44 (0) 788 514 2679 Fax: +44 (0) 207 242 0515



Phoenix display at a Christmas Fair in England.

With the "Friends of Phoenix" campaign, members of the public and companies can support the organisation financially.

To accomplish our objectives and challenges, we are inviting the public to join our work not just as funders, but as a part of Phoenix. This means that we will keep our Friends informed on new developments, showing them how their support has helped.

Friends can also assist us by raising awareness about Phoenix and recruiting more Friends.

To obtain copies of the "Friends of Phoenix" brochure, which explains why we exist and what we aim to accomplish, please phone Gail Simmermacher at 082 932 9504 or e-mail admin@pbp.org.za, or download it in PDF format at www.pbp.org.za/supportus.htm

Cubs back Bear programme

The 3rd Claremont Dawn Hunters Cub Scout pack has adopted the Phoenix Burns Project as part of their social responsibility programme.

The scouts, aged between 8-10, sorted, cleaned and tagged many soft toys for distribution in the Bear With Your Rehab programme, and donated a considerable quantity of toys as well. These toys are being distributed to little burns patients who come to Red Cross Children's Hospital for their often painful but absolutely crucial follow-up treatment.

The Cubs also provided the first donation of a new programme to support mothers of burnt children in hospital. Often, when a child is burnt, the parents rush to hospital with their child and do not have the time to pack any toiletries. Phoenix intends soon to start distributing toiletry kits to mothers who stay at their child's bedside overnight in the Burns Unit at Red Cross Children's Hospital.

The Cub Scouts also donated and packed toiletry kits. These kits will also be included in the Phoenix Fire Recovery Kits, which are distributed (according to availability) to parents of burnt children who lose all their possessions in shack fires.

The Cubs also took Phoenix collection tins, which they returned full of coins.

Phoenix wishes to thank all the cubs and their parents for their wonderful support.

FILL A TIN FOR CHANGE

Your small change can make a big change in a burn survivor's life. Please consider keeping a collection tin in your home to put all the small change cluttering up your purse or wallet. Every cent helps, and it all adds up!

Better still, why not support Phoenix by taking a carton of collection tins to distribute in your school, your office or among your friends?

If you would like to take a tin, please contact Gail at 082 932 9504



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