



# New Project Coordinator for Phoenix

**O**n 1 November 2009, May Bleeker-Phelan joined Phoenix as a part-time Project Coordinator, strengthening our ability to support burnt children and their families by assisting with the day-to-day implementation and administration of various projects.

The appointment was made possible through a donation from the international funding agency Breadline Africa.

May has a background in psychology, is a registered psychometrist and shares her time between Phoenix and doing career assessments for the corporate world. She is also involved in small projects, such as maintaining a website on self esteem.

May has experience in project coordination for non-profit organisations



and recently returned from England where she spent some years working for the Integrated Service for Disabled Children at the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. May has also conducted research projects for a National UK Children's Charity.

She has a personal interest in burns and the impact of burns trauma on affected children and their families, having had personal experience of this.

May shares Phoenix's mission to provide support services to burn survivors, to raise awareness about burns prevention and to facilitate events aimed at increasing the social confidence of the child burn survivor.

May can be contacted on 082 932 9504; Fax: 086 517 5620; e-mail: [admin@pbp.org.za](mailto:admin@pbp.org.za)

## Burns training for doctors

**O**n 17 October, five doctors and one paramedic received advanced training in the medical management of severe burn injuries in a special one-day course held at the Red Cross Children's Hospital and organised by Phoenix.

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 led the course administration and also contributed a teaching assistant.

"Last year we were involved in the course in a supporting capacity," Dr Martinez said. "In 2009, we were asked by the Burn Society to organise 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."

## PHOENIX FIRE MONITOR

Shack fires reported in Cape Town newspapers during the period of 1 August 2009 - 31 January 2010

19 Jan	Fire destroys 5 wendy houses in Manenberg, 11 people homeless.
3 Jan 2010	Shacks razed in Gansbaai informal settlement, 1 man killed
21 Dec 2009	Fire destroys 13 shacks in Wallacedene, 1 dead.
21 Dec	Family of 4, including a 4-year old boy, die in fire in Kraaifontein
20 Dec	150 homeless after 'arson' fire razes 59 Du Noon shacks
15 Dec	25 homeless after Ocean View fire, 4 shacks destroyed and 6 houses damaged
10 Dec	150 shacks destroyed and more than 100 displaced by Khayelitsha fire, 2 hospitalised
3 Dec	50 families homeless after fire in Kosovo informal settlement, Phillippi East
23 Nov	Mother and child die in Klappmuts shack fire
16 Nov	8 Shacks burn down in Masiphumelele.
31 Oct	Masiphumelele. 20 shacks burnt down. 80 residents homeless.
23 Oct	400 displaced by shack fires in Du Noon informal settlement.
20 Oct	Shack fire kills mother and two daughters in Khayelitsha.
9 Oct	Shack fire at Epping market, 1 dead.
5 Oct	3 shacks destroyed by fire in Kraaifontein, 14 homeless
2 Oct	Fire guts 15 shacks in Masiphumelele informal settlement, 60 homeless.
4 Aug	9 shacks destroyed in separate Peninsula fires, 1 deceased

**Please note that this list is not exhaustive**

*We extend our heartfelt condolences to all who lost their loved ones and their homes or possessions in these tragic events.*

## No burn survivor should stand alone



# A holistic and hands-on book

## BOOK REVIEW – BY DR ROUX MARTINEZ

*A Practical Guide to Paediatric Burns*, by Jenny Thomas and Heinz Rode. SAMA Health and Medical Publishing Group, 2006. ISBN 1-875098-41-0. 225 pages

**T**his wonderful book is holistic and hands-on at the same time. The work covers paediatric burns from prevention to hospital management, rehabilitation and finally aspects of living with burns.

The book has a striking front cover picture and apt quotations set the tone at the start of each chapter. The text is concise and management-orientated, with colour-coded pages and very helpful diagrams and demonstrations, making the book an extremely useful pocket guide for the emergency physician. In the past two years, it has become part of the standard armour for this group.

This book is also highly suited for the African and South African context. While providing step by step guidance to the professional in the state-of-the-art private hospital, it is equally suitable for those working with limited resources in rural areas. You will find clear instructions on all the initial life-saving emergency management aspects

to keep even the most severely burned patient alive. This is followed by clear guidelines for safe transferral to a specialised burns unit.

For junior doctors in isolated rural areas, this book provides all the essence, warnings and pitfalls in burns management. So many of these doctors work in poorly staffed facilities and are expected to be the surgeon, anaesthetist, intensivist, dietician, physiotherapist and occupational therapist.

I am not aware of any other single book that will actually equip you to successfully respond to this challenge. You will find a lifetime's experience on cost-effective and ingenious practical ideas to aid the surgery, anaesthetic and after care of the burned child. The clear information also provides a mirror for knowing when you are not succeeding and when referral becomes essential.

The wonderful chapters on pain management, sedation and regional anaesthesia — highlighted by clear indications, dosages and precautions — takes care of another aspect of why so many medical providers shy away from treating burns and especially paediatric burns.

One of the final chapters deals with the rehabilitation perspectives of the burn survivor, the surgeon, therapist and parent. This provides some insight into the expectations, disappointments and challenges that are faced by

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## After the fire

**I**magine 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.

In February this year a young mother and her 16-month-old son received a Fire Recovery Kit to assist them in getting back on their feet after losing the home they shared with the young woman's parents.



A fire, caused by a candle overturning while they slept, destroyed their Gugulethu shack as well as that of a neighbour. Both mother and son

sustained burn injuries and the family were forced to move in with the maternal grandmother. Red Cross staff alerted Phoenix to their plight and the family received their kit on 2 February, shortly after the young boy was discharged from Red Cross Burns Unit.

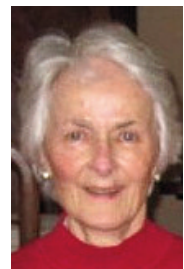
Phoenix Fire Recovery kits come in a sturdy 100-litre plastic container filled with a large number of basic household items and basic foodstuffs. Each Fire Recovery Kit costs approximately R2 000. Please support this by sponsoring a Fire Recovery Kit, or by inviting your church, school or work colleagues to contribute to one or more kits.

**For further information, please e-mail [admin@pbp.org.za](mailto:admin@pbp.org.za) or phone May on 082 932 9504**

## In Memoriam: Wilburgis Helbich-Poschacher (1929-2010)

Mrs Wilburgis Helbich-Poschacher, a member of Phoenix's Board of Advisors passed away in Vienna on 21 January 2010, after a long illness.

Mrs Helbich-Poschacher (81) was a Dame Grand Cross of the Order of Malta. She was the founder of Malteser AIDS Dienst, the AIDS relief organisation of the Order of Malta in Austria. As a regular visitor to South Africa, she was very much attuned to AIDS issues and also to the challenges faced by people living in informal settlements.



"When she learnt that we were planning to start a relief organisation to care for burnt children, she was immediately supportive, offering lots of guidance and advice," recalls Phoenix's President, Dr Peter Martinez. "She was a great supporter of the Phoenix Burns Project, and took an active interest in the development of the organisation. We will miss her and her lovely, warm personality very much. May she rest in peace."



**SAMWUMED staff with their cheque for Phoenix. Back row from left: Nicole Moodley-Klein (clinics), Firdous de Wet (claims), Dr Peter Martinez (Phoenix); Middle Row: Mandisa Ntsendwana (building & maintenance), Estrelita Losper (premiums), Nonceba Dyosi (HR), Lynn Erasmus (marketing & communications), May Bleeker-Phelan (Phoenix), Bathandwa Jimta (client services), Vuyisa Gebuza (finance), Loedt Zemanay (finance); seated: Shaun Hartnick (IT). Not pictured: Nelisa Ngqulana (communications)**

## Staff raises the gift of charity

**T**he staff of the SAMWUMED National Medical Scheme decided to forgo Christmas presents in 2009 and donated their funds to two charitable organisations instead. The Phoenix Burns Project and Sarah Fox Hospital were the recipients of their kind donation. Matching staff contributions, SAMWUMED doubled the sum donated to R5 000.

Lynn Erasmus, marketing manager, and eleven staff members from different SAMWUMED departments were present at the handover of a cheque. Phoenix president Dr Peter Martinez and coordinator May Bleeker-Phelan accepted the donation on behalf of Phoenix.

"Given the large numbers of children suffering from burns in the Western Cape each year, we are grateful for SAMWUMED's support, which will contribute to our efforts to help burn survivors cope and make a life for themselves," May said. "These funds will be put to good use within Phoenix's projects."

## Burns book review

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each group. This section brings home the meaning of treating the patient as a person with hopes and dreams and not merely a "burn case".

Since its first publication in 2006, this book has been extensively used as teaching aid for students, doctors, nurses and therapists. The manageable size, illustrations and tutorial-length chapters makes this book highly suitable for this purpose.

Burns happen no matter where you practice as a health care worker. In a developing country such as ours, poverty and poor housing conditions makes severe burns commonplace. In order for a severely burned child to survive and return to society, you have only once chance of giving the right treatment. No young doctor should start his or her career without this book as a companion.

This remarkable book has also brought burns, the Cinderella of surgery, back to her rightful place at the ball!

## FILL A TIN FOR CHANGE

**Y**our small change can make a big change in a burn survivor's life.

Through the generosity of DivFood, a division of Nampak, we employ collection tins as one of our fundraising activities.

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 May at 082 932 9504.



## We need a container

Phoenix is looking for a standard 6-metre shipping container to use for storage purposes. We have been offered a secure location to place such a container, if it is donated to us. We therefore appeal to our friends and readers to assist us to acquire a shipping container.

The cost of sourcing and delivering a container is in the region of R15 000. If any of our readers can assist with either sourcing or delivery of a container, please contact May at 082 932 9504 or by e-mail at [admin@pbp.org.za](mailto:admin@pbp.org.za)

## Thank you, generous donors

**We thank all individuals and organisations that made financial and/or material contributions to the Phoenix Burns Project during the period August 2009 to February 2010.**

We thank the following individuals for supporting our recent activities: T. Callaghan, R Douglas, Mr and Mrs C. Moerdyk, D. Olivier, E. Poulton, G. Ramplin, Mr and Mrs J Scott, J. Smit, T. Wessels, and D. Williams.

A special thank you to our regular individual donors and to our many anonymous donors.

**We gratefully acknowledge support from the following companies and organisations:**

Breadline Africa, Catholic Women's League, Catholic Church of Constantia, Cripps Sears and Partners, DivFood, Lions International, SAMWUMED National Medical Scheme, *The Southern Cross* newspaper, Swift Designs, and the management and customers of the Wool Boutique in Fish Hoek.

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## Chalk one up for peace

Children with burn injuries from Prince George Primary, Alexander Sinton, Khukhanyile Primary, Soyisile Primary, Rhodes High and Livingstone schools participated in the annual Chalk4Peace event on the steps of St George's Cathedral in Cape Town.

Each year, children from around the world participate in this event by making pavement/street drawings in chalk, and sending messages of peace to each other.

American artist John Aaron started this event several years ago. He contacted Archbishop Desmond Tutu in 2006 and South African children participated for the first time by drawing on the steps of St George's Cathedral. The event has been held at the cathedral each year since then. Last year, one of these drawings was voted the best in the world.

The 2009 event took place on Friday, 18 September. Phoenix's Michèle Twomey who coordinated the participation of the children with burn injuries in the event said: "The day was a great success — the children truly enjoyed themselves."



A learner takes part in the annual Chalk4Peace event outside St George's cathedral. Phoenix facilitated the participation of children with burn injuries in the event.

## Woolie wonders for recovering children

In support of Phoenix's Bear With Your Rehab project, The Wool Boutique in Fish Hoek acts as a collection point for soft toys knitted by nimble-handed crafters in the area.

Through the Bear With Your Rehab project, Phoenix supplies soft toys to children discharged from the Red Cross Children's Hospital Burns Unit. Toys are tagged with a message encouraging them to return for their vitally important follow-up treatments.

A constant source of toys is needed, and in



2008 Rose-Anne Douglas from The Wool Boutique kindly launched an appeal for her clientele to craft knitted teddies to boost supplies. Used toys were also donated to recycle into the project.

Situated on Fish Hoek Main Road, The Wool Boutique is ideally placed for a quick stop over by those in the "the deep south" who wish to contribute to the Bear With Your Rehab project.

Pay The Wool Boutique a visit at 5 Clifton Parade, Main Road, Fish Hoek (Opposite KFC). Tel: 021 782 6478.

## Be a Friend of Phoenix

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

At the moment, all work done by Phoenix is performed on a voluntary basis. However, 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 May at 082 932 9504 or e-mail [admin@pbp.org.za](mailto:admin@pbp.org.za), or download it in PDF format at [www.pbp.org.za/supportus.htm](http://www.pbp.org.za/supportus.htm)

