



The Torch



Edition #31

Ruby Crane

The little girl in this photograph is Ruby Crane.....from the age of 3 years old Ruby walked blinded soldiers around a rehabilitation centre called St Dunstans



Ruby leading a blind soldier by holding his hand

at Brighton in Sussex, where Rubys Father was the head gardener....she knew they were blinded and just returned from the first World War.....wandering in the grounds she would take ahold their hand and ask them where they wanted to go (individual workshops) and guide them there....people were so affected by little Ruby walking the blind soldiers around they would send her dolls and toys as a thank you for all the support she was giving to the men and women affected by sight loss.....little Ruby was rewarded with a long life as she passed away in her late nineties, in 2011.

Ruby recalled..... " I always remember how my little hand seemed so small in their big hands....they were so pleased to have a child come and talk to them....it was something different away from the monotonous grind of not being able to see things, I think. "

Ruby was so popular that she featured on the front page of the St Dunstans first Annual Report for 1915/1916 and later Flag Day emblems incorporated a similar design that featured Little Ruby.

Source: [Evaline Brueton Consulting Historian-Disability Pride month series](#)

Team SA's Para Athletes Illuminate the World Para Athletics Championships

by Lungile Matsuma | Jul 10, 2023

The 2023 World Para Athletics Championships kicked off with a grand opening ceremony in Paris, showcasing the spirit and determination of para-athletes from around the world.

One team that proudly marched into the Paralympic Athletics Championships was Team South Africa (SA), ready to compete at the highest level.

On the second day of the championships, Team SA showcased their skills and resilience across various events in the morning session from 9am to 12pm on Sunday, 9 July.



Anike Pretorius, Ian Fraser Graduate, won a silver medal in the rowing event

Louzanne Coetzee, who competed in the T11 1500m H1 event, delivered an impressive performance, finishing second in her heat. Coetzee's remarkable achievement set a positive tone for the South African team as they launched into the track events.

The 2023 World Para Athletics Championships, organized by the World Para Athletics subcommittee of the International Paralympic Committee, is the pinnacle of para-athletics.

Held in the prestigious Charl  ty Stadium, the event brings together athletes from around the globe to compete in various track and field disciplines.

As the championships continue, Team SA aims to bring home more remarkable victories and push the boundaries of what is possible in para-athletics.

With the exceptional performances of athletes like Louzanne Coetzee, Team SA is making its mark on the world stage, inspiring and uplifting fans, and supporters across South Africa. As the championships progress, the nation eagerly awaits the next thrilling moments and achievements by their para-athletes in Paris.

In an exhilarating evening session, Team South Africa showcased their exceptional talent and competitive spirit. Despite numerous challenges, the team's athletes put forth a remarkable performance.

In an unexpected turn of events, Maria Strong, hailing from the Australia Paralympics, achieved a stellar performance in the women's 100m T72 event, snatching the gold medal and the title of the new world champion. Magdalena Andruszkiewicz from Poland secured the silver medal, while Judith Tortosa Vila from Spain claimed the bronze. Maria Strong's remarkable achievement, especially considering her previous bronze medal at Tokyo 2020, highlights her versatility and determination to excel in different events.

The strong presence of Team South Africa was evident throughout the evening session, as their athletes propelled themselves to the forefront of world-class para-athletics. This success is a testament to their unwavering dedication and exceptional talent. The goal of promoting inclusion and diversity in the world of sports resonated with every step taken by Team South Africa's athletes.

Source: [GS Sport](#)

Visually impaired SU graduate refuses to pedal in sauerkraut

Author: Corporate Communication and Marketing / Korporatiewe Kommunikasie en Bemarking (Anél Lewis) Published: 29/03/2023

Despite facing numerous challenges – a visual impairment that cut short her career as a radiographer, ill health and then, last year, the loss of her home in the devastating floods in KwaZulu Natal – Mbali Ngcamu has been steadfast in her determination to make the world better and more inclusive.

Her thesis, titled “The effects of sauerkraut on human health, nutrition and food security: a review of the literature”, looks at ways in which cabbage can be processed locally to improve food security and nutrition.

Her desire to better understand issues affecting local communities has long been the motivation for her studies. When an eye condition prevented her from working as a radiographer, Ngcamu opened a bakery franchise to support her son and her siblings. Unfortunately, she was forced to close it because of the “oppressive and discriminatory” treatment of African women in business.



Mbali Ngcamu at her graduation

“I was not ready to give up,” she says. With a desire to help other women entrepreneurs, she completed a BA in Social Sciences and a BCom in Small Business Development. She then enrolled for a postgraduate Diploma in Disability Studies at the University of Cape Town to explore the challenges disabled women entrepreneurs face. Interested in ways in which businesses could accommodate more people with disabilities, she started an MPhil in Inclusive Innovation.

When diagnosed with a thyroid condition that almost killed her, Ngcamu decided to register for a Diploma in Nutrition to explore the role of food in optimal health. Realising that fermented foods have a significant role to play in healing the body, she registered a company that advocated for the elimination of foods negatively affecting the gut.

Again, a desire to know more set her on a new academic path. After experimenting on herself by using products brewed and fermented in her

kitchen, Ngcamu decided she wanted to study the impact of fermented food on the body. She enrolled at SU and narrowed her focus of study to look at how cabbage, which is grown widely in South Africa, can help eradicate malnutrition and food insecurity.

“By taking our own health seriously and into our own hands by choosing what we eat, we can one day have a country free of malnourished children with stunted growth,” she says.

Ngcamu’s impaired vision has been a constant challenge throughout her academic career. “I never expected the amount of reading I would need to do.” While she often struggled to explain to course convenors that she was unable to access information because of her eyesight, she experienced “amazing” support from SU’s Disability Unit. With the Unit’s support and funding, she had access to the appropriate software to convert articles into an accessible format.

Everything was on track for Ngcamu to complete her MSc, until the devastating floods in KwaZulu-Natal last year destroyed her home.

Not only did it leave her family without a roof over their heads, but her laptop with its assistive technology was also lost. “Only a visually impaired person will understand what it means to try and get by without the software.”

Ngcamu decided to relocate to the Western Cape to get the help she needed and finish her thesis. She credits her supervisor, Prof Gunnar Sigge, associate professor and Head of the Department of Food Science, as well as the staff at the Faculty of AgriSciences, including Julia Harper and Anneke Muller, for her success.

This indomitable entrepreneur and academic is far from nearing the end of her pursuit of knowledge. She set up a practice dealing with gut health, and she is working on a food bank project with the Technology Innovation Agency (in KwaZulu-Natal). Future plans include commencing with a PhD in 2024.

Photographer: Stefan Els

Source: [Stellenbosch University](#)

11 Ways to Feel Better Every Day



A woman practising a form of meditation.

Some days are easy breezy. You wake up in a great mood, your hair looks terrific and the sun is shining.

Other days you wake up and drink all the coffee, hate your clothes, stub your toe and wonder how you're going to get through the day. To reduce the latter and increase the former, take action! Happiness, like so many other things, must be cultivated and actively pursued. Here are eleven ways to up your happy factor. Try a couple and see how you feel.

Seek mental health care.

This is at the top of the list for a reason. We can talk all day about making gratitude lists or exercise, but if your brain chemistry is out of whack, or if you are experiencing a clinical depression or other mental illness, you need medical care. That may be talk therapy, or it may be medication, but getting treatment for a mental malady is just like getting treatment for a physical one. And just like you wouldn't try to eat fiber or apply sunscreen to heal a broken leg, you shouldn't suffer with a mood disorder or mental health issue, either, or try to treat it with tactics that can't work.

INTEGRIS Health offers free mental health screenings as well as comprehensive services for people of virtually every age. Whatever you're struggling with, we want to help you find the path back. Learn more [here](#).

Sleep enough.

Most of us spend one-quarter to one-third of our lives asleep. The amount of sleep we need varies slightly by individual, but the importance of healthy sleep habits is clear. Without enough quality sleep, our minds and bodies just don't work as well. In the short term, even after one or two terrible nights' sleep can affect your memory, judgement and reflexes. You're at greater risk of crashing your car. In the long term, sleep deprivation can cause weight gain, increase your risk of diabetes, elevate your blood pressure and weaken your immune system. Plus it will make you cranky.

There are two types of sleep, rapid eye-movement (REM) and non-REM, and four stages. We cycle through all four cycles multiple times a night.

Stage 1 non-REM sleep is a quick stage, just a few minutes. It takes from you to go from being awake to being asleep. This is relatively light sleep, and your heartbeat, breathing and eye movements slow down in this stage.

During Stage 2 non-REM sleep, things slow down even more as your body prepares to enter deeper sleep. Body temperature cools and movements stop. You spend most of your asleep time in this stage.

Stage 3 non-REM sleep is deep rest. You need Stage 3 sleep to feel refreshed. This is also when your body repairs your bones and tissue.

REM sleep happens several times per night, usually initially after about an hour and a half. You dream during REM sleep. Your eyes move back and forth, but your arms and legs are essentially paralyzed which keeps you from acting out your dreams. REM sleep increases brain activity and promotes learning.

Think you might have a sleep disorder? [Take our quiz](#), or contact INTEGRIS Sleep Disorders Centers, we are expertly trained in sleep medicine to evaluate test results and develop a treatment plan to resolve sleep related issues. Our board-certified sleep specialists and registered sleep technologists are here to help you get a better night's rest, beginning with state-of-the-art sleep studies, which are conducted on site.

A sleep study is a simple, outpatient procedure that monitors multiple aspects of your sleep and gives your physician critical information required to diagnose and treat sleep disorders. For your convenience, night and day evaluations are offered to meet your busy lifestyle.

[Eat plenty of fiber.](#)

Want to live longer, maintain a healthy weight, reduce your risk of certain cancers and lower your risk of heart disease? Also, not to be indelicate, but you'll have better bowel movements. So [eat more fiber](#). There are two kind: soluble and insoluble.

Soluble fiber dissolves in water and turns into a gel inside your colon, where it is digested. The gel blocks some of the fat and cholesterol you've eaten from being digested and it slows how fast you digest carbohydrates. That helps keep your blood sugar levels steady. Eating plenty of soluble fiber can also lower the risk of heart disease. Great sources of soluble fiber include black beans, brussel sprouts, asparagus, sweet potatoes, avocados, apples and carrots.

Insoluble fiber does not digest or dissolve, it just cruises through your digestive tract picking, um, material up along the way, which you then eliminate when you poop. Your mom might have called insoluble fiber 'roughage.' It keeps you feeling fuller longer, which allows you to eat less. This is also the stuff that helps you avoid or treat constipation, by moving your digestion along. Plenty of insoluble fiber can be found in foods like cauliflower, dark leafy greens like spinach or kale, nuts, peas, pears or lentils.

Go outside.

Even 20 minutes spent outside, in your yard, a park or on a walk, [can change your mood](#) for the better. Studies have shown that stepping outside lowers stress, heart rate and blood pressure. It can boost creativity and optimism. Best of all? It's free, and right outside your door.

Exercise.

Walk, bike, run, swim, play Bocce ball, dance or try some yoga. Get moving and you'll release feel-good hormones AKA endorphins, which your body will literally make for you any time you ask it to by exercising.

Do something creative.

Daily creativity is great for your mood and sense of wellbeing. I'm not saying you have to write the great American novel or paint a mural, although you're welcome to! Or you could learn to knit, take up cooking, sing a song or doodle a little picture. Gather pretty leaves and make a collage. You get the idea.

Practice a little escapism.

Sometimes you just need to tune out and ignore all of the 'shoulds' in your life. Turn your to-do list face down and think about something totally different. This is what trashy novels read in the tub, Hallmark movies and escapist podcasts like [NPR's Tiny Desk Concerts](#) were made for!

Help someone.

Whether you volunteer regularly or help your elderly neighbor take his trash out, doing for others is a known, studied, powerful way to increase your life satisfaction, boost happiness, find meaning and connect. For a quick boost, write someone a thank-you note or a quick hello, or pay for the coffee of the person in the drive-through line behind you. [Kindness](#) is also incredibly contagious! It creates a virtuous circle. Doing good/giving makes us happy, which makes us want to do/give more, which makes us happier.

Pet a dog (or cat).

[Interacting with animals](#) can raise our oxytocin levels, calm us down, lower our blood pressure and make us feel loved. Author and animal expert Karen Winegar sums it up beautifully: "The human-animal bond bypasses the intellect and goes straight to the heart and emotions and nurtures us in ways that nothing else can."

Meditate.

What if I told you that if you commit to meditating 5-10 minutes a day on most days you'll feel calmer, more focused and happier? Can I guarantee it? No. Almost, though. For the vast majority of people who try it, the practice of meditation works. Meditation requires no equipment and it's free to all. People notice short-term benefits, including improved circulation, less anxiety and stress, lower blood pressure and blood cortisol levels, increased feelings of well-being and peace... even bliss! We've assembled a terrific [guide to starting a meditation practice](#).

Laugh.

In the short term, cracking up with your bestie or rewatching that hilarious scene can ease tension, release a burst of feel-good hormones, AKA endorphins and stimulate your heart and lungs. In the longer term, [laughter](#) can give your immune system a boost. When you're happy, your body releases stress and illness-fighting neuropeptides. Check out Rotten Tomatoes' "[150 Essential Comedy Movies to Watch Now](#)" and get your giggle on.

Source: [Integris Health](#)

Ian Fraser Students 2023



Lonwaba, a 26-year-old educational assistant at the Athlone School for The Blind, aspires to pursue a PhD in Education with a focus on inclusive education. His main motivation stems from the scarcity of individuals with disabilities in this field.

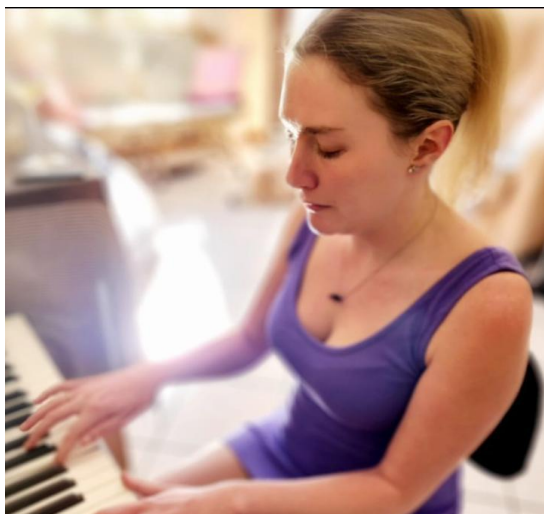
Additionally, he aims to shed light on the educational obstacles faced by learners with disabilities, an area that lacks comprehensive literature, especially within the South African context.

Lonwaba

Lonwaba perceives inclusive education as a transformative shift in mindset, transcending conventional perceptions of disability and advocating for their integration into society. By attaining this degree, he hopes to foster social acceptance and deepen understanding of the world of disabled individuals.

Beyond his professional pursuits, Lonwaba finds great joy in reading, writing, and playing video games. He holds honesty, integrity, and inclusivity in high regard.

Lilley, a 30-year-old writer employed full-time at a learning technology consultancy, also runs her own side business providing counselling, leadership coaching, diversity and inclusion consulting, and other HR-related services. Her ultimate goal is to obtain a master's degree in clinical psychology. She possesses an unwavering fascination with the complexities of the human mind and is driven by a deep passion for aiding individuals in navigating life's challenges and flourishing.



Lilley playing the piano

Through her ongoing studies, Lilley aims to make meaningful contributions to the field of Disability Studies.

One factor influencing her choice of course is her supervisor, a Clinical Psychologist who can provide a strong recommendation when she applies for her master's degree in clinical psychology. Given the highly competitive nature of the field, having an additional master's degree enhances her prospects.

Furthermore, Lilley's pursuit of a master's degree in clinical psychology will shed light on the detrimental impact of specific types of harmful discourses prevalent in schools for blind and visually impaired students. By exploring how these discourses can shape individuals' internalized identities and behaviours in later life, she will be better equipped to advocate for change.

Birthday Wishes



Jeremy Opperman with his white cane

Long Serving Director of St Dunstan's, **Jeremy Opperman** celebrated a very special birthday in June. We wish him many more happy and healthy years ahead.



Faustina and her Mom, Angelina



Faustina on her 21st birthday party

Faustina recently celebrated her 21st birthday. Here she is with her Mom, Angelina. We would like to wish her well for the future. May she continue to work towards all of her life goals and make us proud.