

# Charity kids deliver special letter for JZ

HANTI OTTO

A SPECIAL package awaits President Jacob Zuma at his office at the Union Buildings in Pretoria.

A letter was hand-delivered by burn survivors from the Children of Fire charity, asking him to help a friend whose heart has always been open to them.

Each year the charity takes a group of young survivors to the Drakensberg for a challenge that is about fun but also lets them build their self-esteem.

On these trips they have met the King of the Amangwane Royal Jam Project to curb the 95 percent unemployment in this area of the central Berg.

However, this ambitious plan needs funds, and they now hope the president may be able to help.

On Wednesday Sizwe Hlope, 8, Fursy Mugobe, 19, from the DRC, Mitta Lebaka, 20, Doreen Msimanga, 12, Selamawit Birhanu, 20, from Ethiopia, Max Ma, 15, and Hao-Ting Chang, 16, both from Taiwan, and Seif Juballah, 19, from Tunisia, arrived at the Union Buildings to deliver the package. They were met by Melisizwe Blackie from the president's office.

"He promised to deliver the letter today, so we hope Mr Zuma receives it soon. The king is a very nice chief.

"He has helped us, so we are now helping him," Lebaka said.

The South Africans in the group also explained the importance of the Union Buildings to their foreign visitors. Ma and Chang came to South Africa for the Drakensberg trip.

Ma was badly burnt when he was a toddler, while Chang was burnt on his arms and hands.

Juballah lost his legs after 36 000 volts shot through his body a year



Burn survivors from the Children of Fire charity (from left), Sizwe Hlope with Fursy Mugobe from the DRC; Mitta Lebaka, Doreen Msimanga (second from right) and Selamawit Birhanu (right) from Ethiopia. At the back are Max Ma and Hao-Ting Chang, both from Taiwan, and Seif Juballah from Tunisia during their visit to the Union Buildings.

PICTURE: MASI LOSI

ago. Bronwen Jones of the Children of Fire said he had been sitting on his parents' balcony in Tunis when an electrical wire blew in the wind while he was talking on a cellphone.

Juballah was in a coma for a month. Both his lower legs had to be amputated. As part of his rehabilitation he joined the others on their Drakensberg outreach.

Mugobe, who was burnt in a traffic accident, said he would love to return to South Africa for surgery on his hand and eyelid.

Msimanga said it was her first

time at the Union Buildings.

She is from the Free State, but she could not remember the veld fire that scorched her pretty face years ago.

# Applause as predictions come true

BOTHO MOLOSANKWE

A MENTALIST who on Tuesday predicted yesterday's headlines in three local dailies surprised everyone at the Jacaranda FM studios when he got them right.

There was a hush as the headlines were read out on Darren Scott's breakfast show from The Star, Beeld and The Citizen and thunderous applause as it turned out they corresponded with what Larry Soffer had written down earlier in the week.

This was locked away. The 26-year-old Capetonian revealed that even though he had been nervous, he had no doubt about what was going to happen.

His belief, knowing and having no doubt about what was going to happen made things better.

Soffer said he used to have healing abilities; he would touch people and they would be cured. But, he said, he did not do that any more. He said his job was also guided by ethics and morals and that there were some things he would never do, like giving people lottery numbers.

However, Soffer was expected to predict Lotto numbers in one of the shows lined up in Joburg soon.

# Kunene trial postponed after lawyer's no-show

SAPA

CONVICTED information technology specialist Muziwendoda Kunene appeared briefly in the Pretoria Regional Court yesterday.

His case was postponed to November 27 to enable his lawyer Riaan Naude to be in court.

Naude was not in court because

his car had been broken into.

Kunene, appearing on charges of attempted murder and defeating the ends of justice, said he was concerned that he had not consulted his attorney properly.

"I want to place on record that I have not been assisted by the legal aid. It is nine months now and I have not given instruction to my attorney," he said, adding he would not be ready when the trial started.

The charges against him stem from a November, 2007, incident in which he allegedly shot himself in the hand then claimed he was shot for giving information to newspapers. He also allegedly shot his son Msebenziwenkosi in the same month to prevent him from testifying against him in a murder case in Bloemfontein.

Kunene has since been convicted and sentenced for the murder of estate agent Lynne Hume. He was acquitted of fraud charges in a hoax e-mail case in January.

Kunene arrived at court escorted by eight heavily armed correctional services officers.

International, Charles de Gaulle in Paris, Moscow Domodedovo, Sao Paulo Guarulhos in Brazil and OR Tambo International.

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El Bez in a statement released yesterday. About 63.7 percent of the 2193 passengers questioned chose to book their tickets online. The top four aspects passengers want to change are security screening, the waiting period before flight departure, in-flight experience and waiting for checked baggage on arrival. - Sapa

# Crime causing high blood pressure

A WITS University study has found that neighbourhood crime and household amenities can have a negative effect on teenagers' blood pressure.

"The bottom line is that targeting crime reduction, helping communities to feel protected from crime, ensuring good indoor sanitation facilities and improving household wealth from infancy to adolescence could improve adolescent systolic (heart contraction) blood pressure in similar environments," says Wits Professor John Pettifor, a researcher on the study.

The study reveals that adolescents in poorer households are at greater risk of increased systolic blood pressure as well as systolic

prehypertension than their counterparts enjoying better socio-economic status in society.

It further determines that high crime levels or a lack of neighbourhood crime prevention could make healthy lifestyle behaviours, like physical activity, more difficult, which could have negative effects for blood pressure.

It is also probable that the effect of such neighbourhoods on blood pressure could be mediated through stress, for example through increased cortisol secretion, which increases the risk of higher blood pressure.

The study also reveals that it is possible that poor sanitation facilities result in a high risk environment for infections, like diar-

rhoea. Conducted by Professor Pettifor and Dr Shane Norris, of Wits University, and their counterparts,

Professor Noël Cameron, Dr Paula Griffiths and Dr Zoë Sheppard, of Loughborough University, the Bone Health cohort, a sub-cohort of the Birth to Twenty study, is the first of its kind in that it uses a longitudinal approach in the South African context to show these associations.

Birth to Twenty, colloquially nicknamed Mandela's Children, is the largest and longest running study of child and adolescent health and development in Africa and one of the few large-scale longitudinal studies in the world. - Sapa

# Self-service check-in popular at OR Tambo

AN INTERNATIONAL air travel survey has shown a 20 percent growth in self-service check-ins over the past year at six major international airports, including OR Tambo in Joburg.

The survey, conducted by airport IT provider Sita, showed an increase in online habits at Hartsfield-Jackson airport in Atlanta, Mumbai

International, Charles de Gaulle in Paris, Moscow Domodedovo, Sao Paulo Guarulhos in Brazil and OR Tambo International.

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