

# Hlumelo & Friends are Guarded with Honour at the Annual Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital Day of Remembrance Service

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The joy of seeing the "pretty flowers" voiced by a young boy, Hlumelo (aged 4), was also expressed by his friends Janu, Jesse and Alake at the annual Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital Day of Remembrance service held on 11 November 2015.

The youngsters from the Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital staff crèche, patients from the wards, staff and parents were joined by World War 2 Veterans Bam Hughes (95) and Richard Lawrenson (89), and members of the public. Everyone was moved by the emotional ceremony and the music.

The Izivunguvungu Band from Simon's Town under the direction of Cdr Mike Oldham, along with the Cape Field Artillery Pipes and Drums provided the musical accompaniment. One of the Izivunguvungu band members, Lee (aged 11), remarked that it was "the stories" and "the words of the speakers" that made a big impression on her.



Children from the Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital staff crèche lay flowers at the statue of Peter Pan, the eternal child

The Hospital, which is known as a centre of excellence for pioneering research and treatment of childhood diseases, is a national and international resource.

An exemplar is Sister Jane Booth, who has 36 years experience at the hospital and has been honoured with a ministerial award for the Breatheasy Programme. This programme assists children who have undergone tracheotomies, training their parents to manage them at home.

As aptly summarised by Roxy Mitchell, Head of Communications for the Children's Hospital Trust, "One day in hospital is one day less of Childhood".

The concept of a children's hospital in Cape Town was first considered by Mr Vyvan Watson, a World War 1 veteran, after his son had passed away from diphtheria at the age of 4 in 1923. As the chairman of the Cape Red Cross Society, his dream became a reality after World War 2 when South African soldiers who had been moved by the plight of war-torn children wanted to erect a living memorial in remembrance of their fallen compatriots.



World War II Veterans in Attendance



Cdr (Ret) Mike Oldham plays the Last Post and Reveille



Veterans in Attendance





**Sister Jane Booth founder of the Breatheasy programme at the Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital**

Many ex-servicemen voluntarily donated two day's pay towards this ideal; the funds held in trust by the SA Red Cross Society who supplemented them with a massive community fundraising appeal and Government funding making up the balance. The hospital was completed and opened its doors in June 1956.

In 1994 The Children's Hospital Trust was founded to ensure that the hospital and patients continued to be supported in the face of Government health spending cuts. Over the past 21 years the Trust has funded numerous capital projects at the Hospital to ensure that the facilities are continuously improved and updated. Research and staff training are also funded by the Trust.

The Children's Hospital Trust has recently embarked on one of its most ambitious fundraising drives to date. The bold goal is to raise R90 million to expand and upgrade the Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital Paediatric ICU. Children in need of specialised critical care are referred from all over the African continent, yet this vital unit only has 22 of the 26 ICU beds set aside for children across public and private sectors in the Western Cape Province of South Africa.

At the Day of Remembrance ceremony, the Hospital Chaplain Rev Lynn Pedersen, defined the difference between "peace-keeping" and "peace-making operations;" the latter being particularly relevant to the Hospital's mission to help vulnerable and sick children.

"Blessed are the peace makers – the children of God.

For ALL God's children, God give Peace, ask for forgiveness for greed, anger and hatred. May the Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital continue to do good work. Nkosi sikelele' iAfrika, guard her children."

Thank you to the Children's Hospital Trust staff for arranging this moving and significant annual Day of Remembrance event and to the Cape Town Rifles (Dukes), Izivunguvungu band, ex-servicemen and women, especially the MOTHS / MOTHWAS for attending.

In the footsteps of those far-sighted WW2 ex-servicemen who left their legacy for a better future, imagine if all active citizens and servicemen donated two day's pay towards the Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital to keep the dream alive.

Every active citizen should do their duty for our children now and into the future. Leaving a bequest in your will to the Children's Hospital Trust is just one way that this can be realised.



**Guard of Honour at the Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital 2015 Day of Remembrance ceremony**



To make a donation to the Children's Hospital Trust or to discuss leaving a bequest, contact Liz Linsell at +27-21-686-7860, [liz.linsell@chtrust.org.za](mailto:liz.linsell@chtrust.org.za) or for more details see [www.childrenshospitaltrust.org.za](http://www.childrenshospitaltrust.org.za).

## INTERESTING FACTS

Mr Vyvyan Watson

- The World War I veteran who first had the concept of a Children's Hospital in South Africa. This was realised after World War 2 when soldiers returning from the theatres of the war had been moved by the plight of war torn children and wanted to erect a living memorial.
- He chaired the Red Cross building committee and was president of the South African Red Cross Society in the 1940's and 1950's whilst the hospital was built.
- His daughter was present at the service and laid a wreath on behalf of his family.
- A statue in memory of his son, Peter, who died of diphtheria before there was any children's hospital was erected in front of the hospital. His legacy has remained through this statue and through his sister, Clemmie Hannay-Robertson who is also a volunteer at the hospital.

The children

- The children who attended the service were all from the hospital crèche. A service provided so that their parents can give their full attention to the patients under their care.
- The children in the wards may not have seen the service, however would have heard to beautiful music played.

Veterans who attended.

- Bam Hughes (95) & Richard Lawrenson (89) served in World War 2 and represented those who were instrumental in founding the hospital.
- In attendance were many other veterans, many whom had served in other theatres of conflict since then.

### ***With acknowledgement for details provided:***

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