

## Newsletter - December 2005

### From your CapeAble Team

Russell, Mark W, Mark B, Estelle (and not forgetting Purdy who has attended most of Russell's meetings)

### **RECOGNISED STATISTICS**

There is a large body of legislation such as the Employment Equity Act, the Labour Relations Act and the Basic Bill of Rights in the Constitution that ensures that the 10% of our population that is regarded as disabled, is afforded equal opportunities in our economy. This statistic covers physical, mental and visual disabilities and is quoted widely. And we are well positioned to facilitate the inclusion of this community in your organisation through training and consultation.

### **PROMOTIONAL TRAINING WORKSHOP**

Our Disability Etiquette Skills training course was initially developed for the hospitality industry but it also has a place across all industries. A promotional workshop was held during November 2005 with a number of managers from various corporations. These managers attended our workshop to assess the value of this course in the business sector that they represent. Without exception, all participants enjoyed and learnt from the experience, and have booked places for their staff in the New Year.

Service excellence standard is a common measure across all business sectors. Almost everywhere you go today, the first persons to meet and greet you are security personnel. This specialty placement is usually out-sourced and not an employee of the company that you are visiting. Even the sales assistant in a department store needs skills to serve a person with a disability correctly. Our course has been designed to upskill anybody to provide improved service delivery to disabled patrons.

### **Feedback from our guest "speaker"**

*"I felt the workshop helps people understand and learn some of the daily challenges faced by people with disabilities. It is important when Deaf Tourists visit that the tour guides communicate slowly, face to face in order for them to be able to lip-read and understand what is being said. Simple sign language is also necessary as some deaf are not able to follow the lip reading. Mark's idea re the earplugs to show hearing people what it feels like to be deaf, was excellent. Perhaps next time all the hearing people could wear them and only use sign language to communicate during the workshop. Working in small groups made it easy to follow what was being said. It would be a good idea to have regular workshops and for the tour guides to be taught simple sign language which is used universally. I look forward to the next workshop."*- Douglas de Wet has 100% loss of hearing and uses sign language and lip reading to communicate. He addressed our group of delegates on basic tips to communicate to people with hearing impairment.

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### **HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT FORUM OF THE WESTERN CAPE**

The Boland Public Health Advisory Board invited us to address the forum of the Environmental Health Officers on the topic of the basic building standards relating to accessibility. Part of their responsibility is to certify establishments from construction on an on-going basis and they want to include accessibility to their evaluation function.

Russell presented the background to the building regulations and used his personal experiences as case studies to reflect some of the basic standards.

### **SAFM**

Rehana Dada, presenter of the Durban After Dark Travel Slots on SAFM interviewed Russell to find out more about the options available to people with disabilities when they travel to Cape Town. The discussion included the efforts that are being made by some of the more popular sites to accommodate the many visitors (such as Table Mountain and Robben Island) as well as the operators such as Eco Access, Endeavour Safaris and Flamingo Tours who specialise in catering for the needs of people with disabilities.

The topic of accessibility has been hotly debated as schools have also been brought into the debate during International Inclusion Week. This focuses on including children with special needs into neighbourhood schools where they can be educated alongside their peers.

### **UNIVERSAL ACCESS**

A new grading classification which will be introduced by The Grading Council of South Africa is in its final stages of approval. It has been fully endorsed by the mobility and vision impaired organisations and awaits comment from the hearing-impaired sector.

In the meantime, the Assessors at Cape Town Routes Unlimited have been through our Assessors training course which deals with legislative minimum specifications as well as an on-site case study.

Our first group of people with disabilities have also been on this course with the view to being able to assist the Grading Council Assessors when evaluating facilities for the new Universal Access classification.

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