

## **RuReSA Rural Rehabilitation Health Worker of the Year 2014: Jabu Ndlovu**

Jabu Ndlovu started her tireless career in occupational therapy at Manguzi hospital in 1990. One of 5 graduates from Medunsa, her Head of Department left her with a challenge on graduation day: 'If you do nothing else, ensure that you have helped at least one person each day.' Jabu has strived- and managed- to do that and more since embarking on her professional journey. Similar to the Rural Doctor of the Year, Jabu's impact has extended beyond her clinical capabilities. She remains a mentor and a mother-figure to so many health care workers across the professions and is of excellent standing within the community. She continues to inspire young and old, establishing values within the ever-changing workforce and instilling trust in all those that work with her.



Jabu also continues to contribute towards addressing the challenges that rehabilitation professionals and their clients experience in providing and accessing quality rehab services in far flung rural areas at local, district, provincial and national level. At age 50, her major family responsibilities completed, and in celebration of her new found time for herself, she embarked on her Masters in Public Health. In doing this, she has set an example for all, of the need for continuous learning at all stages of one's career. At the same time, she is equipping herself to translate her extensive clinical and managerial experience into invaluable input at a national and provincial health policy level. At a moment in our country when the health system is seeing massive and exciting changes, Jabu epitomizes the kind of leadership, attitudes and skills needed for the rehabilitation field to take its place in the future vision of "health for all".

Jabu is currently involved in the campaign (recently initiated by the rural health partners, i.e. RuDASA, RuReSA and RHAP with PACASA, Section 27, TAC and others) to establish and strengthen the provision of mental health care services in rural areas. She is adamant that whatever systems are proposed, they should be based on a tried and tested practical model. For this reason she remains fully involved in the clinical implementation of mental health care services at Manguzi Hospital as well as providing valuable input at policy level debates. She has also continued to strengthen the health-community interface at Manguzi hospital through close working relationship with the community health workers and community support groups, further strengthening the various rehabilitation programs and interventions in the area. This kind of partnership of health services with communities is at the heart of the NDOH's Primary Health Care Re-engineering strategy, but few sites to date can show the kind of dedication and success in this, as displayed under Jabu's leadership.

RuReSA is proud to award the first ever Rural Rehabilitation Health Worker of the Year 2014 award to Jabu Ndlovu, who, in true humble fashion, received it by trying to share it with everyone else that she has ever worked with.