



## The Association for Dietetics in South Africa supports financially disadvantaged students

The Association for Dietetics in South Africa (ADSA) Bursary Scheme was launched in 2008 in order to support academically strong dietetics students from financially disadvantaged backgrounds. The scheme aims to identify students who have already embarked upon a dietetics degree and have demonstrated academic excellence, and a passion for nutrition and community upliftment in their letters of motivation. The recipient of the bursary will continue his or her degree without the stress of the financial burden that may complicate education for many. The student is supported for the remaining years of study.

It is sad when academically bright students are forced to terminate their studies because of lack of financial aid. Poverty and the inability of students to continue studying when faced with escalating fees and the demands of higher education make the South African graduation rate one of the lowest in the world. According to the National Plan for Higher Education (NPHE) compiled by the Department of Education in 2001, South Africa's graduation rate is 15%. It is against such a background that the ADSA Bursary Scheme was launched.

In 2008, Sindisiwa Qungani from the University of the Western Cape was awarded the bursary. Sindisiwa graduated last year, and is currently completing her community service at the Kwamhlanga Hospital in Mpumalanga. Sindisiwa's graduation was the culmination of hard work and sacrifice, and a realisation of the objective of the



Sindisiwa at her graduation

bursary scheme. In thanking ADSA for the bursary, she reiterated that without the bursary from ADSA, her dream of becoming a dietitian might not have been realised.

This year, after assessing 18 deserving applications, the decision was taken to award the bursary to Sibulele Pango, also from the University of the Western Cape. Sibulele, who hails from the Eastern Cape, has excelled academically despite enduring difficult personal circumstances.

Currently her favourite module is community nutrition. Sibulele's dream is to transform the lives of people who need it the most. ADSA will be monitoring and supporting Sibulele over the next few years.

Former President Nelson Mandela once said: "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." Similarly we hope that this bursary scheme will contribute to creating dietitians who will make positive changes in nutrition and the field of dietetics.



## NSSA newsbits

The **Nutrition Society of South Africa (NSSA) Eastern branch** (based in KwaZulu-Natal) with chairperson Dr Carin Napier planned an event for 23 August at the Durban University of Technology. The speakers were Ms Zaynab Essack, a project researcher of the HIV/AIDS Vaccines Ethics Group at the University of Kwazulu-Natal and the South African Research Ethics Training Initiative, who presented on "Conducting ethical research in developing country contexts" and Carol Browne, dietitian and nutritionist, with a presentation about the development of the South African Food Guide.

A new item on the NSSA website is a bimonthly update on a nutrition topic, according to the National Health Calendar. We will be regularly publishing new information accessible via the "Useful Information" menu on the left side of the web page. June was Youth Month and Dr Anniza de Villiers posted an update entitled "Changing children's eating behaviour through the school food and nutrition environment." During August the focus is on breastfeeding and a link to International Breastfeeding Week will be posted.