

Letter from the editor

It's unbelievable how swiftly this year has gone by. We are on the brink of entering spring and getting ready to witness what Mother Nature has to offer.

We at AMS are also experiencing exciting and new developments. In this issue we feature some of our partnerships; we have a look into some specialised fields, thank some of our donors and much more.

Enjoy this edition and all the beautiful things life has to offer.

Funder News



Ms Ruth Lewin (Head: Corporate Sustainability Discovery) handed over an Advanced Life Support Jump bag valued at R2 000 to Ashwin Krishna (Operations Manager) and Andre Oliphant (Cape Town Base Manager) as a gesture of goodwill to mark Discovery's donation of R350 000 to the AMS. The grant is a contribution towards the purchasing of medical equipment in the Western Cape. In order to maintain the expansion of our services the AMS relies on funding such as this for medical/aviation equipment and infrastructure development as well as other associated sponsorships to improve the service.



AMS Management and the Western Cape Metro Emergency Medical Services with the Discovery Team.



From left to right: Farhaad Haffejee (AMS Corporate Development Manager) and Ruth Lewin (Head: Corporate Sustainability Discovery) looks on while Dr Cleve Robertson (Head of the Western Cape Metro Emergency Medical Services) 'examines' the gift.

We thank you for helping us to continue to provide efficient and effective healthcare to all those in need.

A day in the life of an AMS hoist operator...



Andre Oliphant has been an AMS hoist operator for eight years. When asked what it takes to be a hoist operator here's what he had to say:

Before being considered the candidate has to be in good health (i.e. good eye sight, hearing and fitness levels).

Day 1 training kicks off by doing a full day of ground school, teaching the trainee to 'patter' (a term used to guide the pilot into position above the incident). The trainee is briefed on emergency procedures, safe working boundaries, lifting capability of rescue hoist and cargo sling.

Issue 3 of 2010

Relocation of AMS Durban Office

Please note that our Durban office has moved from Durban International to the new King Shaka Airport. They can be reached on: 086 11 63729.

Great partnerships mean great service...

The AMS Cape Town operation makes use of medical crew members from the Western Cape Metro Emergency Medical Services to transfer patients from referring facilities.

When a request for a patient transfer is submitted to the AMS National Operations Centre (NOC) a call has to be made to the Metro Control Centre to identify flight crew and dispatch them to the AMS Cape Town base. **This often resulted in delays for take-off due to the fact that the assigned crew member may be busy on a mission.**

A plan was put in place to reduce take-off time of the AMS fixed wing aircraft and in so doing reach patients sooner. Following discussions with Metro, flight crew was identified and are now based at AMS Cape Town base on a two month rotation basis. A Metro ambulance has now been placed at the Cape Town base on a permanent basis for use by the dedicated Metro flight crew. This will reduce delays in waiting periods for ambulances to transport patients to and from the airport.

The latest statistics shows that take-off times has reduced significantly and the service provided to patients has also been improved due to the fact that we can now give daily feedback, training and advice to the flight crew. Their two-month placement at AMS also improves their knowledge and skills on our equipment resulting in better use and care of it. **Having the same crew, improved communications between the NOC and Metro crew resulting in better working relations. This makes them all feel part of the proud AMS family.**

We are very pleased with this arrangement and thank the Western Cape Metro Emergency Medical Services for their commitment in ensuring the best healthcare is provided to the community.

Woman's month focus



August being woman's month, we paid special tribute to all the wonderful women in our country for their contribution to society. We have great women working for AMS, here's a short look into the life of one of our female rotor wing pilots.

Durban's Shelley Gould may be blonde, blue-eyed and petite, but in the world of aviation, size doesn't matter and looks don't count - its experience and dedication that prove your worth as a pilot.

[Click Here](#) to view the full article that was published in Get It Magazine. Journalist & Photographer Peter Upfold

"Remember, Ginger Rogers did everything Fred Astaire did, but backwards and in

Day 2 is actual flight training where the trainee gets to lift a dead weight attached to a rope suspended from the cargo slings – this flying constitutes about 5 hours.

Day 3 the trainee is taught how to patter the aircraft into confined landing zones, do single skid landings, insert a weighted pole attached to a 20m line into a 200l drum (4-5 hours of flying).

Day 4 the trainee starts hoisting rescuers into and out of the aircraft and practices hoisting the stretcher without a patient. (3-4 hours flying time)

Day 5 the trainee does simulated rescues in mountainous terrain, hoisting actual rescuers and patients. It also includes sea rescue exercises, deploying rescuers into the sea and retrieving them by means of a static (short haul) line (flying time 4-5 hours).

Total flying time allocated is 18hours in order to be evaluated and signed out as a hoist operator. If the trainee is deemed competent by the Hoist Operator Instructor and duty pilot he/she is signed out as a competent hoist operator. For the first six months, a two monthly proficiency check is done at simulated rescue exercises after which a six monthly proficiency check is conducted ensuring that all hoist operators are current and operating safely within AMS Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's).

When asked what he mostly enjoys about being a hoist operator Andre said "There are no grey areas in hoist operating with no margin for errors. You either conduct a safe rescue or you make an alternate safe plan." He jokingly added the great part about being a hoist operator is that you get to tell the pilot how to fly the aircraft.

KZN outreach service

Joseph Smith is a final year medical student at Cambridge University. Here's what he had to say about his experience of the Flying doctor and rural health outreach programme in KZN.



Destination: Edendale hospital Pietermaritzburg (PMB), KwaZulu - Natal, South Africa. Working with the Air Mercy Service Community Outreach Programme.

I arrived in Pietermaritzburg South Africa on the 6th June 2010. Doctor Robert Caldwell (Doc) was my initial contact and through Doc I was introduced to the General Medicine Department at Edendale hospital in PMB. I was assigned various interns to shadow and it was recommended I spend my time on the wards, in clinic and in the various Out-Patients Departments. However, it was stressed by the interns that if I really needed to find out what was going on both clinically and socially I should go to the tea-room on the second floor. This last piece of advice was to prove very useful as it was through conversations I had with doctors in the tea-room that I was able to organise most of my hospital-based clinical work. I was invited to various clinics, surgeries and ward rounds and home visits. Although I was assigned to General Medicine I was not restricted in my access to all other departments of the hospital, and the keys to unlocking this access lay in the introductions and conversations I would have with various doctors in the tea-room.

Doc invited me to his Community Outreach clinics which he attended on a twice weekly basis (Tuesday and Thursday). I would meet Doc at 7.30am in PMB airport and we would fly in the AMS PC 12 to Outreach clinics around the region of KwaZulu-Natal. We would land at our destination airstrip (usually consisting of a dirt track and a hut made of corrugated steel), and then be driven to the local hospital/clinic where we would do a morning ward-round and/or a clinic. Usually we would hold a cardiac clinic as Doc's expertise was cardiology, but this was not a strict rule. These hospitals were run by a skeleton staff of doctors and nurses with limited resources and too many patients. The Outreach visits were vital in bolstering the medical care provided at the various clinics and hospitals that Doc and I attended. Often Doc would not only hold a clinic and ward round where he would see 20-30 patients but also find time to teach junior staff and students alike. Places we visited in KwaZulu-Natal included, Newcastle, Dundee, Estcourt, Vryheid and Kokstad.

If I were to spend a lifetime organising the perfect medical elective I really do not think I could have looked much further than PMB, South Africa. At Edendale hospital I was given access to any department I wanted from Paediatrics to General Medicine. This gave me the opportunity to be exposed to the coal face of clinical medicine and surgery at Edendale hospital. The youngest patient I saw was a 3 week old girl with diarrhoea and vomiting and the oldest a 92 year old man with prostate trouble. Interestingly, the most common 'stand alone' cause for admission in Paediatrics at Edendale was Diabetic Ketoacidosis (DKA), along with chronic heart failure/cardiomegaly.

high heels." ~ Faith Whittlesey

Soft toys for our little patients



Joan Matzner getting ready to load the soft toys into the AMS Avanza.

The Cape Jewish Seniors Association has been actively knitting and stuffing toys for AMS. These soft toys are given to our little patients providing them with support and comfort while on their journey.

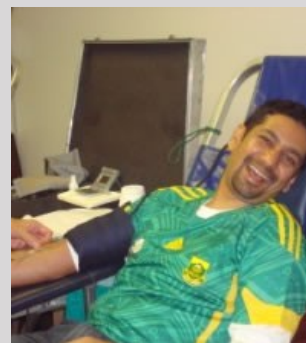
We fly a large number of critically ill neonates infants and children between 2 and 16 years old. The vast majority of these neo-natal, infants and children are from communities in need. Jewish senior member, Joan Matzner and several other members spends their time knitting these toys, "Having to be busy keeps me young and I absolutely love putting a smile on children's faces" said Joan.

The Cape Jewish Seniors Association continues to show their support by helping impoverished children. AMS is also grateful for having the Cape Jewish Seniors Association share in our mission in changing lives and saving lives.

Every drop counts

The AMS regularly holds blood clinics at the Head Office at Cape Town International Airport in support of the Western Province Blood Transfusion Services. At the recent blood clinic 12 units of blood were collected and this helped to save 36 lives. The Western Cape collects around 700 units of blood from donors per day to keep stock levels in check.

For more information on blood donation visit www.wpblood.org.za



Caption: Farhaad Haffeejee (Corporate Development Manager) shares a laugh while donating blood.

Staff Movement

New Appointments



Marilise Boshoff
Service Coordinator
Cape Town

Lorna Smith

In the time I spent helping on the Outreach program it was obvious that the AMS Flying Doctor and Community Outreach Programme in partnership with the KZN Department of Health makes a tremendous difference in improving healthcare by providing specialist services, transport of patients and training of medical personnel in outlying areas of South Africa that have poor access to health care. Also, whilst I was there I also observed that the emergency air ambulance and rescue services are supportive in providing rapid advanced life support and rescue services to patients in emergency situations. Many lives will continue to be saved through the service that Doc and his colleagues provide. My only regret is that I only got to spend 5 weeks on the Community Outreach programme.

Written by: Joseph Smith

Miracle baby pays a visit to Kimberley base



In February last year a 40 year old lady was experiencing lower abdominal pain and to her surprise she ended up with an undiagnosed pregnancy. An 800g baby was born alive and well, kicking and screaming. Dr Hoffman and Sr Riddles-Solomons fetched the baby at Calvinia hospital. Two attempts to sedate the baby failed, intubation was not possible as the baby continued to kick and scream. The baby ended receiving kangaroo care by Sr Riddles-Solomons to Kimberley Hospital.

One month later the baby was flown back to Calvinia, with an increase in weight and feeding well. The mother and baby paid our team in Kimberley a visit and are both doing well.

Fixed wing pilot Johan Morasui and service coordinator Nabuweya Riddles with the 'miracle baby'.

ADVANCED AIRWAY MANAGEMENT & VENTILATION COURSE

This excellent three day training course was presented in Cape Town at no cost to AMS crews and our provincial partners whose crew operate on our aircraft.

This cutting edge and comprehensive course was produced and owned by Dr John Roos, who heads up the Department of Anaesthesia at GF Jooste Hospital in Cape Town. This institution is rapidly becoming known as a centre of excellence in regard to specialised training. This is a tribute to Dr Roos, who has a passion for training. He kindly agreed to donate his time and the course in order to give our crews this important updated training. The course was oversubscribed and we have a waiting list for the next course.

The attendees, ranging from doctors to specialised trauma nurses and Advanced Life Support Paramedics, found the training of great benefit to them, enabling them to update their airway management and intubation skills (a skill required in order to save the lives of patients in their time of desperate need).

The course covers the whole range of advanced airway training and equips Advanced Life Support crews with up to date knowledge on equipment and latest research as well as revision on basic principles. It includes all aspects of airway management, from basic facemask ventilation to tracheal intubation, difficult and failed airway management, and the use of rescue airway devices. It revisits many core concepts, dispels myths, highlights pitfalls and offers many useful tips to smooth airway interventions.

There was discussion of the difficulties and pitfalls associated with pre-hospital and emergency room tracheal intubation, revisits, the often underestimated difficulty associated with facemask ventilation, and examines standard tracheal intubation in terms of the pre-intubation, intubation and post-intubation phases.

Prediction of the difficult airway was discussed, as is the management of the difficult and failed airway, and how to avoid the nightmare of the missed oesophageal intubation and the detailed use of rescue airway devices. Emphasis was placed on rapid sequence intubation, confirmation of tracheal tube placement, and the avoidance of unrecognised oesophageal intubation. Also the use of alternative and "assist" airway devices and emergency airway procedures. Special cases were discussed in detail – namely the paediatric, pregnant, obese and the trauma patient.

New ideas through a fresh perspective, on the standard techniques of tracheal intubation. The associated concepts of ventilation, hypotension, sedation, analgesia and neuromuscular blockade were shown. Including how to predict the difficult airway, and how to manage the difficult and failed airway, plus the "can't intubate, can't ventilate" scenario.

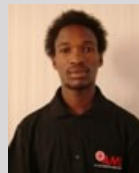
In order to showcase the medical support equipment, various medical companies were invited to bring their equipment, set up workshop stations, allowing each candidate to rotate through all of the equipment stations, allowing them to become familiar with equipment and procedures they may not previously have been exposed to. AMS is very grateful to these medical companies for their time, effort and sponsorship which enabled 'hands on' training for all who attended. It also enabled us to meet the costs of putting this course together which included a full colour manual and catering.



NOC Coordinator



Letitia Lewis
HR Administrator



Andries Shuping
Hangar assistant
Bloemfontein



Neil Bothma
Maintenance Engineer
Lanseria



Rossouw Dreyer
Flight Paramedic
Kimberley



Justin Birkenstock
Flight Paramedic
Oudtshoorn

Promotions



Jesse Pillay
from PDP Pilot to FW Pilot
Kimberley

Changes in Roles



Francois Du Toit
Acting Safety Manager



Lucinda Holmes
Acting Technical Controller



Kevin Donnellan
Acting AMO Supervisor



Rushana Slarmie
transferred from PR to
Operations Support

This Advanced Airway Management & Ventilation Course was held in conjunction with the Emergency Care Institute (ECI) who sent a number of candidates and whose admin assistance was valued.

The next course is scheduled to take place during the month of March 2011.

Calendar

Trustees Meeting

04 November 2010

Management Meetings

31 August 2010

28 September 2010

26 October 2010

AMS Operational Orientation including SACAA Part 138

Oudtshoorn – 1 September 2010

Cape Town – 21 October 2010

AHCP / FMA ILS Course

Cape Town – 13 to 17 September 2010

AHCP / FMA ALS Course

Cape Town – 4 to 15 October 2010

Surf Training

Oudtshoorn – 5 September 2010

Cape Town – 11 September 2010

Oudtshoorn – 3 October 2010

Cape Town – 9 October 2010

Mountain Training

Oudtshoorn – 4 September 2010

Cape Town – 18 September 2010

Oudtshoorn – 2 October 2010

Cape Town – 16 October 2010

With thanks to some special organisations and individuals for their contribution to our organisation whether in kind or financial.

National

Marland Medical SA

ImageSA

Cape Town

High Angle

Louis Van Wyk

Thoughts...

"You must be the change you wish to see in the world." Mahatma Gandhi

We bid farewell to the following staff members. Thank you for your contribution to organisation, we wish you well in your future endeavours.

Deswina Aspeling – HR
Administrator; Isiah Pethu – hangar attendant Bloemfontein; Carlo Kok – Chief Engineer (AMO); Eugene Schreiber – Snr Flight Paramedic Polokwane

AMS Merchandise For Sale

Have a look at the latest AMS merchandise for sale at our bases nationally. Follow the link to view and find the contact details to place your order: <http://www.ams.org.za/fundraising>

Keep in touch

E-mail comments or suggestions to venessa@ams.org.za

The use of contributions is not guaranteed.

Tel: 086 11 MERCY, <http://www.ams.org.za/>

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