



**South African Red Cross Society (SARCS): Annual General Meeting.  
27 June 2012 (740 words)**

The Hermanus local committee of the South African Red Cross Society (SARCS) is a voluntary organisation that has been existence since 1957. It oversees core functions of disaster management, responding to humanitarian needs as needed, training and managing a medical loans depot. The committee works within the ambit of the Western Cape regional office.

In Disaster Management SARCS is an official auxiliary to the government. Hermanus Local committee is less involved with the immediacy of disasters, however believes that there is considerable work to be done in prevention of disasters in particular fire. To this end a safety road show was undertaken in August 2011 on Zwelihle soccer field with the idea of linking an education event with entertainment as a positive approach to creating awareness. Prior to this initiative, we had invited 18 local NPO's to respond to a questionnaire to elicit their perspective about the most serious problems in the community. Our aim was to network and think about approaches in addressing serious problems with safety issues in mind. The road show approach was endorsed in the NPO's responses.

The show aimed to introduce people to safety at home and in the neighbourhood. Whale Coast radio provided entertainment; the Fire department and SA Police service staff assisted the Red Cross to create visual and lively demonstrations addressing safety and prevention of fire, different and suitable paraffin stoves, candle safety, hot box method of cooking and treating a burn. We would like to continue this on a smaller scale in schools and neighbourhoods. This type of education is hopefully about assisting communities to be more resilient in the face exposure to hazards , a recommendation emerging from a document published in 2009 (Ref 1)

Home Based Care Training has been given to 57 people. 61 people passed Level 1 First Aid; those participating in the latter course were from hospitality, crèches, industry, care organizations and tourism.

The medical depot loans about approximately 50 practical aids per month to assist people rehabilitating or who are unwell in their homes. Loans are distributed throughout the Overstrand. Food ingredients are donated to 15 soup kitchens and this costs the Hermanus Red Cross about R65.000 in the past year. Food and blankets are supplied on request for those in need.

Projects funded in 2011 were the safety road show as discussed above. Two facilities renovated. were Ubuntu Bethu of Hermanus Rainbow Trust who work with a variety of social projects. The other facility was Hou Moed youth and community centre. The psychiatric assessments of Camphill residents were achieved on site with the assistance of a Hermanus Provincial Hospital medical doctor and funding of a former psychiatric sister.

After reading about our Safety Road show Vuka Energy Savings Project approached the committee about developing the *hot box method* as a method of cooking. They have considerable know how from their work in the Stanford community. We have got underway with 6 demonstrations and plan to use Ubuntu Bethu in Zwelihle as a centre. This collaborative project partners with Hermanus Rainbow Trust. It aims to reach a larger audience and show people how they can cook food reducing fuel costs and introduce energy saving methods.

We have been pleased that the 2011 projects demonstrated NPO's and municipal department joining hands with communities to work together to find relevant ways to assist communities be more confident in dealing with everyday challenges, recognizing that the huge issues of poverty, unemployment and education are inextricably linked.

Lastly a little about our infrastructure, as yet we are waiting for a decision about where the Red Cross and SANTA facility will be built, both facilities remain on the land owned by the United Church. We have also had several productive talks with the Greyton branch of Red Cross. We hope to work more closely with Greyton sharing resources and skills. Our local website will be launched in August.

Many people have contributed to its development and we are fortunate to have benefactors including generous donations again this year.

We welcome new members to our committee and encourage organizations that have a perceived health and social need to request a proposal form from the committee.

Committee Members 2011: Christiane Paine, Margaret Barron, Denver Scheepers, Estelle Koen, Kitta Nieuwland.

Chairperson: Angela Heslop 0726098655

UNISDR 2009 Strategy Outline for 2010-2011 World disaster Reduction Campaign on making cities resilient, reducing urban risk.