



Raising a nation of sensible and capable water users

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Annual Report

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Background and overview
2. Project Achievements 2008
3. Planned Projects 2009
4. Capacity Building
5. Donors
6. Challenges and recommendations

Background and Overview

WaterWise is the education initiative of Sea Rescue. The WaterWise mission is to offer some very basic water safety rules to high risk groups. Many South African children are not exposed to any form of water safety education, yet children between the ages of 9 and 14 are still most likely to die by drowning.

WaterWise has developed a “hip and happening” approach to CPR, where children are encouraged to “just do it”. The aim is to give kids the confidence to get in there and help their buddies while they wait for medical back up.

Drowning is a major cause of accidental death in South Africa. Those statistically most vulnerable include children between the ages of 9 and 14, living in rural and remote areas. They are exposed to water during their daily lives, and often do not receive education in water safety and prevention of water related accidents.

Central to the WaterWise programme is assessable CPR skills for bystanders at accident scenes. Bystander CPR has been proven to save lives. Medical research confirms that if CPR is initiated immediately, the prognosis is significantly improved. The remoteness of many rural and recreational expanses of water mean that in the case of an emergency, the rescuer often has to be a peer.

Project Achievements to August 2008

From such humble beginnings just more than 3 years ago, WaterWise has become a national charity, with separate fundraising numbers from its parent body, NSRI.

Reading back in the archives, I recall with fondness the twenty teenage boys who started the ball rolling for WaterWise. Their enthusiasm and eagerness to learn spurred the research and has resulted in the program that we have today.

With some tweaking and brainstorming the WaterWise PLAN was developed – a short, easy to remember 4 point lesson in water safety that ensured that all WaterWise workshops covered the most important basics. We often say that WaterWise is not rocket science, but our simple and easy formula certainly does make sure that we don't forget to cover essential skills. Many of our South African children are not ever exposed to concepts that most of us take for granted – the boys from the Homestead discovered how the tides work while watching their rock beacons from the windows of the Sea Rescue base in Strandfontein.

Learning to do CPR is a skill that almost 35 000 South African children have now been exposed to through the WaterWise program. They have memorized the Triple H and ABC and have reveled in the feeling of accomplishment this brings. Recently I conducted an impromptu workshop at a playground in the Hangberg community of Hout Bay. A young teenager approached, and explained that he had completed a WaterWise workshop the previous year at his school. He wanted to demonstrate that he remembered how to do CPR.

Table showing regions, number of schools, clubs or groups reached, and number of children in Total

REGION	DATES	NUMBER OF SCHOOLS	NUMBER OF CHILDREN
National	2006	50	6465
Western Cape	2007	22	3626
	2008	9	1310
Boland	2007	22	5022
	2008	25	6009
Eastern Cape	2007	13	5420
	2008	5	1771
Gauteng	2007	3	250
	2008	40	4950
KwaZulu Natal	2007	3	180
	2008	1	400
Southern Cape	2007	3	560
	2008	1	1500
TOTALS		197	37 463

A small school in East London has taken the initiative and written a manual, based on the WaterWise workshops. One of the teachers, who also crews for the East London NSRI station, presents the workshops and has now been invited by schools in East London and the Transkei to present WaterWise workshops in the Eastern Cape. WaterWise has made available a CPR doll for the use of this school.

National water safety aides

- The WaterWise DVD – a 15 minute educational water safety DVD. Distributed to schools and libraries throughout South Africa.
- www.waterwise.org.za – updated monthly with articles, pictures and the latest figures showing number of children reached in a WaterWise workshop
- WaterWise A5 booklet – Sea Rescue stations are often asked to present to school groups – station commanders wanted WaterWise approved material for distribution.
- WaterWise fund raising tin – distributed at schools and suitable venues
- WaterWise ruler – distributed at schools.
- A2 poster for schools and learning institutions – How to do CPR
- A4 advertising material published by Media 24 in various publications

Planned Projects – 2009

Research

WaterWise will begin an impact study during the last quarter of 2008. Swellendam has been chosen as the area from which to begin the study. A layer of questionnaires and research will be conducted at 10 schools in the area. Thereafter, WaterWise workshops will be rolled out to these schools, and learners will be taught basic bystander CPR.

Further studies will be conducted at yearly intervals, regarding drowning, incidents, retention of skills and general water safety knowledge.

Results will be published.

Regional Workshops

- Gauteng – proposals are in place for regional projects as per the Western Cape Inland Project
- KZN – pending approval for a regional project as per the Western Cape Inland Project

- Western Cape
 - i. Coastal – West Coast Municipality has requested another series of workshops to be held at schools along the West Coast before summer. Red Bull has requested more Survival and CPR workshops in Hout Bay.
 - ii. Inland – this project now enters its 3rd year funded by the Department of Agriculture Western Cape is the key funder.
- Eastern Cape – The Department of Water Affairs has requested a proposal for a WaterWise project to operate in the Kirkwood and canal region of the Eastern Cape. Pending approval.

Safe Sport Project

- Engen is the key funder on this project.
- Proposals pending for week long events in the Eastern Cape, Western Cape (Monwabisi), Southern Cape (Wilderness)
- Fund raising events planned for Summer, incorporating sport and competition
- The BE WaterWise cycle team will again ride in the Double Century challenge in November. A more aggressive fund raising plan aims to raise awareness and funds towards the safe sport project nationally.

Marketing

- Explore options to upgrade the current printed newsletter to an electronic one
- Lesson Plans to be distributed to educators – with the poster and classroom material
- Write a series of articles of water safety related interest during the year to be submitted to various magazines for publication
- Begin a South African Water Safety Committee, to formalise a united and cohesive water safety strategy for South Africa

Capacity Building

During 2007, the staff component of WaterWise increased to cover a wider area and deliver on donor projects.

Eoudia Erasmus was appointed to visit rural and farm schools in the Boland area.

Elane Burger made herself available to do WaterWise workshops in Gauteng.

Early in 2008, Marcus Oshry was appointed in Port Elizabeth.

The most recent addition to the WaterWise team is Charles Mc Helm, in the Western Cape. He joined during July 2008. As more regional projects are funded, more educators will be employed in these regions.

Some WaterWise administrative functions are handled by NSRI head office staff.

An opportunity exists for WaterWise to employ an office based administrator, as systems emerge for maximizing fund raising potential.

Donors

Table Bay and Newlands Rotary

Department of Agriculture

SAN Parks – West Coast

Department of Water Affairs – Eastern Cape

Foschini

Engen

Saldanha Municipality

Gauteng:

Transnet Foundation

CB Charitable Trust

BEE Donors

(list pending)

Challenges and Recommendations

As WaterWise grows larger, and facilitates joint projects simultaneously, it becomes increasingly important to ensure that the administrative systems are working smoothly. With different regions and projects as well as several staff members dealing with donors, it is imperative that donors are thanked professionally, as well as supplied with comprehensive and meaningful reports as per agreed upon schedules.

It is recommended that structures are implemented to assist in this regard.

WaterWise has an enviable reputation as a charity backed by the very credible NSRI, and offering measurable and sustainable projects in sectors that are currently popular with funders.

It is recommended that fund raising be geared up to match this.

Conclusion

WaterWise has grown in size and stature over the last year. Increasingly, the WaterWise viewpoint is seen as the authority on water safety for South Africans.

The next phase has begun, and in order to take advantage of the momentum generated, administrative procedures and fund raising efforts can be increased during the next year.