

24 Hour Awareness Event – Saturday 1 May, 2010 Peanut Butter, Soccer & World Cup Tickets!!

I had heard about the annual 24-hour event all year; all the prep-work, all the kids, all the chaos, all the soccer and of course the excessive quantity of energy drinks and coffee. But to see it for yourself and actually partake in the planning and execution of the event is something completely different. I



awoke on May 1st at 6:00 and prepared for my 24 hours out in Khayelitsha, packing enough food and clothes to last through the night. The first couple hours at the field were relatively low key for the CTC Ten Programmes Team as Amandla Ku Lutsha was in charge of the first session of the day. The guys and myself were tasked with set-up of the field and clubhouse; after much trial and error I can now say that I know how to successfully set-up a sound system complete with speakers, music and a microphone.

The day commenced with several homesteads from the area participating in teambuilding, life skills and soccer-themed stations. At each station the team was rated on a scale from 1 – 10 on their participation and the successful completion of the task presented to them. The stations ran from about 10 to 1 and were immediately followed by a handful of performances by traditional dance and drama groups from the surrounding area.

Now it was our turn!
The rest of the 24 hours would be filled with organizing teams, timekeeping, refereeing games, scorekeeping and awarding prizes. Let the chaos begin! First up were the U-13 boys and the U-16 girls tournament brackets.



The boys were all participants in the U-13 Heads Up programme run on Monday and Friday afternoons. The girls on the other hand were a combination of girls from Ikhusi Primary School

complimented by teams from various partner organizations such as Grassroot Soccer, Soccer 4 Hope and Baphumelele. The one requirement for entrance into all the tournaments was that the participants must be enrolled in one of the youth development programmes at the Campbell Field or a similar life skills programme at another organization. At any give point during this three-hour period there were about 40 kids running around on the soccer pitch all striving for those first place medals and World Cup tickets! The best part of this time was that it was very evident that with a little patience and coaching girls who previously had no desire to play soccer and possessed very limited ball skills can develop into competitive athletes with a true passion for the game. Hooray for girl's soccer!!!



After the champions were recognized and the paparazzi (aka Me) finished with the barrage of pictures we moved on to the 32 team U-16 tournament bracket. These boys are also enrolled in the U-16 Heads Up Programme running on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. The teams had been honing their skills weekly for that past month or so and the competition was evidence to all their hard

work. However, the knock-out style soccer tournament would only produce one champion as the day rapidly turned to night and the men's tournament was quickly approaching. Another group of young boys was awarded first place medals, a variety of other prizes and the coveted World Cup tickets.

At this point it was time for the first Red Bull of the evening, the early morning wake-up and constant running was starting to take its toll and some caffeine was desperately needed. As the marathon portion of our event, the men's all night tournament, began there was much work still to be done behind the scenes. There were approximately



350 people that were expecting to get fed in about 3 hours; there were peanut butter sandwiches to make and absolutely gigantic pots of soup to cook. The next couple hours all blur together into a bunch of sandwich making and soup stirring. With the help of some lovely ladies in the kitchen, all the prep was finally finished ensuring that the participants were going to be fed on time ... it was now time to PLAY! I joined my team, Yizzo Yizzo, out on the field for a couple matches. I am now able to now say that I have played soccer out in Khayelitsha at 4 o'clock in the morning, in fact that's the only time I've ever played soccer at 4 o'clock in the morning.



As the night drew on some participants began to fade and opted for some quick shuteye, whether intentional or not. Others made it through the night with no rest, just the continual beat of the house music and the occasional serenade by Serge in the

background to keep their energy levels high. As the night wore on the list of soccer games yet to play began to get shorter and shorter. All of the participants were fed, the music continued to blare on, the scores were tallied and the next thing you know the sun was starting to rise and it was time for the playoffs of the tournament. With a rousing group dance party to “Umlilo” prior to the final game everyone was ready for some quality soccer games, awards ceremonies and the eventual collapsing into their own warm cozy beds awaiting them at home. The finals came and went without a flaw as the whole day had gone, a true testimony to the hard work and organizational skills of the programmes team, and another group of happy participants were awarded with prizes and the elusive World Cup tickets.



I can now proudly say that I survived the annual 24-hour tournament and everything that it entails; the non-stop pounding house music, countless peanut butter sandwiches, lack of sleep and LOTS and LOTS of soccer games. As I look back on the event I feel that it can definitely be labeled as a success and a great demonstration of teamwork. Everyone pulled their weight and was able to utilize their own unique strengths resulting in both participants and staff walking away from the event thoroughly satisfied and thoroughly exhausted.

