

RRI Conference Abstract - Stephné Jacobs

The Ditto Project: A Unique Story of Ubuntu in Action (10)

In South Africa the word “Ubuntu” denotes the inter-connectedness of all humans. It embraces reaching out with kindness and compassion. The Ditto Project offers comfort and dignity to women who cannot afford silicone breast prosthesis. It came into being through people working together to share diverse resources and talents. The services offered by Reach for Recovery SA have always included a prosthesis service. In 2011 the initiative received a boost when the South African Mushroom Farmers’ Association came on board as sponsors. This partnership was the result of research indicating that fresh mushrooms could play a role in the fight against breast cancer. Every October pink punnets of mushrooms are sold at Pick n Pay stores. The Power of Pink campaign has raised funds to provide a total of 5857 silicone prostheses (costing more than R3.7 million) to patients from low income groups. In 2014 we introduced the name “Ditto” (meaning the same again), thanks to the creativity of a design student who felt a woman receiving a prosthesis would like to have one as close to the real thing as possible. The final link in the chain of support is made up of our volunteers who help patients regain confidence after the trauma of breast cancer surgery by encouraging them to have a prosthesis fitted, at little or no cost. The Ditto Project is a beautiful illustration of the concept of Ubuntu – people giving to others along life’s journey, and in the process healing themselves. (246)