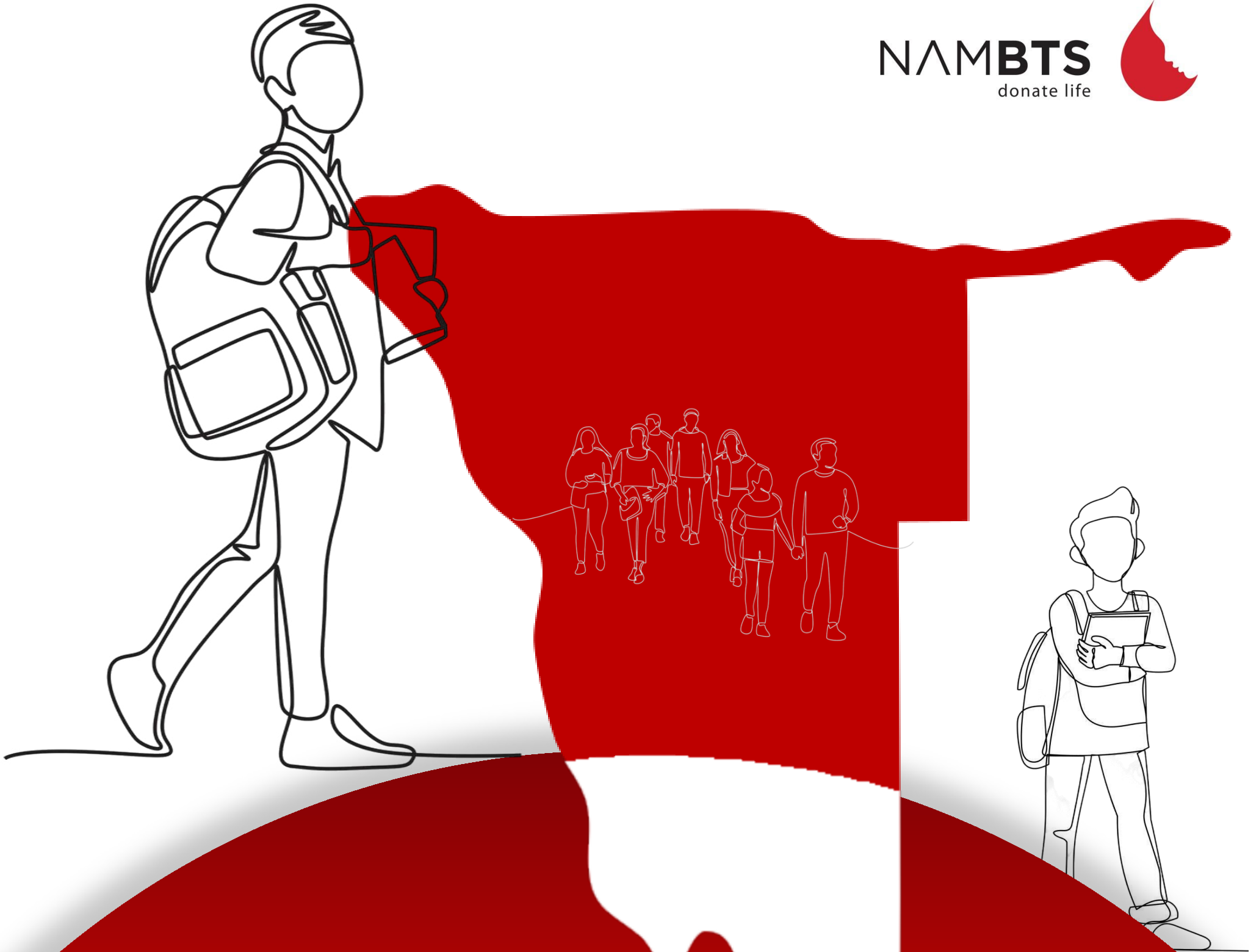




YOUTH CONNECT

newsletter



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Editor's note

It's already been a productive and busy year at NamBTS and we welcome you to enjoy this 10th edition of Youth News with us. In this edition we bring you some feedback from various events we attended and participated in including the NUST Career Fair celebrated under the theme: 'A Decade of Eminence: Celebrating Education, Science, and Technology for Development' where NamBTS was awarded first prize for our stall in the Corporate Companies Division.

We also held a successful Peer Promoter Training program in Windhoek with 11 schools and 100 learners participating. In Oshakati and Ondangwa 111 peer promoters attended the training, and 86 from Swakopmund and Walvis Bay. Learners have now been empowered with knowledge to teach and lead programs in their own schools and were encouraged to share their ideas on how we can improve

clinics, youth engagements and sensitise even more youth on the work we do at NamBTS in our bid to provide safe blood for a healthier nation. Our UNAM blood donations were also a huge success and we stay indebted and blessed to have a nation of caring Namibians that look out for each other.

Liliana Baptista and Messiah Lambert shared their heartfelt experiences with how the work that we do has touched their lives and transformed the lives of their loved ones, providing healing, learning and peace of mind. School yourself on the importance of iron and blood donation and you learn a few fun facts about donating blood that might enlighten you.

We thank you for your continued support. Happy reading #daretocare #daretoshare

Frieda Vatileni -Asino
Editor

AFSBT ACCREDITATION

Continuous improvement is at the heart of what we do at the Blood Transfusion Service (NamBTS), and we take pride in striving to maintain our accreditation status. The accreditation process serves to confirm that NamBTS meets the required standards and provides assurance to stakeholders, including donors, patients, clinicians and the public regarding the quality and safety of our services and, blood and blood products.

The Africa Society for Blood Transfusion (AfSBT) is an accrediting body that grants accreditation to blood services that meet international standards and conducted a comprehensive accreditation assessment from 04 to 14 March 2025 of all our departments in Windhoek, Swakopmund, Oshakati, Rundu and Onandjokwe. The Onandjokwe blood bank underwent its initial assessment, while the other sites were reassessed during this period following the 2019 accreditation assessment.

The results of the assessment reflected NamBTS's ongoing commitment to strengthening its quality management system, as no critical non-conformances were identified. However, the NamBTS team is currently addressing the identified minor deficiencies through corrective and preventive actions to further improve the quality management system and maintaining accreditation.

The AfSBT assessors commended the NamBTS staff for their professionalism, friendliness, and active engagement throughout the process. Achieving and maintaining quality and accreditation is a shared responsibility, and every staff member has contributed toward this goal. Kudos to the NamBTS team!



Dr Mohammed Farouk AfSBT Managing Director and Israel Chipare , NamBTS CEO.

Why Donate Blood?

Facts About Blood Donation

1. It's a simple act that can save lives. Every day, someone in Namibia needs blood, yet only a small percentage of eligible donors actually donate.
2. Blood donation saves lives and supports medical treatments worldwide. One donation can save up to three lives and it's a simple way to make a huge difference in the world.
3. One pint of blood can save up to three lives! Blood is separated into its constituent components, namely red blood cells, plasma and platelets.
4. Donating blood offers benefits to both recipients and donors. It can improve heart health, burn calories and even provides a free health check-up. Plus, it's a great way to help others and boost your own well-being.
5. AB positive is the universal plasma donor. Plasma from this blood type can be transfused into any patient regardless of their blood type.
6. Donors undergo a mini-physical. before donating - your temperature, pulse, blood pressure, and hemoglobin levels are checked.
7. Blood donation encourages a healthy lifestyle. Knowing you can help others may motivate you to maintain good health.
8. World Blood Donor Day is celebrated annually on June 14. This day raises awareness of the need for safe blood and honours donors.
9. The Blood Transfusion Service requires a collection of 200 donors daily to cater for the demand of the ever increasing need for blood and blood products in the hospitals.
10. The Blood Transfusion Service of Namibia distributes blood products to 55 medical centres across the country.
11. Blood donations generally increase during the festive period considering that most donors are on holiday with their families.
12. There are 4 blood donation programs available at NamBTS: Red Cell Pheresis, Plasma Pheresis, Platelet Pheresis and the whole blood program.
13. A person can only donate 450ml of blood with every donation.
14. In 2024, 34 559 donors donated 50 979 units of blood at NamBTS, meaning that only 1% of the Namibian population donates blood.
15. Red blood cells have a shelf life of up to 42 days whilst platelets only last for up to 5 days.



Ms Kasita of Hans Daniel Namuhuya SS.

Donate. Save A Life.

DARE TO CARE

YOU HAVE THE POWER TO SAVE A LIFE. DONATE BLOOD.

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING:

- Eat a meal before you donate.
- You need to be older than 16 and younger than 65.
- You must weigh more than 50KG.
- You must lead a sexually safe and healthy lifestyle.
- Be committed to helping others.

Blood donation takes 20 - 30 minutes, is completely safe and utterly rewarding. Your donation will save lives - in fact it could save three.

NAMBTS
donate life

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in f t y

The Transformative Power of Blood Donation



Overcoming Fear and Embracing Purpose For years, a profound fear of needles prevented me from even considering blood donation. This apprehension, however, paled in comparison to the growing awareness of the critical role blood donation plays in saving lives. Eventually, I resolved to confront my fear and contribute to this vital cause, a decision that has profoundly impacted my life.

Beyond simply overcoming a personal phobia, I discovered a range of unexpected benefits associated with regular blood donation. Notably, donating blood contributes significantly to cardiovascular health. By reducing iron levels, donors can mitigate the risk of heart disease and high cholesterol. Excess iron, while essential for oxygen transport, can accumulate in vital organs, potentially leading to serious complications such as cirrhosis, liver cancer, irregular heartbeat, and diabetes. It is crucial to emphasize that while blood donation offers these advantages, maintaining a balanced diet and engaging in regular exercise remain essential for overall well-being.

The impetus for my decision extended beyond personal health considerations. I began to contemplate the devastating scenario of a loved one requiring a blood transfusion and facing a critical shortage. This realization underscored the profound difference a single donation can make between life and death. Imagining the helplessness of such a situation solidified my commitment to becoming a regular donor.

The process itself, once a source of anxiety, has become a routine act of altruism. A simple needle prick and a brief time commitment every 56 days are all it takes to potentially save multiple lives. The experience has instilled a sense of purpose and fulfillment, demonstrating that even small acts of courage can yield significant and transformative results. Embracing blood donation has not only conquered a personal fear but has also opened my eyes to the profound impact of collective action in safeguarding human life

Story by: Maryke Mouers

NUST Career Fair

Namibia University of Science and Technology hosted its annual Career Fair on 9 - 10 April 2025. As per our tradition, NamBTS secured an exhibition stand at the career fair. The theme for this year was '*A Decade of Eminence: Celebrating Education, Science, and Technology for Development*'.

The NUST Career Fair was quite abuzz with a marvellous turnout from both attendees and exhibitors. The Blood Transfusion Service of Namibia captivated pupils with resources and information related to our company and its operations. Beyond providing insights, pupils engaged in exciting activities such as finding out which blood group they belong to.

It takes all types of people to deliver the kind of service that saves and improves lives, therefore, we exhibited the different careers one can pursue to be able to work at the Blood Transfusion Service of Namibia.

NamBTS scooped the 1st prize in the Corporate Companies division.

Winning first prize was a testament to the company's unified effort and strategic execution. With the success of the 2025 Career Fair, NamBTS raised the bar for future outreach and engagement activities.



Sr Annie at the NUST Career Fair with a Centaurus pupil.

Need To Knows

Iron and Blood Donation

Iron plays an important role in maintaining various body functions including the production of haemoglobin, the molecule in your blood that carries oxygen.

Your red blood cells are rich in haemoglobin which contains iron. This means that if you donate red blood cells, you will lose iron. If you donate a unit of whole blood, you can lose between 200-250 mg of iron which can potentially lead to iron deficiency.

Most donors have sufficient iron to donate blood safely. However, frequent blood donations can in the presence of pre-existing low iron, a diet low in iron, or certain underlying medical conditions lead to iron deficiency.

Ferritin Testing

Haemoglobin is always tested before each donation to measure the amount of red blood cells but not iron. Therefore, a ferritin test is done to measure the amount of iron in the body.

A level above 6 ng/mL will be accepted for whole blood donation but ideally a level of 16 ng/mL or more is desired. Double red cell donations require at least double these values.

How can iron levels affect me?

A person with low iron can still feel normal, since there is still sufficient iron in the body to meet one's daily needs and make red blood cells. If all the iron in reserve has been used up, a person will be iron deficient and start to feel unwell. If left untreated it can lead to anaemia (low haemoglobin). The severity of symptoms can vary and present as tiredness, weakness, palpitations and shortness of breath and/or sores on the tongue.

Iron and Diet

Your body is able to store iron; however, it can't make iron. The only way to obtain iron is by consuming iron-rich foods. The best sources of iron are animal-based foods but many plant-based foods also contain iron.

Iron Supplementation

If the iron level in your body is low, based on ferritin tests done during the blood donation process, NAMBTS will provide iron supplements to you. This will help your body replace iron faster. Iron supplements replace iron faster than iron-rich foods alone. The time it takes to replace iron lost with iron-rich foods alone varies and could take more than 12 weeks to be replenished. If iron levels remain low while you continue to donate blood, you are at risk of becoming anaemic. Therefore, if you continue to donate blood with undesirable iron levels you would need to replace it faster with iron supplementation.

Each tablet contains iron, folic acid and vitamin B12 and you should take one tablet per day for months, preferably on an empty stomach with orange juice. The iron supplements supplied by NAMBTS have minimal to no side effects. You might experience abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting and constipation. If you experience any of these side effects, they can be reduced by taking the iron supplements before bed in the evenings.

Iron supplements should not be taken unless a blood test has confirmed low iron levels and should only be taken if recommended by a doctor or a nurse and should be kept out of reach of children at all times.



Mona Edwards donates for the first time.

And The **WINNERS** Are:

Earlier this year the NamBTS in association with the Global Blood Fund put out a call to the public for entries to our 'My Blood Story Competition' encouraging them to use creative ways to share powerful stories about blood donation to inspire others.

We received over 250 entries flooded us in the form of video, poem, song, play, film or animation and our judging panel had quite the task ahead of them in selecting the winners.

The judges included the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture's Gretta Gasper, the Namibia Film Commission's Esther Veii Beukes, Jacques Mushaandja, Arts Professor at UNAM, the

Arts Association of Namibia's Queeny Hekandjo and NBC TV's Jackzee Tsareb.

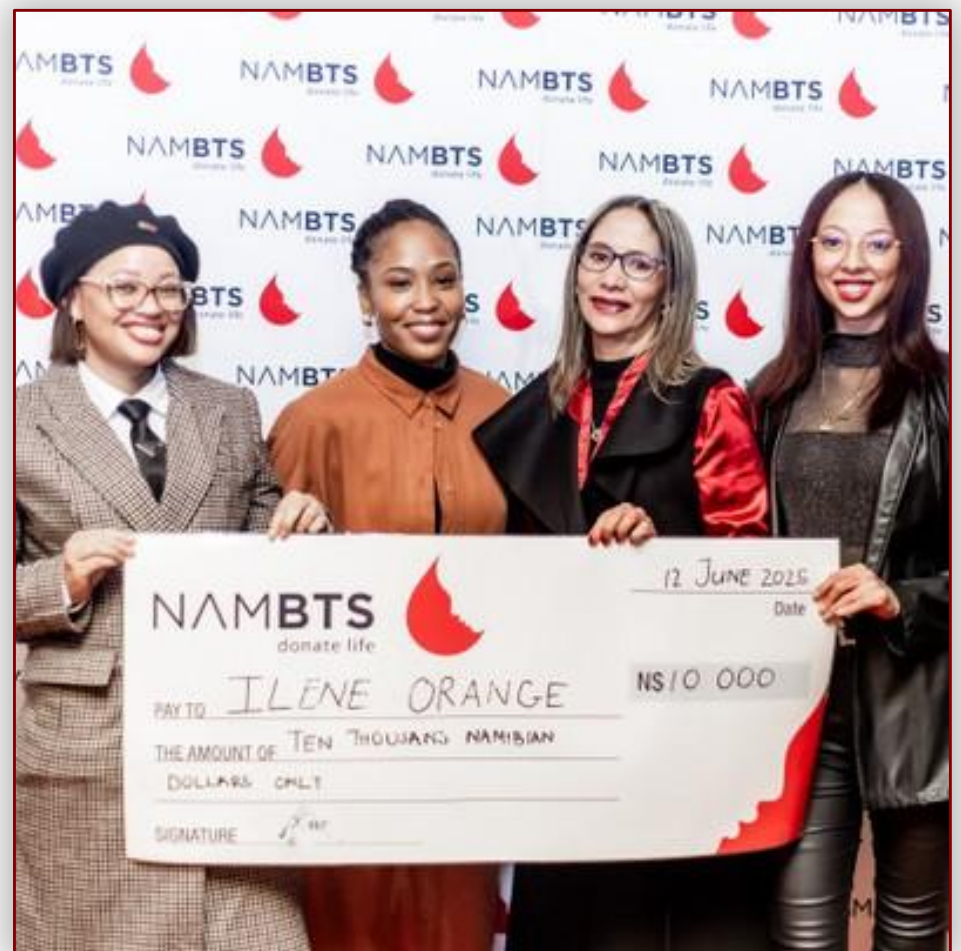
Ilene Orange from Gobabis took the first prize of N\$10 000 with a video entry,

Diedre Kharihas from Omaruru took the second prize of N\$5000 and

Loide Ekandjo of Windhoek took the third prize of N\$3000.

Two commendation prizes of N\$1500 each, were awarded to **Stefan Van Der Merwe** and **Juliette Erdstieck**.

We also share some entries which moved us for your reading pleasure:



Judge Queeny Hekandjo, Ester Veii Beukes, 1st prize winner Ilene Orange and her daughter at the 2024 Recognition Awards in Windhoek.

Your Donation Saved Her Life! by Liliana Baptista

One moment she was her usual loud self, the next she was almost lifeless...

My sister bled excessively day in and day out, large clots escaped her body at an abnormal rate - so much so that pads didn't help anymore and we had to use diapers. We had to rush her to the hospital. I sat there with her watching her become less responsive as the time ticked by. I had to clean pools of her blood and watch her lying there almost lifeless, colour draining from her face, lips turning purple, eyes dulling and yet, still, her blood flowed like a river of red. Dozens of tissues filled with her blood and all I wanted to do was help her but I couldn't.

When they admitted her, I was sent

out of the room. As we waited anxiously, a single donation made all the difference. They resuscitated my sister with blood. She got three units of blood as well as plasma.

A stranger's selfless act became my sister's lifeline.

As the blood slowly entered her veins, the colour also returned to her cheeks. Strength replaced weakness. In that moment, I realised the incredible power of blood donation. Someone, somewhere had saved my sister's life without even knowing her name... She was only 19 and had fibroids. I will never be able to fully thank and express my gratitude to the stranger/s that unknowingly saved my sister's life.

They will never understand the impact they have made in my family's lives by saving my sister just by donating their blood. Even though I am a peer promoter and I know the importance of blood donating I was ignorant about its

true importance until my sister was in a life-or-death situation and the only thing that could help her was blood.

The experience changed us. It made us passionate advocates for blood donation, knowing firsthand just how vital it is.

Every donation is a gift—an unseen thread connecting lives, giving hope and saving futures.

I hope this story acts as a beacon that attracts people to donating as well as a lesson on the importance of blood donating. Please, don't be like me, don't only educate yourself on blood donation and its importance when either you or one of your family members need it. Remember one donation saves three lives and you never know whose life you are going to change or whose life you can save just by donating blood.

Step up, be the hero you want to see.

I Stayed by Messiah Lambert

I couldn't do it - not yet. The thought of metal meeting vein still makes my stomach twist, my fingers clenched around empty courage. But she was ready. Brave, quietly brave.

Her eyes searched the room for something familiar, someone to say "you're not alone."

And there I was - just me, a 24-year-old with no needle in my arm but my heart beating wild like it was mine instead of hers.

I sat beside her. Held her hand. Joked badly to make her laugh. Counted the seconds, not out loud but inside me, so the silence wouldn't feel too long. She closed her eyes - and I kept mine open for her, watching every move like if I looked away something might go wrong.

I told her I was proud. I told her she was strong. I meant every word though I was still too afraid to do what she was doing so effortlessly.

But support - support wears many faces. And mine, that day, wasn't a donor's support - it was a friend's and sometimes, that matters just as much.

One day, I'll be in her place but that day, I sat beside her. I stayed.

Peer Promoters Training:

On the 6th February 2025, NamBTS hosted its first phase of the biennial Peer promoters training program in Windhoek.

NamBTS hosts blood donation clinics at various secondary and high schools in Windhoek and while doing so - seeks to obtain learner engagement, choosing leaders at the school that can drive the important message of blood donation and how the youth can get involved in becoming ambassadors for the institution - at their schools.

A total of 6 learners are chosen per school by the teacher responsible for conducting blood donation clinics at the school.

The training entails a descriptive segment on the operations of the NamBTS, its fixed and mobile sites and the different blood and blood products collected, processed and distributed by the NamBTS.

Peer promoters are then trained on their expected duties during their tenure as Peer promoters for the NamBTS.

NamBTS equips every promoter with a shirt and badge to wear at their events which illustrates that they are indeed part of the NamBTS team. Promoters work closely with NamBTS staff year-round and in so doing, gain experience in the day to day workings of the Blood Transfusion Service of Namibia.

The main benefits of this program for the learners is to gain deeper and more knowledge on how the NamBTS operates and why, gain leadership skills, equip fellow learners with knowledge, assist them in filling in forms, conducting new clinics and identifying potential areas of improvement at the clinics.

The following schools took part in the recent training program:

- **Concordia College**
- **Khomas High School**
- **Chairman Mao Zedong High School**
- **A, Shipena SS**
- **Acacia High School**

- **Hage Geingob High School**
- **Westmont High School**
- **Dawid Bezuidenhout SS**
- **Eldorado High School**
- **Immanuel Shifidi High School**
- **Jan Jonker Afrikaner High School**
- **Jan Mohr High School**

Team Build Namibia conducted the ice breaker for the learners which allowed a lot of engagement and fun amongst the attendees.



Peer promoters with their attendance certificates.

YOUTH CORNER

Trending Health Recipes

Golden Milk

- 2 cups low fat milk
- 1/2 tsp Turmeric
- 1/2 tsp Cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp Ground ginger
- 1 tbsp Honey to taste
- Pinch of black pepper

Instructions:

1. Warm in a pot on low to medium heat
2. Let it simmer for 5 minutes
3. Add the honey
4. Strain and enjoy

Health benefits

Turmeric - Natural Detoxifier

- ✓ Improve digestion
- ✓ Good for brain health
- ✓ Reduces inflammation in the body

Ginger - Potent Antioxidants

- ✓ Supports digestive system
- ✓ Pain Relief

Cinnamon - Helps balance blood sugar levels

Various schools donated blood during our blood donation clinics.

