



The US Witsie



Wits Fund Newsletter March 2024

witsfund.org

Wits turned 100 in 2022. Learn more [here](#).

SPRING HATH SPRUNG, and everything feels more hopeful and alive. Even though there are still days of gloom and darkness to get through, we know that sunny days are just ahead. How can we help our communities bloom, and how can we pay forward all the things for which we are grateful?

WITS CAMPUS VIBRANT



Wits US Representative, [Nooshin Erfani-Ghadimi](#), was on campus at Wits University in February this year, and has shared some updates, pics and videos of her time there:

I had the opportunity to visit the Wits University campus in Johannesburg for a series of meetings, in February 2024. Campus itself is vibrant, feeling safe and well-maintained. Many murals and reminders about #WitsValues, the #WitsForGood branding, and Wits pride, can be seen, and were especially ready for new students who were in Orientation that week. In 2024, Wits welcomed 6,300 first years, chosen out of 140,000 applications.

A big highlight was being able to see in person [the Zola Wits Dental Clinic](#), and the wonderful facilities that have been so generously donated by the Bergman Family Foundation. The Zola Wits Dental Clinic is a refurbished and re-equipped 15-chair, state-of the-art facility for community-based training and clinical services in Zola, relaunched in September 2023. Zola is located in the west of Soweto, about an hour's drive from the Wits campus.

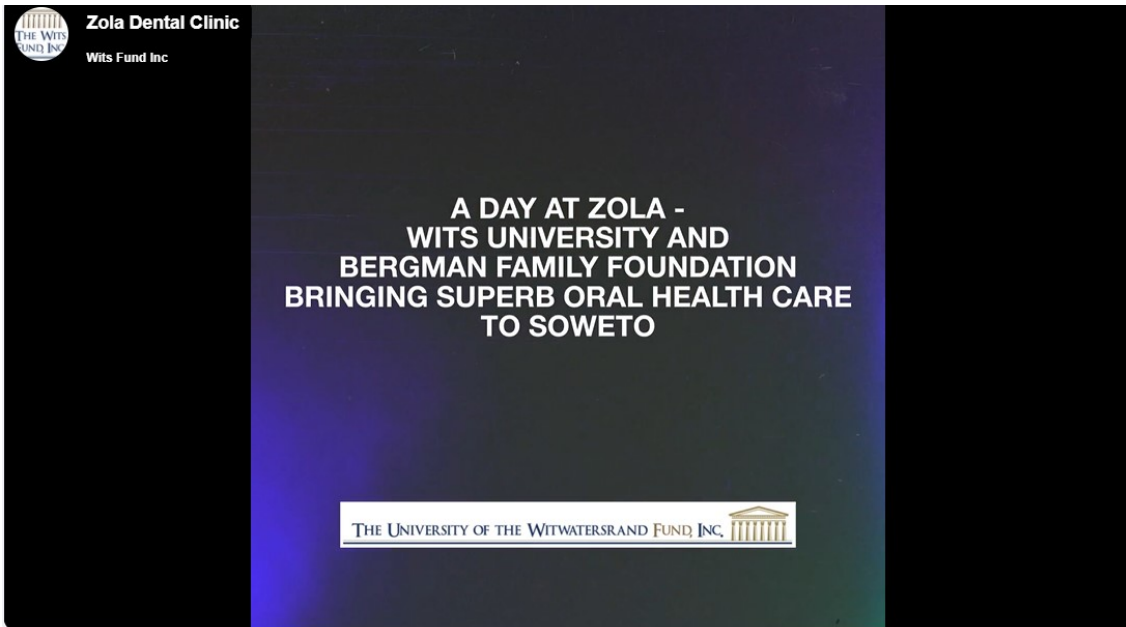


At a pre-launch event, Prof Shabir Madhi, the Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences said: **"This clinic will have great impact in the community. It is also a landmark moment for the revival of the School of Oral Health Sciences. It is not just the people of Zola who will see a difference, but because we are training students here that will be working in the rest of South Africa, it will have an impact in the whole of South Africa."**

On my visit there, so many months after the official opening, I was impressed to see how well kept the clinic continues to be, and how well-staffed and important it is to the community (see the video below).

We were told of the feedback from Zola community members, who express their sense of ownership and pride in the clinic, and their sense of gratitude that the Wits expertise, coupled with the world-class facilities, is making an impact in their lives.

The daily average of patients seen continues to increase, month by month, and is now at about 60 or 70 per day! And they have full rotations of students brought in every day, with staff on hand. One of the students made this short video about a typical day for them: <https://vm.tiktok.com/ZMM8MXby5/>



WATCH: Wits Zola Dental Clinic visit, February 2024

As we feel gratitude for the blessings in our lives, one way to pay it forward is through making an impact in a person's life that will uplift them, and their family, for generations to come.

DONATE [HERE](#)



WATCH: Wits Spirit Game 2024 - first-year students enjoyed a thrilling football match when Wits FC and Orlando Pirates clashed at the annual Spirit Game. 🌐

HOLLYWOOD WITSIE LABOR OF LOVE COMES TO THE BIG SCREEN



[Mr Johnathan Dorfman \(Wits BA Hons, 1993\)](#) recently told of his journey in bringing a story about a miracle to the big screen - needing its own dose of perseverance and miracles too. With his kind permission, we share the LinkedIn post below:

"It takes a village.

14 years ago, I was introduced to the story of Sharon Stevens and the Schmitt family in Louisville. The "snow baby" story that was Louisville legend <https://lnkd.in/gatRPdKx> was one of kindness and the ability to see beyond yourself.

It resonated with me, and it resonated with my friend and partner, Dave Matthews.

Every film we've produced in the more than 20 years of our partnership has felt like a miracle to get completed. Ordinary Angels was a miracle and a lesson in

perseverance.

Jon Gunn made a wonderful film. Meg Tilly and Kelly Fremon Craig wrote a beautiful screenplay. Hilary Swank and Alan Ritchson will make you weep.

Thank you to our producing partners and thank you to Lionsgate Studios for seeing what we saw so long ago.

It takes a village.

Playing on over 3000 screens from February 22. Go see it. Take some Kleenex.

[#OrdinaryAngelsMovie](#)"

IN MEMORIAM: PROFESSOR EDDIE WEBSTER



*Recently, Professor Imraan Valodia (Pro Vice-Chancellor for Climate, Sustainability and Inequality, and Director of the SCIS) wrote this touching tribute to the late Professor Eddie Webster, who passed away in mid-March, entitled **"The 'Sociology Madala' who shaped the way we think"**:*

"Eddie Webster was the ultimate socially engaged academic who played a key role in the labor movement.

I heard of Eddie Webster's passing shortly after 5pm on Tuesday March 5. Until that moment, though he was at almost 82 by far the oldest member of the staff at the Southern Centre for Inequality Studies (SCIS) at Wits University, it had not once crossed my mind that he would not be with us forever. He was that sort of person: always effervescent, always intellectually curious, always

engaged in the university, always engaged in social change, never quiet.

Edward Webster was born on March 29 1942 and spent his early childhood at the famous Methodist school, Healdtown, in the Eastern Cape, where both his parents taught just after World War 2. Healdtown is the school where Nelson Mandela, Robert Sobukwe, Archie Mafeje and other luminaries of the struggle were educated. Eddie's father resigned from Healdtown in the early 1950s, but this upbringing influenced his own trajectory into education and liberation politics."

Read more [here](#).



WATCH: WITS LATEST NEWS IN SIXTY SECONDS - In this episode, Professor Achille Mbembe makes history as the first African recipient of the Holberg Prize. Students benefit from new solar benches, part of Wits' sustainability strategy. The Irish Tech Challenge launches at Tshimologong, spawning innovation and entrepreneurship. Wits health scientists are lauded at the SAMRC awards, whilst the Afretec Gender workshop in Rwanda promotes gender equality in STEM. Read the full stories [here](#).

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Vision

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pre-eminent research-intensive educational institutions, with top academic standards,
committed faculty, and supportive alumni.

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