

Brave Women of the Year

Beka's courage brings hope

Beka Ntsanwisi is very, very ill.

She suffers from advanced colon cancer and walks with crutches. On some days the pain is so bad that she finds it difficult to stand up. Despite this, Ntsanwisi (37) of Limpopo feeds thousands of people in the rural communities.

Ntsanwisi, who is also a presenter for Mung-hana Lonene FM radio, won the 2005 Shoprite Checkers/SABC2 Woman of the Year Award in the social welfare category.

On the night of the award ceremony, Ntsanwisi collapsed before the event. The organisers arranged for her doctor to attend the event to take care of her. When she received the award, Ntsanwisi, who was in a wheelchair, could barely speak. However, she vowed to continue to work for her community until the day she dies.

"I am involved with different projects to help the poor and people living with HIV/Aids. I have acquired 21 hectares of farmland in the Makumeke village near Tzaneen where villagers plant cotton and vegetables for selling and home use."

What is colon cancer?

The colon is a muscular tube that absorbs water and nutrients from food. Cancer is the general name for over 100 conditions involving dangerous cell growth. Some cancer is caused by genetic factors, while other forms are caused by environmental conditions.



She said she received a lot of support from the government, her husband, Solomon, and her 17-year-old daughter Nkhesani.

"I'm suffering, but I always put other people's pain first," she said. 📍

Changing the world



'Disabled' but capable

When Julia Moloi speaks on the phone, people who do not know her often tell her to stop crying and speak properly.

She just tells them that she is disabled and finds it difficult to speak. But she says the comments don't bother her anymore.

In fact, Moloi (30) says people should stop feeling sorry for people with disabilities.

"We are capable of doing things for ourselves. All we need is support and help from government, business and other organisations — just like everybody else in this country," says Moloi. She is editor of a Johannesburg-based magazine for people with disabilities called *We Are Capable*.

Vuk'uzenzele caught up with her at the Presidential Women Working Group meeting in Pretoria. She was invited by President Thabo Mbeki to join other successful women after she won the arts, culture and communications category of the 2005 Shoprite/SABC2 Woman of the Year Awards.

"I started the magazine in 2003 after realising that there is little awareness regarding people with disabilities.

"Through this magazine, we want to show that people with disabilities are just like everybody else. Take them to school, give them opportunities and they will look after you in future," she said. *Ndivhuwo Khangale* 📍