

Vega students pay tribute to Nelson Mandela through children's hospital

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The Nelson Mandela Children's Hospital, which opened on 2 December 2016, is the culmination of years of effort by many people. Among them were four students of Vega School, a brand of the Independent Institute of Education (The IIE). Each of the group achieved a career pinnacle even before embarking on their first jobs.



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The logo of the hospital was designed in 2009 by then Vega third year visual communication, copywriting and multimedia design students Deeshana Chetty, Nkgabiseng Matou, Nichola McKay Davis, Vanja Lavadinovic, and Kagiso Magoba. The project arose out of Vega's annual Brand Challenge in which students are given the opportunity to tackle real-world briefs from external organisations as an experiential part of their studies.

Their design was ultimately selected. It was based on the concept of Ubuntu, which includes the essential human virtues of compassion, humanity and care – an echo of the qualities that children in need of medical attention most require.

All the students have moved on with successful careers, but say the experience of playing a critical role in the design of the hospital will rank among their career highlights. No matter what they ultimately

achieve, it was done for Madiba.

Nichola Davis says: "It's amazing to see the building finally up and to realise that we were part of Madiba's dream. For all of us, it has been an exceptional experience having worked on a project and to finally see it realised. Even if the individual role of each one of us was relatively small, it's part of something that has become incredibly meaningful. I gained a lot of real life experience through Vega's Brand Challenges. This one will always be more inspirational."

Vega students were invited to the former president's 99th birthday, shortly after winning the 2009 logo competition. Kagiso Magoba explains that it was the experience of a lifetime and the magnitude of their accomplishments only struck him when he rubbed shoulders with greatness.

"This hospital stands as a part of all of us who were involved. It's a monument to Madiba's lifetime of achievement, something we were all honoured to have been a small part of. I don't believe I've yet realised the full impact, however it has made me realise that there is no limit to what an individual can achieve given the chance," says Magoba.

"At Vega, and especially on this project, we learned a lot about each other, about different cultures and backgrounds. I am no longer hesitant to tackle any challenge," continues Davis.

The design did not come easily or quickly, but was the product of researching different cultures and the dreams and aspirations of children. The Vega students took basic children's drawings and doodlings from many school children and graphically conceptualised them. They simplified the concept into something which could turn the clinical structure of a hospital into a warm environment children could feel at home in.

"We all feel proud of our involvement. Personally, this has been the most momentous event of my life," says Deeshana

Chetty. "It's emotional, ultimately we helped Nelson Mandela reach his final dream. It's all a tribute to the great man.

"Vega teaches you to be conceptual, something which played a big role in this project. The Vega style of learning has taught me to become a 'thinker' in my subsequent career. It's an invaluable trait to be able to take an intangible idea and convert it into a visual, tangible design. Great design comes from developing something which is not just pretty, but has a strong message," explains Chetty.

Construction of the Nelson Mandela Children's Hospital in Parktown, Johannesburg, began on 22 April 2014. The state-of-the-art hospital has a specialised paediatric facility that will provide the children of Southern Africa with quality medical services irrespective of their economic status.

For more information, please visit [or \[www.nelsonmandelachildrenshospital.org\]](http://www.nelsonmandelachildrenshospital.org)

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