



**UNLEASH
YOUR DOG'S
INNER
LEGEND**



All photos courtesy of Marusckha Wessels

A REACH FOR SKYE

After an intruder attacked the Wessels family in their home in Richards Bay during the night, not only did Hans and his son, Daniel, require medical treatment, but also their pure-bred Pitbull, Skye, had to be rushed to surgery.

Her injuries were very severe, but this brave member of the family had given everything to protect her pack from an intruder who fled into the night.

The physical ordeal was over, but soon reality set in. Extensive surgery comes at a price, and the Wessels family was in despair. They had no idea where the money would come from.

“The biggest hero in this story is the SPCA,” says Hans straight off the bat. “I don’t know how, but they heard about Skye and the next day they called and asked how they can help. They took total control and ran with it.”

Soon the call went out on the SPCA Facebook page, and Skye’s owner and career photographer, Marusckha, offered 5 photoshoots to followers of her Capture Life Photography page if they would donate to the SPCA to help Skye.

“It spread like wildfire. I couldn’t believe it. People donated from



England and New Zealand. Right over SA! Everywhere!” exclaims Hans. Raking in almost 4000 shares, the community united to save the hero.

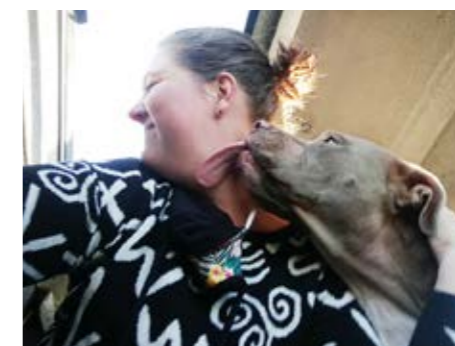
Patsy Blignaut, a Richards Bay resident who supported the outreach, says, “Our community immediately jumped in and donated towards the vet bill. I’ve shared it far and wide

on Facebook... It’s heart-warming to see the help that poured in. We get updates on her progress and I am delighted to see that she is well and healthy again. I am proud of our town people!”

In fact, the response was so overwhelming that it took only 3 days to cover the bills. Messages of support, concern, and donations kept pouring in. “We had to ask people to stop sending money,” says Hans.

Hans continues, “When we walk around town, heads turn. People come up to us and ask, ‘Aren’t you Skye’s owners? We also donated. How is Skye doing?’ It definitely brought the community together.”

Overwhelmed by the outpouring from their community, Marusckha and Skye decided to dedicate their 67 minutes on Mandela Day to help the animals at the SPCA by donating food. “If it wasn’t for them helping us, we would really have struggled to gather the money for her,” says Marusckha.

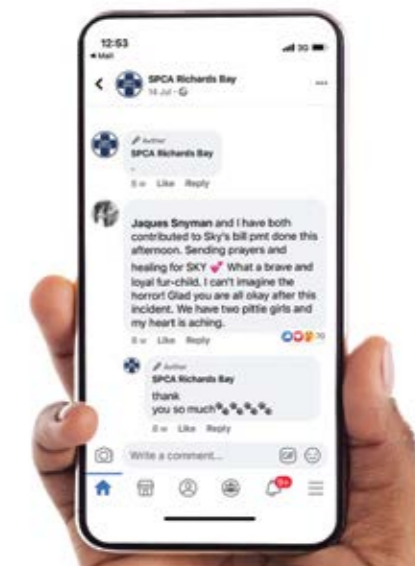


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Hans says he has seen many animal shelters in his previous career as a police officer, “There is no other SPCA like Richards Bay. It’s the best in the country because of the people who work there. Beverly Thole and Engela Hamman are truly amazing. And Dr Singery and Dr Charl Nehore who treated Skye at Meerensee, they are fantastic with the animals.”

“We are so lucky to have such a dedicated team in Meerensee who have once again shown the will to go above and beyond the call of duty,” relates Gail Nel a long-time client of Meerensee Veterinary Clinic.

At Skye’s last check-up the vets gave her a clean bill of health. “She’s back to her old self. Her hair just needs to grow back,” says Hans.



Like all great stories this one starts with a conflict, tragedy, and despair. But, really, it’s what happens thereafter that reignites our belief in the real everyday heroes all around us.



Footnote: Local police instantly recognised the intruder on the CCTV footage from the incident. They have since tracked him down and arrested him in relation to four other open cases.