



*Community  
Events*

COMMUNITY  
EVENTS

## N3TC Drak Challenge

Years Funded: Nine • Province: KwaZulu-Natal

Route Map: 



**T**he destination is Underberg, a 'sleepy hollow' in the southern Drakenberg known for idyllic views and cold, snowy winters. But it comes alive in the summer months as the Umzimkulu River flows through the valley (on a good rainy season, that is)... at times one can hear a gentle trickle as the river flows gently over giant boulders in parts of the riverbed; and at other times it gushes through the valley and the boulders are lost to sight.

This is the story of the N3TC Drak Challenge. A true community-owned and organised event on the South African canoeing calendar. It is known for outstanding paddling in some of the cleanest water in South Africa, it is recognised for outstanding organisation and most of all for an incredibly fun, exhilarating and challenging time.

From racing down the river for the top paddlers in the country to those portaging across more difficult river terrain it is a race for one and all – beginner, advanced, amateur and elite. It is an event that caters for the family and supports local charities, changing lives one stroke of the paddle at a time.

The N3TC Drak Challenge has been the recipient of awards from Canoeing South Africa in recognition of its organisation and contribution to canoeing in South Africa. More than 5000 entrants in the past seven years have been able to enjoy this event but more importantly the local community has been able to provide superior quality event service and delivery as a result of N3TC's investment in the event but more importantly in the community the event ultimately serves.



The Underberg village is alive with paddlers, supporters, families and media for the annual N3TC Drak Challenge, the array of accommodation venues are filled to capacity and restaurants and cafes are brimming with people as locals scuttle around making sure that their guests' every desire is met, with a smile and a genuine heart of hospitality – that is the spirit of this community.

With N3TC's support the Drak Challenge team, entirely comprised of volunteers from the community, has been able to continuously improve the event and the service offered to paddlers. Typically, 'no stone is left unturned' as planning is undertaken year-on-year with a critical view to ensuring that every aspect of the event is well managed, executed and delivered so that every paddler has an incredible but safe experience.

Equally important to the Drak Challenge team is the contribution the event makes to supporting local charities, organisations and community projects. This makes a significant difference to the lives of those living in Underberg and the surrounding communities as the spin-off benefits have far reaching impact.

The race acts as a significant fund-raising platform for local community projects. Some are environmentally focussed such as the eradication of Wattle along the Umzimkulu River, others have contributed to the education of children in the community through its support of Underberg Primary School and the vulnerable members of the Underberg community, the residents of Pevensey Place, are taken care of.

As the popularity of the N3TC Drak Challenge has grown it has been able to attract additional investment that further supports these initiatives. Another significant partner, FNB, recently signed up and is contributing to further amplify and secure the future of the event.

The N3TC Drak Challenge is but one of many other local events, but it is a highlight on the Underberg calendar and has fast grown into one of N3TC's most significant community event investments that touches lives near, far and wide.



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## Meals on Wheels Cycle Race

Years Funded: Nine • Province: Gauteng

Route Map: **A**



**A**s the infamous saying goes, 'dynamite comes in small packages', and there is no better example of this than that of Louis Harmse from Spectrum Sport – founder and organiser of the annual Meals on Wheels Cycle Race.

Louis is an avid cyclist, a Comrades Marathon enthusiast, founder of the Ironman in South Africa and sports event organiser extraordinaire. And despite these accolades Louis remains humble, family focused and dedicated to supporting the vulnerable members of South African society.

This is the magnitude of the man behind the Meals on Wheels event, but he is the first to mention that he cannot do it alone and relies on a much bigger team to support him. His team includes many members of his family as well as his beautiful wife Rinette, who quietly supports and encourages Louise while anticipating what he may be thinking or wanting to achieve. A formidable husband and wife team!

*"It is thanks to the generous support from N3TC that the first Meals on Wheels Cycle Race kicked off at Sedaven in Heidelberg nine years ago."* **Louis Harmse**

It was a chilly and windy day in September 2013, when 290 entrants lined up for the first race. It was a tough one as the cyclists battled gusty conditions but the team celebrated the R26 000 that was raised for Meals on Wheels in the area and would further support them in the delivery of nutritious, healthy and wholesome meals to less-fortunate elderly citizens and vulnerable children in the communities they serve. It was a resounding success for Louis and the team.



Today, the Meals on Wheels race has become a sought-after qualifying race in South Africa. Its location makes it unique and cyclists enjoy the beautiful mountains and scenery of the Soutpansberg. It's the day that the city 'slickers' descend on the quaint village of Sedaven to enjoy a day out while cycling for a good cause.

Entries have naturally grown over the years with over 900 received in 2018 and the profit donated to Meals on Wheels was R149 000 – even more reason to celebrate was the fact that the proceeds from the race had doubled in two years.

In 2018, the road met the trails of the Soutpansberg. As the team introduced a challenging trail run to complement the speedy road race. Despite a somewhat small field participating in the first event, it is anticipated that the trail run will grow.

One runner mentioned: *"This is such a beautiful route. I will definitely come every year. The event was inspiring and lifted my spirits."*

Local ECDs (Early Childhood Development Centres) next to Sedaven managed the water points and community members were invited to participate. Some of the income from the trail run will benefit the ECD centres as well as the Pathfinder Association that focuses on developing young leaders for our country.

The Meals on Wheels Cycle Challenge and now the Sedaven Trail Run certainly brings the

community together to make a difference in thousands of people's lives.

The community impact linked to the event is having far-reaching affect. The Meals on Wheels event is one of their major fundraisers for many local charities as they host water points, food stalls and provide additional services that contribute to the event's offering.

Through the Meals on Wheels event more than 25 local ECD centres were identified and have received valuable training over the last three years through N3TC's support and interventions.

Sindile Ntanda the principal of Siphiliswe Day Care Centre at Sedaven said that the Meals on Wheels event gave them opportunities they would not have had otherwise. *"Because of N3TC we not only benefit from the race but from training provided by Lusa. We have grown so much, and we can see the difference in our children. We now send school ready children to Grade 1. We are empowered. Thank you so much N3TC for the Meals on Wheels race and the training."*

While one may think that supporting an event of this nature only benefits the entrants that is really not the case in a truly community-spirited context. In the case of the Meals on Wheels Cycle Challenge that supports many local communities – their people, children and the elderly – and showcases the Heidelberg region, it is contributing to the economic growth of the area.



## 1000 Paws Walk for SPCAs

**Years Funded: Six**  
**Province: KwaZulu-Natal**

Route Map: **K**



***"A far wider range of sponsors now support the event, from insurance companies and other 'corporates' to local retailers and veterinary clinics. The event has also become far more multi-faceted, combining various activities to promote the 1000 Paws Walk."***

The 1000 Paws Walk for SPCAs is an annual event, now in its 11<sup>th</sup> year, and has been a beneficiary of support from N3TC since 2013.

The event is the largest single fundraising event for three participating branches of the SPCA, Pietermaritzburg, Umngeni-Howick, and Mooi River & District. It contributes significantly towards these SPCAs

continued operations and for more outreach work to be done through this increase in funds.

The event is extremely popular, attracting in excess of 1200 people each year (many with their dogs). There are two walks within the grounds of Hilton College, a 2km walk around the playing fields and a scenic 4km walk overlooking Albert Falls Dam.

Families enjoy a day in the open where kids can have fun with their pets, with dog-focused activities, stalls, refreshments, displays and live entertainment.



## Royal Drak MTB and Trail Run

**Years Funded: Eight**  
**Province: KwaZulu-Natal**

Route Map: **F**

***“The Royal Drakensberg Primary School inspires the wider community to be better: we don't have to accept litter and harshness as the only way. Children that grow in the happy environment of the school open the eyes of their community members to what can be.”***

N3TC's decision to support the Royal Drak MTB and Trail Run was based on the fundamental principle that the proceeds of the event contribute to the fund-raising efforts of Royal Drak Primary School. It provides a hand-up to an impoverished community and highlights the importance of a quality education.

Further spin-off benefits are centered around creating awareness of the school, the Northern and Central Drakensberg as a tourist destination and the subsequent economic impact on the local tourism sector through the event.

Royal Drak Primary School provides its learners with hope for a future, but the broader impact on the AmaZizi Tribal Area and the Northern Drakensberg Valley is far reaching.

Community members see how life can be; their children are taught first world ideas in excellent facilities; donors see the growth and improvement in the children; local businesses are inspired to do their part in closing the poverty gap; and visitors contribute towards meaningful support of the community.

N3TC's support touches lives directly and the success is showcased in the children who get the opportunity to learn to read and write and who have a real chance of growing into successful leaders of the future.





## Splashy Fen

**Years Funded: Four**  
**Province: KwaZulu-Natal**

Route Map: 

**Splashy Fen is South Africa's oldest music festival. Impi Events took over the operation of this event in 2016, which had an attendance of 2800. In 2019, the event attracted 11 500 people.**

With N3TC's support the event has been able to include local rural music acts in the Splashy Fen programme; and cover the costs of their logistics to attend the event. In this way, these artists are gaining a platform to showcase their talent and establish a foundation for ongoing promotion of their music in South Africa.

Over 80 rural musicians have been provided an opportunity to perform at the festival, an opportunity that they wouldn't have had before.

Splashy Fen is yet another community event that contributes to the local economy of Underberg and Himeville and the surrounding rural district communities.





## joBerg2c

**Years Funded: Ten**  
**Province: KwaZulu-Natal**

Route Map: 

***“N3TC has, by association, been part of the one of the most significant community mountain bike events ever.”***

N3TC has supported joBerg2c for 10 years as one of the event's supporting sponsors through its Dropngo2c Supporters Tour and has contributed to creating one of the most incredible multi-stage, world renowned MTB events in South Africa.

joBerg2c works with eight schools and 24 community-run water points, all of which contribute to the fund-raising initiatives of the individual institutions that host these water points. All of which have a direct benefit on their communities and the beneficiaries they serve. The event is also responsible for creating temporary and permanent employment through the development of the trails along the route.

The Nelson Mandela Education programme is the national beneficiary of the event that has been responsible for establishing 14 libraries in rural areas along the joBerg2c route.

joBerg2c also partners with Surgeons for Little Lives – a charity focused on improving post-operative care for children at Baragwaneth Hospital.

The respective schools that benefit from the joBerg2c use the event as their biggest fund raiser for the year. The proceeds have contributed to employing extra teachers, the purchase of school buses, funding new classrooms and essential maintenance at the individual schools.

N3TC through the Dropngo2c Supporters Tour has contributed to profiling the N3 Corridor region and the tourism destinations along the way. By promoting these, predominantly, rural communities as tourism destinations, there is the potential for knock-on economic benefit both during the event and beyond as many supporters return to these destinations on other occasions.

The event, through the support of sponsors like N3TC, is an authentic 'feel-good' story of South Africa.

