

Algoa FM investigates boy's Springbok wish via social media

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Christmas wishes do come true - thanks to the intervention of people like Algoa FM journalist Doreen Loubser, who ensured that a young boy's rugby jersey that had been signed by all the Springbok Sevens team players was given to him just in time for Christmas.



Jay-Dee Van Loggerenberg receives gift just in time for Christmas from Algoa FM News journalist Doreen Loubser

The making of the present started at the Sevens tournament played at Nelson Mandela Bay Stadium between December 7 and December 8.

A former professional rugby player for Western Province Rito Hlungwani made friends with 10-year-old Jay-Dee van Loggerenberg and his family after he accidentally sat on their seats.

Rito overheard the boy saying to his uncle how he wants his jersey signed by the team. Rito, who knows some of the players, offered to have Jay-Dee's jersey signed.

"We took his top and gave it to Hugh who is the Springbok physiotherapist. He said he would return the shirt to us the following day. I gave the father my cell number and told him to contact me the following day which he never did. I'm hoping I didn't give him the wrong number," said a concerned Hlungwani.

"Rito phoned Algoa FM News from Cape Town on the morning of Wednesday, 11 December to ask our help in tracking down this young boy," says Doreen.

"We were more than delighted to help with this very special mission and could see how eager Rito was to keep his promise to the young boy. After the call he immediately sent us a picture that he got off his PVR. He had recorded the game and when he watched it again, to his astonishment, the boy was recorded. He attached an image of the boy and some pictures that one of his friends took of the uncle and sent it through to us."

Doreen made the post on the Algoa FM news Facebook page on Wednesday, December 11, and within the first five minutes the post received over 150 shares and 24,000 views and a stream of comments.

Within minutes the mother's best friend, Janine Julyan, sent Algoa FM News an inbox message with the name of the mother and contact details.

"The mother was absolutely elated.

"They had gone back to the stadium the Sunday with the hope of finding Rito, but without any luck. When Jay-Dee got home he was terribly disappointed, but kept on saying, 'I know I'll get my jersey back signed, because Rito promised'," said Amanda van Loggerenberg, mother of Jay-Dee.

The boy was reunited with his Springbok jersey on Christmas Eve on Algoa FM's Daron Mann Breakfast Show and got the opportunity to call Hlungwane and personally thank his hero.

"I think what makes this story so special is that it took place at an event that is so symbolic of what Nelson Mandela stood

for just two days after his passing. It took place at a stadium bearing his name, in support of a team that he supported so that South Africa could reunite and follow his example of forgiveness. Most importantly this exchange of Ubuntu took place between two different groups of people that he fought so hard to reunite and effortlessly became good trusting friends. This is a perfect example of the spirit of Ubuntu and the legacy that he has left behind. We should constantly be reminded of his legacy so that we challenge ourselves to keep it alive," says Loubser.

"One of the things that make a good journalist is finding the extraordinary in what is seemingly an ordinary story and exposing it to show the world that every person has the ability to do great things. Just because all stories don't make headline news doesn't mean that they aren't worth telling," says Shadley Nash, News Editor of Algoa FM.

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