**UKZN produces the Youngest Medical Graduate in its history**

*Words By Maryann Francis*

Dr Sandile Kubheka, recently completed his MBChB degree from UKZN’s College of Health Sciences at the young age of 20, making him the youngest MBChB graduate in its history.

Kubheka who hails from Newcastle in the KZN province, was ecstatic to be the youngest graduate and to have also attained a distinction in Obstetrics and Gynaecology. He was voted by his class as a recipient for the Yashiv Sham Bursary for having compassion and caring qualities and the Enid Gordon Jacob Good fellowship Prize for character and good conduct which in the eyes of his fellow classmates promoted good companionship.

Kubheka began his formal schooling at the tender age of 5. He was promoted in April of his Grade 6 year to Grade 7 and completed his schooling at Siyamukhela High School at the age of 15. He then enrolled at UKZN’s Nelson R Mandela School of Medicine where he served in the Rural Development Club, in the Happy Valley Clinic and in the Medical Student’s Representative Council.

Kubheka volunteered much of his time, providing free medical treatment and advice to rural communities attending the Happy Valley Clinic and Madadeni hospital. He enjoys giving back to the community and had this to say, ‘I love working especially with rural communities that often don’t have easy access to medical treatment. I assisted in registering the Happy Valley Clinic as a Non-Profit Organisation during my student years and will continue to work with disadvantaged communities in the future.’

‘I’ve had a very humble upbringing and my mum has greatly assisted in keeping me grounded. My mum raised me on her own as well as my four siblings. I am the first to qualify as a doctor in my family.’

Kubheka is serving his internship at Grey’s hospital in Pietermaritzburg. He hopes to eventually register for a Masters of Medicine degree, specializing in Internal Medicine and to super specialize at some stage in Endocrinology. Kubheka said he acquired an interest in Endocrinology after being inspired by UKZN’s Head of Department of Diabetes and Endocrinology, Professor Ayesha Motola, as well as having a family member who has Type 2 Diabetes.

The medical class of 2013 also voted Kubheka as most likely to be ‘the next South African Minister of Health.’