

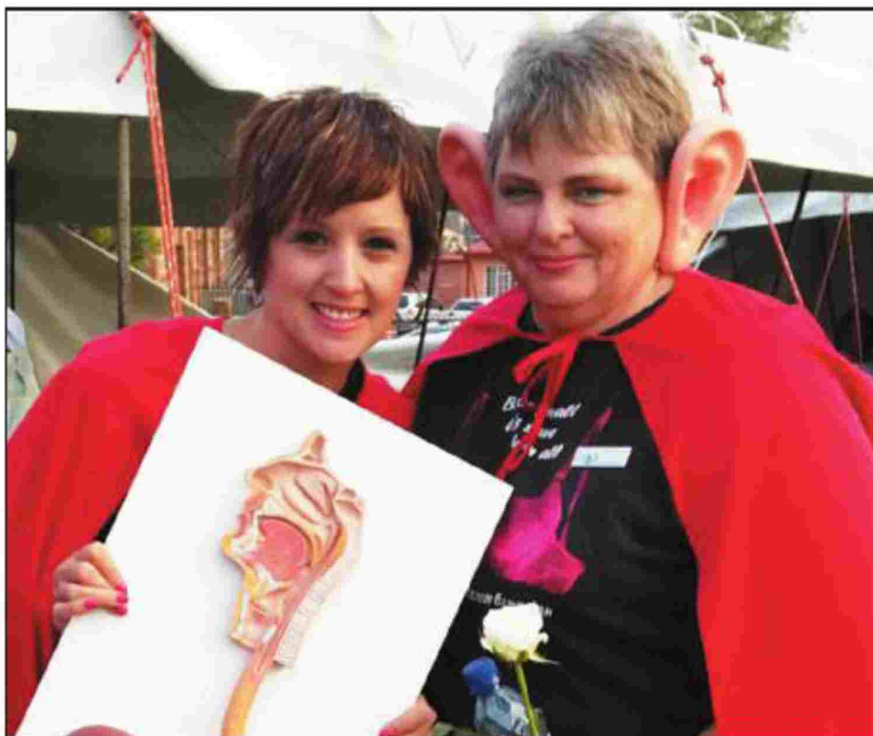
Spotlight on volunteers who really care

International Volunteers Day on 5 December, will pay homage to those individuals who give their time and effort to a good cause, while touching the lives of those they come into contact with.

This week, **Newcastle Express** shines the spotlight on two local ladies, Michelle Apperley and Lutfiya Peer, who volunteer at CANSA, Newcastle Office. 47-year old mother of two, Michelle Apperley said she got involved in CANSA in 2011.

"I was tired of dyeing my long hair. The easiest way to curb this problem, was to cut it short and donate my hair to CANSA. Someone at work said they would pay me if I cut my hair, others said they would pay me if I didn't. I then approached friends and family to donate money if I cut my hair. Three days later I had raised R4500 for CANSA," she explained.

She said that the highlight for her has been working with the wonderful volunteers and businesses for the 2011 and 2012 Relay For Life, when she served as chairperson. "I am not the type of person who can deal with personal emotions well, so I have always been more on the fundraising side of CANSA. Most people are willing to assist and support CANSA, they just don't know how to become involved," she added. Apperley said that people



Michelle Apperley during a CANSA Initiative, seen with Anna Marie from CANSA



CANSA volunteer Lutfiya Peer

want to be loved and appreciated.

"Sometimes you only realise that you have the potential to change people's lives, when you are given the opportunity to give your experiences to those around you. I would never have seen myself as a volunteer for CANSA, but someone from the office phoned and asked me if I am

interested in volunteering.

"I am now that person asking you, the reader, if you are interested in volunteering for CANSA," Apperley said further. Apperley believes there is so much one can do for a cancer patient, be it cutting their grass, fetching their post, buying groceries, cooking a meal, taking them to the

doctor or phoning to see if they are alright. "It does not matter your race, gender or age, cancer can affect us all. Just as volunteering can," she concluded.

Seeking to make a difference in the lives of others, CANSA volunteer Lutfiya Peer, said her purpose for joining CANSA in 2013, was to help

the sick and create an environment of happiness for them.

"This experience has changed my outlook on life and the way I view people around me. Helping others has made me realise how privileged I am," she said. Her advice for people interested in volunteering, is that they should be unafraid

to talk and interact with others. "Sometimes communication with other volunteers can be difficult, especially if they are not easy going, but always stay focused and know that you are helping someone," she encouraged. At age 20, Peer said she is always on the look-out for new opportunities to expand her knowledge and grow as an individual.