

## Editors Note

The sun is slow to rise and early to set, the leaves are falling from the trees; autumn has arrived, along with our first edition of embraceTALK for 2013. The first quarter has been busy and we have a lot to TALK about as we continually strive to partner in your success, leaving no stone unturned.

In this edition we recognise that every company is unique and there is no such thing as "one size fits all", which is why we pride ourselves on being able to easily tailor Embrace to suit client specific requirements, ensuring a perfect fit. Taking this one step further, future releases of Embrace will include "user exits". These are routines that facilitate site-specific customisations without affecting the standard programs and its features. They also support software upgrades and follow-on releases, eliminating the need to "recustomise", allowing clients to embrace the latest release of software.

Our Special Feature TALK's about the fully integrated Embrace Point of Sale Module, which helps retailers build customer trust and satisfaction, improving their bottom line, which some of our clients are taking full advantage of.

On this note, we take great pride in presenting our Case Study on how "Union Tiles cements efficient customer service and inventory control by implementing the fully integrated Embrace business solution, leaving no tile unturned."

We have experienced our fair share of "Movers and Shakers" in the past few months and extend a warm welcome to new members of Team Embrace, wishing them a long, happy and rewarding career at ACS.

Our Outreach Team has been very busy and we report back on our successful "Treevolution" and other physically demanding initiatives. Thank for your continued support and best wishes for a successful 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter.

*Scanette*



## Inside this issue

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Left: Steve Wookey- Managing Director

## From the desk of our Managing Director Development Update – Partnering in your Success

Every company is unique and no single ERP solution is going to Embrace 100% of a company's requirements, unless enhancements or customisations are made, tailoring the solution to their exact needs. This ensures a successful implementation with both users and business processes and closes the gap between a good solution and one that fits every facet of a company perfectly.

Based on feedback we have received from our clients, one of the most compelling reasons they chose Embrace, was the availability of source code and the ability to easily customise the software to meet their exact needs. The software could be adapted to the business rather than the business needing to change in order to use the software.

Over the last 28 years, an impressive library of customisations has been built up across our client base and whilst in recent times, we have made a concerted effort to incorporate the more general ideas into standard Embrace, there remains a lot of client specific code out there. In some cases these customisations contain protected intellectual property that give the client a competitive advantage in their industry and for that reason cannot be included in standard package.

Embrace has always catered for discreet custom software libraries, allowing custom routines to easily co-exist with standard package. In addition, screen customisations per user or group of users could be set up by system administrators and overlaid on the standard screens. Screen customisations and subroutines typically integrate with new versions or service packs seamlessly, which has been of great benefit to our clients. However, where changes to the core of Embrace were required, or where additional prompts were required to standard programs, the whole program was typically moved into the custom library where it was tailored to the user's requirements. This was fine until a new version or service pack was implemented on site, at which stage the customisation had to be completely re-implemented, based on the latest version of the standard program, which was both costly and time consuming and required full testing of the routine after the re-customisation was complete.

The next major release of Embrace will go a long way to improving and streamlining the custom environment. Inactive prompts will be reserved on every standard screen for site customisations. On site, the prompts can be activated and tailored to a client's needs, without a change to the standard source code. Logic around these prompts can be stored in pre-defined user exit routines, catering for before and after logic, as well as transaction update coding. More complex routines that require extra screens can still be coded seamlessly by using the Embrace User Exit routines. These routines can be spliced into the core of standard programs without the actual core needing to be moved into the custom libraries.

It does mean that some effort and planning will be required before migrating to the new way of doing things. Existing customisations will need to be analysed and evaluated to see how best to exploit the new facilities. Initial migration costs may be slightly higher, however the returns will soon be realised with the release of service packs and new versions. Clients will still have the option to continue as before with some or all of their customisations, should they prefer this route.

As mentioned, these new facilities will only be available in our next major release of Embrace, and because we are still in the development stage, there is time for suggestions, requests and comments around customisations. Please email your ideas to [loqs@embrace.co.za](mailto:loqs@embrace.co.za).

We believe these improvements will make a big difference to the customisation process, making it more robust, reliable and importantly more cost effective both in the short term and for the on-going cost of ownership. Staying current and embracing the latest release of software, while still taking advantage of the customisations which give clients their competitive edge, will be simpler, faster and will ensure their continued success.

Steve Wookey – Managing Director

## Did You Know?

Embrace has a fully integrated Point of Sale Module, which

- Handles any combination of discounts, returns, quotes, pro-forma, till pay-outs, suspended sales and specials.
- Supports customer loyalty cards allowing retailers to retain and reward their customers.
- Includes a full "Laybye" management system
- Allows for functions such as pre-planned promotional sales and multiple payment types.
- Supports customer account payments at POS
- Is VAT Compliant
- Quick referencing for Popular Items
- Suspend and Resume Sales

## Payment Methods Supported

- Cash
- Cheque
- Postal Order
- Travellers Cheques
- Credit Card
- Debit Card
- Transfer
- Loyalty Card
- Coupons

## Embrace Cashier and Point of Sale Module

The Embrace full-featured Point of Sale Module delivers a robust set of retail functionality, right out of the box, but it can also be tailored to match the retailer's specific requirements and business needs.

The system was designed as a discreet system in its own right, yet it is fully integrated into the Embrace Cash Book, Debtors, General Ledger, Sales, Inventory and Service modules, allowing retailers to maintain complete control over all aspects of sales and inventory management, while presenting an easy to use and professional Point of Sale.

The design allows for full functionality as an integrated Point of Sale system being closely coupled to Sales Order Entry as well as an extremely powerful Standalone Cashier Function. In the Standalone Cashier mode, the functionality is far more extensive, allowing Cash Book functions from within the Cashier System, while still being able to access Sales, Service and Debtors transactions for immediate payment and credit availability.

Embrace supports complex pricing and discount matrixes, including discounts or price lists per customer, quantity discounts, as well as promotional prices or specials set up to commence on a certain date at a specified time. These are automatically applied, ensuring pricing accuracy at the POS. This improves customer trust and satisfaction, helping retailers build stronger customer relationships and improve their bottom line.

The Embrace POS system has been designed for operation with both a keyboard and/or mouse or



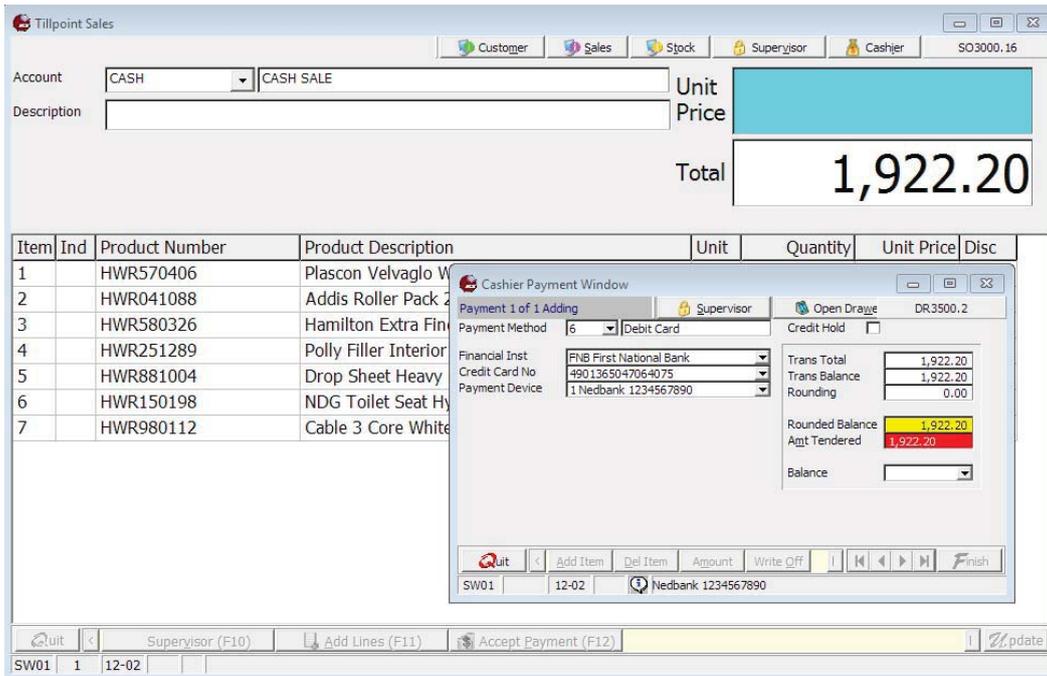
touch screen and can handle any type of independent retail or multi-branch environment. It supports all the modern retail devices including bar code scanners, pole displays, cash drawers & receipt printers.

### Key Features

#### General Features

- Powerful Standalone Cashier Function that can still link to Sales and Service orders as well as post payments at an account level.
- Integrated Point of Sale function available from within standard Sales Order Entry.
- Till Point Mode which uses large font display and a quick entry interface that auto stock adjusts up should the stock holding be incorrect.
- Payments can be received for customers and orders belonging to other branches.





## Did you know?

Embrace has the following fully Integrated Modules:

- General Ledger
- Debtors
- Creditors
- Multi Currency
- Cash Book
- Fixed Assets
- Sales
- Cashier Receipting
- Point-of-Sale
- CRM
- Service
- Service Contracts
- Deal Management
- Rental/Hire
- Purchasing
- Shipments (Imports)
- Auto Procurements
- Forecasting
- DRP (Distribution Requirements Planning)
- Inventory
- Price Book (Full Inventory Costing)
- Lot and Serial/Batch Control
- Warehouse Tracking (WMS)
- Stock Reconfigures
- Engineering
- MRPII
- Workflow
- Output Management
- Web Services
- Faxing and Emailing
- Utilities and Report Writer

- Immediate credit availability once payment is entered.
- Functionality controlled by a user Cashier Code which determines what a cashier may or may not do as well as controlling limits for authorisation waiver.
- Supervisor override based on codes and passwords that can be used at any point in the transaction to override restrictions.
- Full Cash Float control and management, allowing for cash drops, top up replenishments and adjustments.
- Till and Cashier Batch control with cash up takings entry to assist in cash up reconciliations.
- Till sheet reconciliation print.
- Powerful enquiries with drill-down facilities to the lowest level.
- Cash rounding to nearest coin denomination in circulation.
- Interfaces to banking and credit card systems provided for.
- User defined selection of additional information to be captured at time of payment such as Payee ID number.
- Flexible batching and reconciling of transactions before posting through to Cash Book, General Ledger and Debtors modules.

## Transaction Types Supported

- Account Payments
- Sales Order Payments
- Service Job Payments
- Account Refunds
- Sales Credit Refunds
- Service Credit Refunds
- Sundry Receipts
- Sundry Disbursements
- Cash Drops
- Cash Replenishments
- Cash Float Adjustments
- Encashments
- Transaction Voiding



## Union Tiles cements efficient customer service and inventory control by implementing the fully integrated Embrace business solution, leaving no tile unturned.



### The Company

Union Tiles (Pty) Ltd has evolved from its 1910 origin as a small Johannesburg based cement and terrazzo tile producer, to become a multi-faceted wall and floor tile corporation dealing in ceramic, porcelain and natural stone, while also offering a wide range of associated building material products and services.

The company expanded its operation into three separate divisions under the Union Tiles banner, each specializing in different floor and wall tiles, and related products.

The ceramic division, namely "Union Mosaic & Tiles", retails and wholesales a wide range of ceramic, porcelain and terracotta wall and floor tiles, as well as bathroom accessories and sanitary ware.

The natural stone division, namely "National Tiles", specialises in all forms of natural materials in tile and slab form, comprising of sandstone, slate, marble, granite, limestone, quartzite and Silestone® and also specialises in all natural stone polishing, processing and quarrying equipment.

The mother company "Union Flooring Tiles", manufacture a wide range of cementitious tiles, wall coatings, plasters, pebbles and coloured stone chips and in addition supply white and grey cement.

Union Tiles currently have ten distribution outlets, situated in Bedfordview, Randburg, Tshwane, Nelspruit, Bloemfontein, Ballito, Pietermaritzburg, Cape Town, Windhoek and Lusaka (Zambia), with its head office located in Bedfordview. The group has over 400 employees within its various divisions and covers other outlying regions through its independent distribution network as well as supplying large export contracts to neighbouring countries.

### The Challenge

There was a lot of change and growth in the group and their previous ERP System soon became inadequate as it was rigid, had limited support, and could not meet their growing and changing requirements. More and more had to be done manually as the system was not giving the required internal controls. Union Tiles recognised that they needed an integrated, centralised business solution to manage their 10 branches, 2 Manufacturing Companies

and 7 trading Companies. This included a fully integrated Accounting, Inventory Management, Distribution, Retail Point-Of-Sale and Manufacturing System, able to support a multi-company, multi branch and multi warehouse environment. The companies within the group are all individual entities, with their own cost structure that needed to integrate into a single Head Office.

"We looked at various ERP solutions but most were rigid, could not adapt to change or growth and we would have had to change our business processes to accommodate the system. With Embrace came flexibility, a comprehensive suite of integrated modules which could be tailored or customised according to our unique requirements, ensuring a 100% fit. We did not have to change any of our business processes."

– Ross De Abreu, Managing Director.

Cost was also a big factor and when comparing license and implementation costs to other ERP systems proposed, Embrace was the most cost-effective. A local product with easy access to local support was another key requirement. "The implementation and support team have been excellent, they met all our expectations and having them on our doorstep has been a huge advantage. ACS understands our business!"

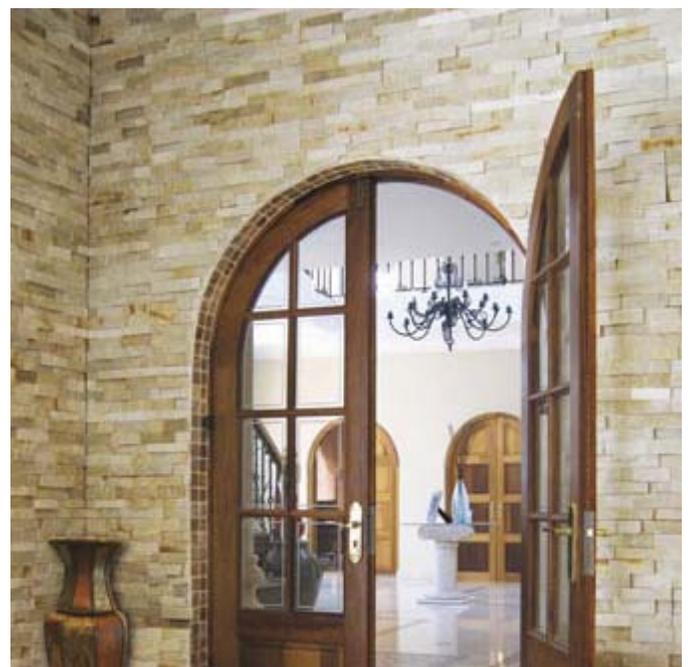
– Rhodri Harding, Assistant IT Manager.

### The Solution

Union Tiles buy locally, import, manufacture, distribute and retail to the public and all facets of their business are currently running on their Embrace end-to-end business solution.

"Embrace Stock management and reporting is excellent! Our stock efficiency has improved enormously. We have clear visibility of Stock turn, movement, in process, with indicators of when and how much to order. We can verify stock and have been able to close loopholes in terms of breakage and shrinkage by more than 25%."

– Ross De Abreu, Managing Director.



Embrace gives full visibility of Group stock across all Companies, Divisions and Branches in real-time and on one screen, enabling stock enquiries, intercompany transfers and sales to other group companies. A purchase order, which includes transport costs is raised, invoiced and then "GRV'd", in one seamless process.

Salespeople are able to advise customers immediately whether there is stock available, if there is sufficient stock in their specified colour, to meet their square metre requirements as well as where the stock is physically located. Embrace splits the number of square metres required into boxes, advising customers how many boxes are required and then determines the tonnage. They are able to assist customers in planning how they will take delivery of their goods, as Embrace gives them the weight in kilos, the weight their vehicle can safely load and the number of trips required.

This has further assisted Union Tiles with distribution planning and delivery costs, as Embrace calculates the correct weight and volumes to be loaded onto their trucks, ensuring safety standards are met and avoiding delays and fines at vehicle weighing stations.

Stock can be assigned to a customer or project which the customer secures by paying for it up front. Embrace allocates this stock to "Prepaid", issues a Proforma Invoice and while the stock can be seen by other salespeople, it cannot be sold to another customer. The customer "draws" or takes delivery of the stock as he needs it and is invoiced accordingly. Although already paid for, the sale is not recognised or invoiced until the goods leave the store, giving Union Tiles full visibility as to what is in their sales pipeline.

"We may consider implementing the integrated Embrace Warehouse Management System with scanning and barcoding in the future which will further assist with labour and stock efficiency as well as ensure faster and more efficient customer service."

- Ross De Abreu, Managing Director.

#### The Benefits

"The integrated Embrace Retail and Point-of-Sale System has saved us a lot of time, money and administration while improving our time to service the customer", Ana Chaves, IT Manager. "Client payments on the old system were cumbersome, because of the group structure. The management company is Union Tiles (Pty) Ltd and while we are one group, we would have to generate separate transactions. Clients used to receive three separate invoices, make three separate payments, then go to three separate areas, to receive their goods. With Embrace, the transaction is

captured and the system will then generate separate invoices for the relevant companies as well as picking slips to the relevant warehouses so that when customers collect their goods, their goods are ready for collection. The client pays once and Embrace splits the relevant amounts between the different companies. There is one view of the transaction and it is now much quicker and easier for customers to collect their goods."



Embrace has a centralised credit management system, which can be viewed across the group, preventing customers from exceeding their credit limit at any branch. "With the consolidated reporting, we are able to generate and evaluate reports quickly, resulting in more accurate and timely information for focusing on reducing bad debt and increasing cash flow. This has helped save a lot of time in terms of administration and improved customer service. We now have time to focus on other risk areas as well as strategic aspects of our business." – Nico Smit, Chief Financial Officer.

"In the past we did not have a fully comprehensive accounting and business system. Now we have a complete business system, which is integrated and linked to stock management. Embrace has grown with us. We can take on new operations and factories effortlessly." -Ross De Abreu, MD. For example, "Africote", a paint, plaster and coloured screed manufacturing division was brought onto the

system, Bills of Materials (BOM) created and users trained, with limited assistance from ACS. "Five new branches have opened since Embrace was implemented and we were able to train the branch managers ourselves, who in turn trained their staff."

– Ana Chaves, IT Manager.

Ana further explains that "before implementing Embrace, Union Tiles had to run 15 month-ends, one for every individual company. This was cumbersome and time consuming and then still needed to be manually consolidated. Now, on Embrace, we run one group month-end, which is simpler and requires little manual intervention." Banking is also simpler and faster as payments are made into one Head Office account and in Embrace we can then allocate the payment across companies, and get a consolidated report showing the allocation between companies.

"Statements and invoices are being e-mailed directly out of Embrace, saving a lot of time, paper, ink and postage costs."

"Embrace is running smoothly, without any intervention. It is user friendly, cost effective and used extensively throughout the group. Embrace gives us accurate, reliable, up to date, real time information at the right time to enable us to make important and strategic business decisions. Our Return on Investment has been significant!"

- Ross De Abreu, Managing Director.



## FAQ (Frequently Asked Question)

**Q:** Does Embrace have a CRM module that fully integrates into the package? We currently have a stand-alone CRM package which is cumbersome to use as we have to input everything twice. This means that the information is always outdated and unreliable. It would be a lot easier and more useful if Embrace updated the CRM automatically. How can we achieve this?

**A:** Yes Embrace does have a fully integrated Customer Relationship Management module, which enables any transaction that is processed in the Embrace ERP to be available immediately to the CRM dashboard. Source documents can be interrogated directly from the dashboard enabling easy access to information. For example, quotes captured by telesales are visible to sales executives immediately for execution from the dashboard. In anticipation of a sales visit, sales figures and credit details can be reviewed, while any service jobs executed in the past month can be accessed. You will never again need to input everything twice and all information will be current and reliable. We have received a lot of questions around CRM and will include it as a Special Feature in our next edition of embraceTALK. Meanwhile, contact your sales executive who will tailor a CRM demonstration to your specific requirements.

## Team Embrace TALK



**Top Left:** Rob Davidson **Top right:** Ruth Hale **Bottom Left:** Jeffrey Shulman **Bottom Right:** Michelle Foster



Our Team has continued to grow, excel and succeed. We start by welcoming and introducing you to our newest team members:

**Rob Davidson** is an Analyst Programmer with 16 years of experience and joins our Custom Development Team. He also has a wealth of knowledge and experience in Point-of-Sale Solutions. Rob – take note ladies - is single, plays golf, enjoys reading and going out with friends. We wish Rob a long and happy stay here at ACS.

**Ruth Hale** joins our Customer Support Team as an Assistant Account Manager and brings 20 years of Embrace experience and knowledge to the team, having been an Embrace client and user before joining ACS. Ruth was born in the UK, is married, has two children and enjoys reading, quizzes and spending time with family and friends. We welcome Ruth to the ACS-Embrace family and know that she will make lasting

friendships with her colleagues and clients as they benefit from her warm, calm, helpful and reassuring manner.

**Jeffrey Shulman** joins our Customer Support Team as an Assistant Account Manager. He is married, has 2 children, along with an Honours Degree in Industrial Engineering. Jeffrey has an interesting and colourful career history, having worked on different projects, ran a Safety Fuse production plant and a furniture manufacturing company before venturing into the exciting world of computers and software. Jeffrey plays league squash, is a keen photographer and "enjoys working at ACS and being part of a great team".

**Michelle Foster** joins ACS as the company Accountant, is married and has 2 children, both of whom are studying at University. Michelle started her career in the banking environment before branching out and running her own accounting firm which exposed her to many different business environments. Michelle looks forward to a long and rewarding career at ACS.

## Retirement

We say farewell to **Mary Fairon**, our Administration Manager, who after 26 years of service, retired from ACS. As the 3<sup>rd</sup> longest serving member of ACS, Mary has lived through several mergers and acquisitions, all with their own unique demands. With all these changes and challenges, she remained calm and loyal, doing what was required. Mary has touched many lives at ACS over the years, made a lasting impression and will be missed.

We also say farewell to **Shirley Goodrum**, our Bookkeeper, who after 14 years of service, retired from ACS earlier this month. Shirley joined ACS to assist Mary in the accounts department and to take over the invoicing and debtors function. From day one Shirley fitted right in with her warm, sunny personality that was instantly endearing.

We thank them for their contribution to ACS and wish them both a long, happy and rewarding retirement. They will always be part of the ACS community.



Mary Fairon and Shirley Goodrum

## Outreach TALK

Team Embrace uses "Pedal Power" to raise funds and create awareness for **FreeMe Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre**.

Team members Johann Van Rooyen and Lars Haacke were part of the ACS FreeMe peloton at the 94.7 Momentum Cycle Challenge in November last year. FreeMe needs all the help they can get as they have grown into a recognised wildlife rehabilitation centre and have to deal with hundreds of sick, injured and orphaned animals, brought from all over Gauteng and beyond. "It was a long, hot, tiring ride but well worth it. We believe we achieved our goal



and look forward to cycling for this worthy cause again next year." – Johann van Rooyen.



Above: Members of the ACS FreeMe peloton at the 94.7 Momentum Cycle Challenge

## FAQ (Continued)

**Q:** We are looking at purchasing new printers. What printers would you recommend that best work with Embrace? Are there certain specs we need to be aware of?

**A:** ACS recommends you choose a Laser printer that supports the PCL5 printer language with resident fonts. If the printer is to be used for reports as well as documents, we recommend a non-entry level printer that has front panel setup facilities that allows the printer to be defaulted to print in Landscape Fixed Font Compressed mode. For more information on the subject, we suggest you request a copy of our Embrace Printer Setup manual from your Embrace Sales Executive or Account Manager.

**Q:** If we want to e-mail directly out of Embrace, do we need to run VSIFax or is there another way of achieving this?

**A:** There are two ways to generate document emails out of Embrace. Either using VSIFax, which also gives you the ability to fax directly out of Embrace or, if faxing is not required, you can use LincolnPDF as an alternative, to generate high quality PDF documents that are SARS compliant and are based on your laser printed documents. These documents and reports are then sent as direct emails using the same document routings that VSIFax would use. Note that the LincolnPDF solution is only available to those sites that are running Windows servers for Embrace.

## Editors Brain Teasers

**Q:** A brick weighs 1kg + half a brick. How much does a brick and a half weigh?

**A:** See below

**Q:** What number am I?

I am equal to the sum of the cubes of my own digits. I am the sum of consecutive factorials and I am triangular. I am also, according to the New Testament, the number of fishes caught by the apostle, Simon Peter. What am I?

**Hint:** The sum of consecutive factorials starts with 1.

**A:** See below

## Last Word

### Words to Remember....

DID is a word of achievement

WON'T is a word of retreat

MIGHT is a word of bereavement

CAN'T is a word of defeat

OUGHT is a word of duty

TRY is a word of each hour

WILL is a word of beauty

CAN is a word of power

**Answer 2:**  $153 = 1^3 + 5^3 + 3^3 = 1 + 125 + 27 = 153$   
 $\frac{1}{2} \cdot 17 \cdot 18$  (The 17<sup>th</sup> triangular number).

**Answer 1:** 3kg

## embraceTALK

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## Outreach TALK



"The great French Marshall Lyautey once asked his gardener to plant a tree. The gardener objected that the tree was slow growing and would not reach maturity for 100 years. The Marshall replied, 'In that case, there is no time to lose; plant it this afternoon!'"

With no time to waste, our tree planting party at the **Ikwezilokuza Home** was a huge success and despite the intense heat, 81 fruit trees were planted. This was a great achievement and one that will leave a lasting legacy for many decades to come. Several residents helped, especially with the watering of the trees and they took great delight in doing so. They will continue to enjoy watering the trees and in time to come, relax in the shade, eat the fruit and sell what they do not need. Trees reverse the impacts of land degradation and provide food, energy and income, helping communities to achieve long-term economic and environmental

sustainability.

This ties in with the ACS "Water" project at the home, where they have limited access to Municipal water. Often there was barely enough, if any, for drinking and cooking. Addressing this problem, two pumps and water tanks were installed to enable residents to use borehole water. This has minimised their reliance on Municipal water and reduced costs significantly.

Borehole water is now being used to water their vegetable garden and trees as well as for the laundry. These projects have contributed significantly to the overall social and economic upliftment of the residents of the **Ikwezilokuza Home**.

"When the well's dry, we know the worth of water" – Benjamin Franklin



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