

## Raising funds for Operation Smile - Man vs Beast adventure

To raise funds for Operation Smile, which performs corrective surgeries on children born with cleft lips and palates, and Saving Survivors, which funds corrective facial surgeries on injured rhinos, the Cipla Foundation is planning the Man vs Beast adventure.



This will see endurance athletes David Grier and Andy Stuart race against jockeys Gillese de Villiers, Taryn Peters and Micah Antrobus on horseback.

According to David Grier, managing trustee of Cipla Foundation (Cipla SA's social enterprise division), this race will cover a distance of 800km in 16 days and will take place along the West Coast of Cape Town. "The ultimate physical and mental endurance race for man and horse alike, this initiative is geared to raise funds and awareness for the plight of children born with cleft lips and palates as well as rhinos who have survived poaching attacks and sustained facial injury."

Grier adds that one in every 700 children in Africa is born with a cleft lip or palate and one in 10 babies born with this condition does not see their first birthday. "Malnutrition, medical and psychological problems also compound the problem. Life can be a difficult and complicated place for children and not being able to smile shouldn't have to limit their experience of the world."

He says that another pressing issue on the continent is rhino poaching and points to statistics released by the South

African Department of Environmental Affairs in 2015, which indicated that approximately 1 964 rhinos have been killed by poachers since the beginning of 2014 to date. "Rhino poaching has reached a crisis point in the country and if the killing continues at this rate, we could see rhino deaths overtaking births between 2016 and 2018. There are many rhinos that survive the brutal poaching of their horns and Saving the Survivors, established in 2012, is committed to rescuing and medically treating injured rhinos and endangered species by performing life-saving corrective surgeries."

The extreme race conditions require a proper strategy, says Grier. "Both teams will aim to avoid the heat of the day by running during the early hours of the morning and covering the greater part of the planned distances before noon. Then both teams will break over the heat of the day and commence in the early hours of the evening."

The advantages that The Man Side have include their experience, the ability to climb up and over rock faces and fences, the ease of crossing water where necessary and their ability to judge their own coping mechanisms. The Beast Side will have to take alternative routes where barrier fences present themselves or horses refuse to cross water. The riders will have to use their experience to judge their horses coping abilities under the pressure of the race. The advantage of speed favours The Beast Side, but is that sustainable?

Both David and Andy have a rich heritage of running adventures behind them. They have covered India, Cuba, the UK and North Korea as a team, with a cumulative distance of 7,850km on foot - all in support of Miles for Smiles. Over the past 9 years David has covered nearly 25,000km on 6 adventures and in the process raised R 8.7 million towards corrective cleft lip and palate surgeries for 2,000 children.

Gillese is a world-renowned competitive endurance rider. She has had the privilege of representing the South African team 11 times and has reached a 3 star achievement level in the sport. Her support team consists of two additional horse and rider combinations who will ride alongside her, reinforcing the herd instinct that is important to horses. "Both support riders are Cipla Vet employees, a reinforcement of the organisation's commitment to the cause."

In preparation Gillese started training one of her young Beast's, Rooi Jan, who she says is ready to kick some dust and take on the challenge. "Donators have a choice on whether to donate to Miles for Smiles or Saving the Survivors or both initiatives."

Donations for the Man vs Beast are open and individuals may contribute by visiting [Miles for Smiles](#) or by sending a SMS charged at R25 to 41014.

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