



Rural Doctor's Association of Southern Africa

“Inspiring others to rural health”

RuDASA Rural Doctor of the Year Award 2020

The Pierre Jaques RuDASA Rural Doctor of the Year award was first awarded in 2002 and is usually presented at the Annual Rural Health conference. Due to the COVID 19 pandemic this conference was not held in the usual format in 2020.

Over the last 18 years 6 doctors from the Eastern Cape have received this award. Dr Angela Hartwig is the 3rd recipient from Amathole district.

Angela Hartwig studied medicine at Pretoria University. She did her internship at Mthatha and Frere hospitals and then completed community service at the Church of Scotland hospital, Tugela Ferry in KZN. She worked in Greytown, KZN for 4 years in a variety of jobs, including as a substitute Life Science teacher for 3 months! She and her family also volunteered in Malawi for 5 months in 2019. She has a post graduate diploma in Clinical management of HIV/AIDs from UKZN, and a Masters in Public Health from the University of Liverpool. She is currently enrolled in a post graduate diploma in community and general paediatrics through UCT.

In March 2020 Angela and her family (husband and 2 children) moved to Adelaide. In the first month of working at the hospital, she was the only doctor. Shortly after commencing work, COVID 19 lockdown started. The next few months were a whirl of activity – Adelaide became a hotspot for COVID 19 resulting in many patients being admitted needing oxygen. Angela was pregnant and also contracted COVID 19. She was admitted in the ward and continued to help manage patients from her ward!

Angela worked tirelessly during this time, including during her maternity leave. There were only a few days during her maternity leave when she didn't come into the hospital. She encouraged support to the clinics, health education to the staff and sent an encouraging voice note each day to the hospital staff. She attended many zoom meetings to discuss COVID issues – where you could sometimes hear a little baby's voice in the background!

Angela was nominated by RuDASA for the Mail and Guardian's 2020 Top 200 Young South Africans, in the category Heroes Editor's choice. Her words in the midst of trying times are “Don't let yourself become frustrated by things out of your control; you may not be able to change the circumstances around you, but work to make a difference in the areas you can control. Do what you can with what you have, do it with joy, and don't feel bad about what you can't do.”

We would like to honour Dr Angela Hartwig with this award, recognising the excellent work that she has done over the last few months in pursuit of clinical excellence. She is constantly reviewing indicators and trying to find ways to improve support to the surrounding community. She is concerned about food security, mental health services and child safety and protection. She has also been advocating for more allied staff to work in the hospital. We recognise her belief in team work and her desire to encourage others around her, including those in the community to strive towards change. In her words: “I want to not only inspire but empower people to bring change to their workplaces and communities, to know that everyone doing their part, together can make a difference”.