

Specialist team celebrates opening of dedicated unit to fight cancer in young people

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[Crayon](#), a specialist paediatric, adolescent, and young adult oncology unit based in the northern suburbs of the Cape Metropole, celebrated its official launch on Thursday, 16 November. The event was attended by members of the oncology community who are dedicated to delivering care to young people living with cancer.



Pictured here from left to right, Johann Riedemann (Jnr), Dr Ernst Marais, COO of Icon Oncology, Ruben van Rooyen who officially opened the unit on the last day of his chemotherapy treatment for rhabdomyosarcoma, Dr Johann Riedemann, oncologist and founder of the Crayon unit, and Stiaan van Rooy, who celebrated the opening with a ribbon-cutting ceremony.

[Icon Oncology](#) and [Cancercare](#) earlier this year collaborated to establish Crayon with a 'dream team' to help address the rising incidence of cancer in younger people. As the brainchild of [Dr Johann Riedemann](#), the Crayon unit is based at Cape Gate Oncology Centre and focuses on solid tumour pathology which includes nervous system cancers, head and neck cancers, nasopharynx, lung cancers, abdominal cancers, soft tissue cancer and urogenital cancers.

Dr Riedemann says that a team of highly skilled individuals has come together to provide personalised care for every patient. "We have some of the most brilliant minds in their respective fields on our team and every patient case is discussed and carefully considered. The main goal is to ensure safe and effective treatment whilst also creating a system for ongoing care and survivorship to address any potential consequences of the disease process and associated therapy," says Dr Riedemann.

As part of the celebration, the winners of the Crayon high school art competition, which was launched in September to commemorate Childhood Cancer Awareness Month, were also announced.

The competition, themed 'Dreams and Wishes', invited learners from high schools in the northern suburbs of Cape Town to illustrate the dreams, hopes, and wishes of children affected by cancer. The aim was to shed light on the strength, bravery, and aspirations of these young cancer warriors, bringing attention to the importance of childhood cancer diagnosis, detection, and treatment.

Dr Johann Riedemann expressed excitement about the initiative, stating, "This competition allows us to pay tribute to the incredible strength and resilience of our young heroes."

The competition received a wonderful response, with students showcasing their artistic talents while conveying powerful messages of hope and courage. The entries were judged based on creativity, adherence to the theme, and the emotional impact of the artwork.

Dr Riedemann commended all participants, stating, "The level of creativity and thoughtfulness displayed by the learners is truly inspiring. We believe that art has the power to convey emotions and messages that words sometimes cannot."

This art competition is part of Crayon's ongoing efforts to raise awareness about childhood cancer and the importance of early detection. The winning artworks will be showcased at the Crayon unit allowing the community to appreciate the talent and dedication of these young artists.

An average of 800 to 1,000 children are newly diagnosed with cancer annually in South Africa and it's estimated that at least half of all children with cancer in the country are never diagnosed.

For more information about Crayon and its initiatives, please visit www.cancercrayon.co.za.



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