

CHARITY TANDEM SKYDIVE

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My dream to skydive started when I was 11 years old.

I have always wanted to jump out of a plane, purely because my mom and dad did. I love challenges. So, I thought it is now time to make a huge tick off on my bucket list and complete this adventure.

Way back then, there was no tandem skydive availability, only a one person one parachute option. I opted for the tandem as a safe and secure way to make the giant leap.

My parents had these old-fashioned balloon parachutes and jumped via a static line. The family jumping weekends we spent were in Citrusdal, a Club called Citrusdal Skydive and this unfortunately is long gone.

My mom damaged her Achilles Tendon, by landing incorrectly and this was her last jump, and she decided to call it quits. My dad continued to jump thereafter. He also managed to land in an orange tree, way out of the drop zone. Needless to say, we had great entertainment. I, at the tender age of 11,

I packed the parachutes under the instructions of the Parachuting Team Master in the huge hangar they had for the tiny airplane to be tucked in at night and also for packing the chutes. Today, I shudder to packing someone's life in my hands!

I decided for my birthday this year to take the dive (excuse the pun!) and Just Do It!!!!



My husband, Richard was kind enough to pay for my jump, as a birthday gift. I decided to take the plunge for Charity as felt perhaps, I can rake in some donations to contribute towards an ear-marked Pinelands Rotary Club project.

Richard was quite nervous that his wife was going to dive out of a plane, and knowing that she is an adrenaline junkie, was concerned she might get hooked on this sport. Well, I survived, and did not land up on the tarmac like a blob of strawberry jam much to his delight!

The planned date for the jump was on my birthday, but unfortunately the weather was not viable to jump, overcast and windy, so another date was set. On the day, the weather was perfect, no wind and clear skies, apart from a few scattered clouds. I couldn't have asked for a better day!

The jump was off the West Coast at Cape Farms. I signed in, paid, and then geared up. There were 2 other girls joining in on the jump. One celebrating her birthday as well – seems to be the in thing! The plane took about 20 minutes to reach an altitude of 9 000 ft (2.7km). The pilot also had a parachute on, which didn't bode very well at the time!



I was the last out of the plane, which seriously had my nerves going, seeing the other two taking the plunge. Sitting on the floor and on the edge of the plane, legs dangling out, I knew there was no point of return.

The freefall, about 30 seconds, was probably my most memorable moment. Falling at a speed of 200 km/hour was exhilarating! In fact, it was too short for my liking! Once the chute was open the stillness and quietness was absolutely amazing. Not a sound to hear. The view was spectacular overlooking Robben Island, Table Mountain and Big Bay beach.



I had a chance to steer the chute which was thrilling and managed to do twirls and upside maneuvers, much to my tandem instructor's delight or horror!

The landing is quite fast, just seeing the ground coming up towards you is pretty awesome but the landing was perfect and very gentle. My tandem instructor gently brought me to touchdown.

The feeling I experienced, not only in the air but upon landing is something I will never forget. My adrenalin and endorphins kept me on a "high" for at least a week!! I enjoyed every moment of it.

My husband is a bit horrified that I would like to do this again...and again....and again....



I managed to raise R3100, which will go towards our Club's Tree planting project. We will be planting 12 trees on the verge of the Elsieskraal river (the Pinelands Canal). The date has been set for Saturday 21 May 2022.





**I have a feeling this will not be
the first and last time I will
jump.**