

## PUBLIC AWARENESS

### *TB Outreach*

To mark World TB day on 18 March 2008, Profs Valerie Corfield and Rob Warren attended an event at Military Hospital 2 (MIL2) in Wynberg, Cape Town. The occasion was attended by about 60 military doctors and paramedics. Prof Corfield presented a combined TB/HIV demonstration, and at the request of the organizers, showed ways in which to translate medical and scientific jargon about these diseases to make important information understandable to their patients.



The annual Scifest Africa festival held from 16-22 April in Grahamstown was attended by four members of the CBTBR and the Centre for Molecular and Cellular Biology, namely, Prof Valerie Corfield, Prof Valerie Mizrahi and two PhD students, Ms Carmen Swanepoel and Miss Gail Louw. Together they manned two interactive exhibits, one called "The trouble with TB..." engaged members of the public from school children to adults with assessable information about *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* and the acquisition of drug resistance. It emphasized the importance of diagnosis and treatment and showed aspects of research undertaken in the CBTBR. Daring Dot, a cartoon character who leads the antibiotic gang, was brought to life by Ms Louw and proved popular with visitors. The team also presented an exhibit entitled "The skin you're in" which was shown on the TV programme for children "Hip to be squared" and ran daily interactive workshops, one of which "HIV comes to the party" emphasised the relationship between AIDS and TB. Co-director of CBTBR Prof Valerie Mizrahi delivered a public lecture entitled "TB, *the Scourge of Africa: Where to From Here*". In total, 64 317 people attended Scifest and many of these visited the exhibit. While in Grahamstown, Valerie Mizrahi was interviewed by SAFm for a piece that was aired on radio during the week of April 21, 2008. She was also interviewed by journalism students from Rhodes University who are preparing a television documentary on tuberculosis.



**National Science Week held in at MTN Sciencentre** presented the opportunity for 27 members of the CBTBR and the Centre for Molecular and Cellular Biology to man “The trouble with TB...” and “The skin you’re in” exhibits during the eight day event. They were able to promote debate about the TB epidemic in the Western Cape, discuss the science of drug resistance and explain some of the research undertaken at the COE. Again Daring Dot, this time portrayed by PhD student Ms Erika Truter, proved a popular attraction. At the same time, workshops were held, including “HIV comes to the party”. A total of about 3500 visitors, which included school learners during the week and adults and family groups at the weekends, attended the event between 10-17 May.



**A Maths and Science Week** from 12-16 May 2008 for senior high school students (part of recruitment of learners to Science, Maths and Medical degrees) was held at the University of Stellenbosch. Prof Corfield ran combined interactive TB/HIV workshops, which included information about current research projects undertaken at the CBTBR, nationally and internationally. The practical sessions which were followed refreshments and thereafter by a lively debate session about issues concerning social aspects and ethical aspects of these two diseases and research into them. Prof Corfield was assisted by Ms Erika Truter and 6 students (in rotation) from the Genetics Department of the University of Stellenbosch. This new approach of interactive activities and debate was most successful and was well received by the 60 attending learners and their teachers.

**Co-director of CBTBR interacted with top Grade 12 learners in Gauteng.** Valerie Mizrahi spent time interacting with top Grade 12 learners in Gauteng in March 2008. On March 12, she presented a lecture entitled “Tuberculosis Research in the Post-Genomic Era” to the approximately sixty Grade 12 Biology learners at Crawford College Sandton. On March 15, she then hosted a session on careers in the field of medical research as part of the GIBS CareerXpo, which was held at the University of Pretoria’s Gordon Institute on Business Science campus in Illovo, Johannesburg. The GIBS CareerXpo was attended by the top 1200 Grade 12 learners drawn from approximately 500 schools in the Gauteng area.