

Local residents kick off dreams of soccer players

WHEN a local uMhlanga resident spotted a group of soccer enthusiasts playing the 'beautiful game' on a patch of unkempt grass in the area he stepped into action. Andrew Fraser who is the chairman of the Upper Umhlanga Security Trust (UUST) said he decided he needed to help when residents said the players who played on a field just below Atholton Primary School were posing a security risk.

"This is a typical reaction in local communities, where the unknown is seen as a threat," Fraser said. The trust teamed up with the uMhlanga UIP (Urban Improvement Precinct) and decided that they were going to sponsor the kit for the Umhlanga Football Club made up of players who come from as far afield as the Blackburn Village Informal Settlement.

The Umhlanga Football Club has been in existence since 1997 and is headed by club managers Dumisani Tembe and club agent, Desire Mekossangoye.

"Brian approached the UIP boards with this thinking and it was immediately obvious



The Umhlanga Football Club show their excitement for the donation of a full kit from the Upper Umhlanga Security Trust (UUST) and uMhlanga Urban Improvement Precinct (UIP).

that funding the soccer kit was something we had to do," said Ron Klambt, chairman of the uMhlanga Promenade UIP.

The donated items consists of a large kit bag, 14 sets of branded shirts, shorts as well as socks and vest bibs.

"Our team is very grateful for the brand new kit. Players are more

happy and they felt important. We will carry on encouraging young stars because we believe that soccer is an exercise to keep fit and also a way to unite people from different places. We thank all member of this initiative very much for all of their support," said Mekossangoye.

As part of the community initiative, the football club players

asked what they could do for the community and it was agreed that a monthly schedule of cleaning would be created to augment the services carried out in UIP and UUST areas.

What has started with a football kit has the potential to grow into a relationship of substance and community.