

# Creating a Joyful Planet



Patrice Tanaka  
Founder &  
Chief Joy  
Officer  
Joyful Planet  
LLC

Patrice Tanaka, Founder & Chief Joy Officer of Joyful Planet LLC, whose consultancy is focused on helping people live their life's purpose and, in doing so, unleashing all the success, fulfillment and joy available to them, interviews people who are actively living their purpose and contributing to a more joyful planet. This interview spotlights Cathe Kruger, Founder of The American Friends of the Phelophepa Train, a 501(c)(3) she established to support two, 18-car trains delivering primary health care services to remote regions of South Africa. More than 23 million underserved people have been helped by the Phelophepa Train of Hope since its inception in 1994.

**PT: Cathe, I know that you've accomplished much in your life because you are a very purpose-driven individual. Can you share your life's purpose with us? I define a "life's purpose" as one that leverages your greatest passion and talent in service of people and planet.**

**CK:** My purpose in life is to help my native South Africa become a stronger nation by improving the health and wellness of underserved, marginalized people in our country.

**PT: How did you arrive at your purpose?**

**CK:** After high school, I spent a "gap" year traveling around Europe with a friend, including working on a Kibbutz in Israel

where I helped people living in very impoverished circumstances. When I returned to South Africa to attend university, I switched my major from chemical engineering to social work, feeling that I could make a difference in the world by helping those in need. My career since then has been involved in working with underserved people in South Africa. My commitment has only deepened since my involvement in the Phelophepa Train, which I was encouraged to support by the late Nelson Mandela and Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who with his wife, Leah, are Honorary Patrons of the Phelophepa.

**PT: Is your life's purpose what drives you to work as hard as you do in fundraising for the Phelophepa Train of Hope? I know that, although you live in South Africa, you spend months at a time every year in the U.S., working tirelessly on behalf of the Phelophepa Train.**



Cathie Kruger  
Founder of The  
American  
Friends of the  
Phelophepa  
Train,

**CK:** Most definitely! I'm driven by my passion and purpose to make the world a better place, especially for less fortunate people, where something as basic as receiving a pair of eyeglasses can be a life-changing event.

**PT: How and why did you become involved with the Phelophepa Train?**

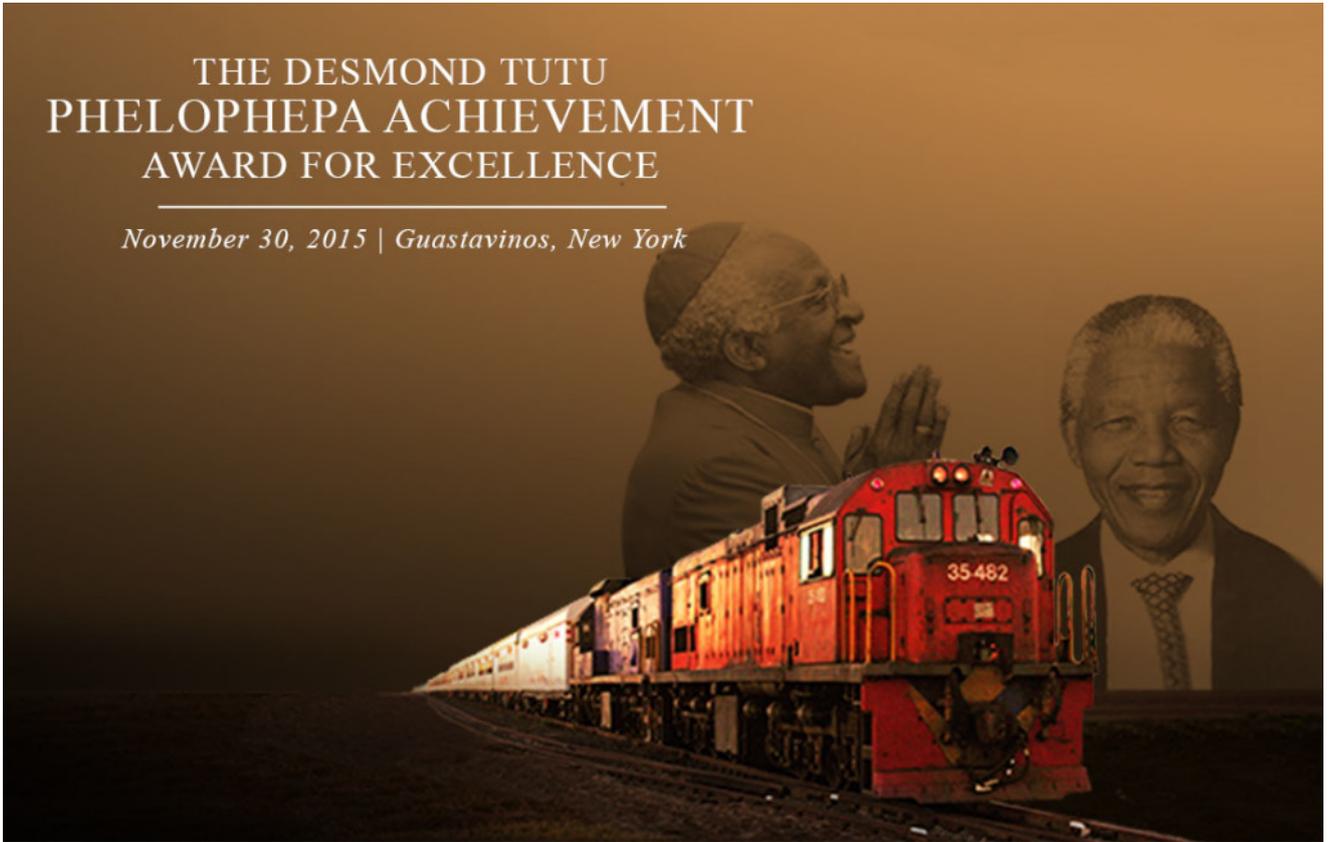
**CK:** I was on an advisory board in 1994 to name the Phelophepa Train, which means "good clean health" in several African languages, and shortly after found myself seated at a dinner next to the CEO of Transnet Ltd., the biggest transportation company in South Africa and operators of the Phelophepa Train. He asked if I would consider raising money for the Phelophepa Train. I was not working at that time and was on my way to the U.S. for a holiday and told him I would see what money I could raise during my trip.

**PT: Is this what led you to start The American Friends of the Phelophepa Train?**

**CK:** Yes. Initially, I thought I could simply visit a few contacts I had at big American corporations and return to South Africa with a substantial amount of money for the train. I knew that Americans were big-hearted, generous people. I soon found out it was not as simple as that. I had to first register a 501 (c) (3) entity in New York and establish a non-profit organization in South Africa for the Phelophepa Train, so that is what I did. I went home to establish the Transnet Foundation and then returned to New York to register the 501 (c) (3), creating The American Friends of the Phelophepa Train. We completed this in 2001 and shortly after held our first fundraising gala for the Phelophepa Train in New York, which we have done almost every year since.

THE DESMOND TUTU  
PHELOPHEPA ACHIEVEMENT  
AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

*November 30, 2015 | Guastavinos, New York*



**PT: What have you been able to achieve since starting The American Friends of the Phelophepa Train?**

**CK:** Apart from raising money for the primary health care services rendered on Phelophepa I, we were able to roll out a second, 18-car train, Phelophepa II, in 2012. Our current fundraising goal is to raise money to bring an 18-car surgical train, Phelophepa III, on line in 2018. In the meantime, we will be adding a surgical car onto each of our two existing trains to perform routine operations like cataract surgery even before the Phelophepa III comes on line three years hence.

**PT: What is your current fundraising goal for the Phelophepa Train?**

**CK:** \$8 million over the next 3 years.

**PT: What is your greatest challenge in fundraising for the Phelophepa Train in the U.S.?**

**CK:** Being a “foreign cause” means it takes longer to build the trust of donors so you need to work much harder to be successful.

**PT: What is your vision and biggest dream for the Phelophepa Train?**

**CK:** To increase fundraising so that we can provide enhanced medical services such as the surgical train. The Phelophepa III will offer fairly routine but, life-changing operations like cataract surgery. Half of all blindness among the people that the train serves can be eliminated by simple cataract surgery. We also want to renovate empty railway stations along the Phelophepa Train route and repurpose them as permanent health clinics/wellness facilities to offer medical services on a much more frequent, daily basis, using the trains to augment these services.

My dream for the Phelophepa Train is that it will be recognized globally as the most innovative provider of health care to underserved people and that it will be a flagship program for South Africa.

**PT: Tell me about the satisfaction and joy you get from working towards your vision and biggest dream for the Phelophepa Train. At the end of your life, I know you’ll be able to look back and feel very good about what you have accomplished by actively living your purpose.**

**CK:** My greatest joy and fulfillment comes from visiting our trains in South Africa, knowing that our clients are receiving medical services because of the funds I’ve helped raise through The American Friends of the Phelophepa Train. Yes, I think I’ll feel a sense of accomplishment at the end of my life for what I have helped to achieve in bringing life-changing services to millions of people who would otherwise never have received this medical intervention.

**PT: If you weren’t engaged in this work for the Phelophepa**

## **Train, what would you be doing with your life?**

**CK:** I would probably be enjoying tea parties with friends, playing golf and spending more time with my husband and family in South Africa. And, I would most probably be involved in some type of charitable work.

## **PT: How can people support you, your life's purpose and the Phelophepa Train of Hope?**

**CK:** I would ask them to please visit our website: [www.trainofhope.org](http://www.trainofhope.org) to learn more about the Phelophepa Train of Hope and get involved with this remarkable and special non-profit, which was recognized with the 2008 United Nations Award for "Best Service Delivery in Africa" and twice honored with Sigma Theta Tau International 's Archon Award in 2011 and 2013 for its work and dedication to providing primary health care services and education to South Africa's most remote rural areas.

*About the Author: Patrice Tanaka is a serial entrepreneur, having co-founded three award-winning, PR & marketing firms and, most recently, Joyful Planet, a Business & Life Strategy Consultancy. "Through Joyful Planet, I am doing what I love and what I do best, leveraging my creative, problem-solving talent to help individuals and organizations move forward more successfully and joyfully in business and life," says Patrice. This is the subject of Patrice's upcoming book, Beat the Curve, co-authored with world renowned management consultant and coach, Brian Tracy, and other business leaders. Her chapter is entitled, "Live Your Life's Purpose and Unleash Your Joy." Connect with Patrice@JoyfulPlanet.com*