

Yo School Magazine

‘Enable our Children now for Better Days’

Community and Water Care

Water as a Human Right, what does it mean to South Africans?

Away with illegal electricity connections and dumping in Zandspruit

Our schools must remain alcohol and drug free.

Gauteng Government installs CCTV cameras to enhance the fight against crime





Editor's Note:

December: “For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.”

Romans 5:10-11 NKJV

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, we received the reconciliation and we no longer are alienated with God, He is now for us. Glory to God!

There is a Water Crisis in Gauteng, to eradicate poverty in Africa, means providing a sustainable strategy for increasing the income and welfare of the poor as well as securing a well-functioning clean water supply.

A well-functioning water supply infrastructure is an important factor with respect to well-being. Improper functioning of water supply has not only caused severe poverty, but it has also resulted in environmental contamination, poor agriculture, increased mortality rates which in turn result in a loss of critical skills.

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Community and Water Care



By Dr. Tony Igboamalu

My work within many African countries has widened my understanding of poverty and how we define it in the African horizon, it is defined in terms of lack of well-being and severe inequalities.

About 14.7% of the world's population live below the brink for extreme poverty of which 33% live in Africa according to article by Julian in 2016. To eradicate poverty in Africa, means providing a sustainable strategy for increasing the income and welfare of the poor as well as securing a well- functioning clean water supply.

A well-functioning water supply infrastructure is an important factor with respect to well-being. Improper functioning of water supply has not only caused severe poverty, but it has also resulted in environmental contamination, poor agriculture, increased mortality rates which in turn result in a loss of critical skills.

Poor water supply, sanitation, and hygiene is one of the major causes of poverty, and thus numerous poor populations suffer a lot in our community. This has resulted in various water related diseases such as; Typhoid or E. Coli infection, cancer or even death. It is of interest to note that there are fewer or no functioning or non-maintained water and sewer reticulation infrastructures in most rural areas in Africa, and the majority settle for cheap unlined concrete septic tanks, often collected by truck tanker drivers, and discharged into the river without proper treatment or untreated borehole water supply.

In most cases this untreated sewerage infiltrates and contaminates underground water which is about 100 – 200 m away from the drinking water source. Secondly, it is logical to argue that community unrest is also associated with poor water and sanitation service delivery which is because of water inaccessibility to poor communities.

In South Africa water scarcity is set to rise to 17% or more in 2030, therefore it is vital to secure our water resource to mitigate this effect. If this is not mitigated, we all know the consequences (e.g. Cape town water crisis as a case study). Majority of rural areas in South Africa do not have access to drinking water and good sanitation “take Emfuleni Municipality as an example”. Secondly most of Municipalities are struggling to meet green drop or blue drop or no drop requirements, and this could be attributed to high infrastructure deficit, poor maintenance, or lack of skills to operate and maintain the water infrastructure.

Though South Africa is a dry climatic region, many factors contribute to water scarcity is the “*Water Use and Allocation Policy*”. This policy was made during a time when agriculture was a lucrative business. To date, about 60 % of water was allocated to agricultural, while the remaining 40 % was allocated to both domestic and industrial use.

With the current industrial growth and development, I believe that this policy may need to be revised. Secondly, inefficiency in operation and maintenance of infrastructure, hence our infrastructure should be owed and care by the community. Community involvement is vital to ensure those infrastructures are efficiently operated and well maintained.

Thirdly, community unawareness and limited skills to look after our infrastructure is a big challenge. We need to educate our youth to be able to operate and maintain these infrastructures. By taking care of the infrastructure by the community, this will help the government to manage this effectively, because it is the communities that have the in-depth understanding of the damaged to the water supply system since it affects their service delivery.

I believe that a sustainable solution towards ending poverty and developing communities can be achieved by complementing engineering solutions with finance, investment, and economic in the context of public-private partnership, and programme to educate communities regarding water and wastewater management.

Like in the energy sector, it is important that we create a conducive environment for foreign investors, and government should seriously consider spending a lot of money in water and wastewater infrastructure for it to look attractive. One of the ways I think wastewater could be made an attractive business model for investors is through wastewater recycle and reuse; either as potable water or industrial process water use etc.).

Dr. Tony Igboamalu was Senior Consultant (Advisor, Water Infrastructure. Water and Wastewater Engineering Specialist at AURECON) and CESA Commended Young Engineer of the Year 2019.



Water as a Human Right, what does it mean to South Africans?



With Water shedding a reality in Gauteng, we are reminded of what water access as a human right for all citizens' means.

The Constitution of South Africa has placed a legal obligation on the government to realise people's right to sufficient water. In order to do this, South Africa has developed policies, strategies and institutions to manage water resources and deliver water services to people through local government structures.

Although access to water has been included in our Bill of Rights, few people working with water-related issues understand the implications of a human rights approach to water, while those with a right to water also do not fully comprehend what is meant, particularly the most vulnerable and poor members of the South African community.

The historical imbalances that have resulted in the spatial segregation and allocation of people and resources, respectively, is at the base of the problem; however, 24 years into democracy access to water as a human right is an important issue to unpack. The generally accepted volume associated with the human right is 25 litres per person per day. However, we need to check if all citizens have access to this allocation.

Does the country have enough water to allocate this volume to the population?



SAVE BY USING LESS WATER

In a water-scarce country like South Africa, every drop counts. Let's band together and reduce our water usage so that there is enough water for everyone.

BE LEAK FREE

- Fix leaks in your home/business
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Water throttling since Thursday 14 November in Johannesburg!



The water throttling took place from Thursday 14 November 2024 between the hours of 21:00 to 04:00 so that reservoir levels can recover overnight.

Johannesburg has been experiencing a severe water crisis, with ongoing water supply challenges. This is due to population growth, illegal connections, and damaged and ageing infrastructure.

Water throttling is the practice of deliberately reducing water pressure in a supply system, often to manage water shortages, control usage, or prevent overuse.

This can be done by utility providers—in this case, Johannesburg Water—to conserve water when demand is high and supply is limited. When water throttling is applied, residents and businesses may experience lower-than-usual water pressure, making it challenging to perform daily activities. Throttling is a way for municipalities and water agencies to ensure that available water lasts longer, distributing it more evenly across a community without completely cutting off access.

Water throttling and water restrictions

Water pressure controls have been implemented in addition to level 1 water restrictions in Johannesburg—that took effect on 1 September.

These restrictions prohibit daytime use of hosepipes for gardening, car washing, driveway cleaning, and filling pools. These restrictions are set to remain in place until 31 March, 2025.

“The main underlying cause of the water supply disruptions in Johannesburg is that the peak demand for water is close to, and occasionally exceeds, the available supply from Rand Water,” said Water and Sanitation Minister, Pemmy Majodina, after an urgent meeting was convened. The demand-supply relationship for treated water in Johannesburg is very tight and the system is vulnerable to disturbances caused by electromechanical breakdowns or spikes in demand caused by heatwaves.”

Majodina said that Rand Water is already abstracting water at its set limits from the Integrated Vaal River System.

Gauteng Premier Panyaza Lesufi joined the chorus from City officials, emphasising the urgent need for sustainable water management. “We have to reduce the consumption of water at a faster pace,” Lesufi added. “If we cannot do that, the system will not be in a position to carry us for longer.”

Your Giving Brings Comfort!



By Elize Joubert

CANSA provides many vital services to cancer patients and loved ones free of charge. This includes our Tele Counselling, offered in 7 languages (now including virtual sessions), support groups (face-to-face, WhatsApp) and Facebook, advocacy services and clinical advice (guidance on how to cope with side effects of cancer, treatment, nutrition, stoma related and pain control).

One of these services is our TLC support service, where we provide emotional and practical support to children / teens affected by cancer, and their loved ones.

We rely on your generosity to keep these services going.

This is Elsa's story, a young girl, now just 12 years old, diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukaemia:

When Elsa was diagnosed, she was treated with chemotherapy and radiation.

She was also a perfect candidate for a bone marrow transplant with her 16-year-old sister as the donor.

The family's hopes for Elsa's full recovery ran high.

It was in the TLC rooms that Elsa and her mom were accommodated and cared for during the month of her radiation treatment.

And when the time came for Elsa's stem cell transplant, generosity through donations meant that CANSA could supply both the donor and the recipient blood transfusion lines.

TLC support for Elsa and her family continued during her isolation period until we could welcome them back to Tygerberg Hospital for monthly check-ups.

Things were going well . . . until Elsa was rushed to hospital after a weekend of loss of appetite and vomiting.

Elsa had relapsed...

Two weeks on antibiotics and more chemotherapy followed. But sadly, the treatment was unsuccessful, resulting in the chilling words that no parent wants to hear, "We are sorry, the treatment has failed. There is nothing more we can do."

Elsa is now receiving palliative care through our TLC programme at Tygerberg hospital, which aims to give her the highest possible quality of life, for as long as possible.

Anthea Lewis, our TLC Co-ordinator, reports how Elsa still shares her beautiful smile and is always ready to give a hug. The bond that's grown between the two allows Elsa to ask hard questions of Anthea – like, “Am I also going to die? Because I really miss my friends”.

There's a precious sisterhood and brotherhood that exists between young children and teenagers fighting cancer. The friends Elsa misses are Marie-Lee and Abranecia, who passed away from cancer.

CANSA TLC staff don't know how long Elsa has left but are committed to keeping her as comfortable and happy as possible for every moment of that time, as well as giving her family much needed support.

Please consider giving a donation towards the work that CANSA does, keeping young patients comfortable during treatment, providing palliative care, including counselling and support to their loved ones.

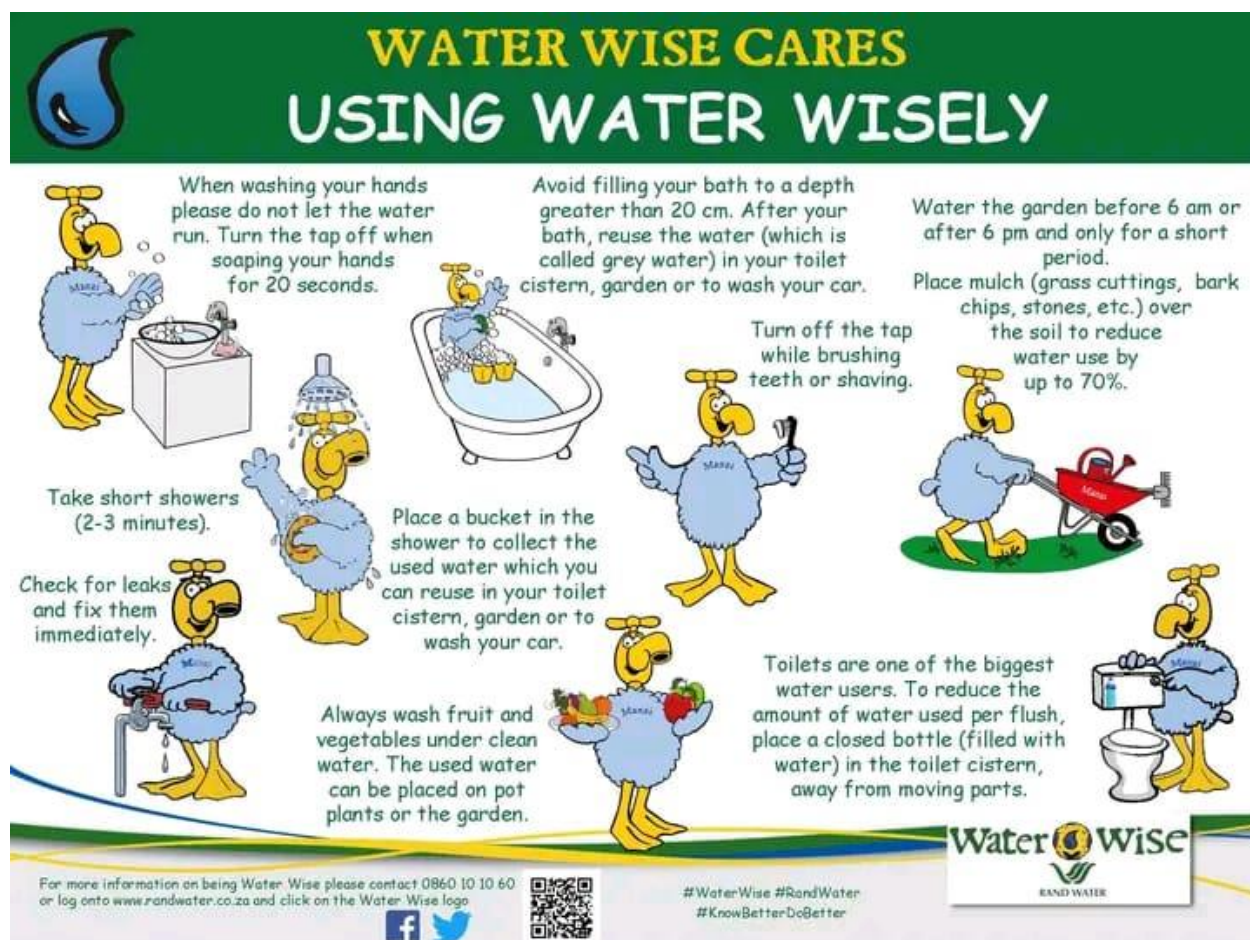
Thanks for your ongoing support, which enables us to provide these vital services for free.

May you and your loved ones enjoy a joyful and peaceful festive season.

Warm regards,

Elize Joubert

Chief Executive Officer at SADAG



Hostels benefit from Gauteng Provincial Network WIFI



As part of its mandate to provide service delivery to the residents in Gauteng, in line with the approved Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) Strategy, the Gauteng Department of e-Government (e-Gov) is connecting Hostels, providing them with free WI-FI.

So far, the department has connected 6 hostels with high-speed Wi-Fi known as the Gauteng Provincial Network (GPN). The network has been set up in these Johannesburg hostels: George Goch, Jeppe Hostel, Denver Hostel, MBA Hostel, Murray and Roberts Hostel, and Rethabile LTE Hostel.

The GPN is WIFI connectivity provided by the Gauteng Provincial Government in schools, clinics, hospitals, libraries, community centers etc as part of digitizing Gauteng. The GPN is a step towards bridging the digital divide while providing greater accessibility to government services and free wi-fi to residents in Townships, Informal Settlements and Hostels.

In this case, the GPN has proven to be a good initiative for many residents of the hostels as it provides easy access to the internet, allowing them to participate digitally, free of charge. The network will also assist job seekers in applying for jobs. Learners and students can use it for their schoolwork such as conducting research and assignments.

MEC for e-Government, Research and Development, Mr. Bonginkosi Dhlamini has urged the hostel residents to use the GPN for everyday needs including job applications and research for academic assignments.

"The reason why we decided to install WIFI in Hostels is that we want to help our people who cannot afford data to access the internet easily or without having to go to internet cafes. Another thing is that our services are online, and as a result, people will need to have data to access them, so it is important that we give them a network that will help them be able to access our services. We encourage residents to use the WIFI the right way, for example scholars must use it for learning purposes, those that are unemployed must use it to apply for jobs," said, MEC Dhlamini.

MEC further stated that it was critical for the department to create its own network so that communities can use it to access e-services.

"When e-Gov was established, the focus was to develop our own connectivity infrastructure, so we stop relaying on telecoms service providers who were charging us an arm and a leg for connectivity. We know that this would result in a lot of cost savings and those funds would be directed elsewhere. I am happy to report that we have really achieved a great deal in this regard and people will connect on our network for free."

Gauteng Government installs CCTV cameras to enhance the fight against crime



The Gauteng Provincial Government has installed CCTV cameras in various locations in the province. The Cameras are part of various crime fighting methods that have been introduced to fight crime.

Phases 1 and 2, has delivered 144 and 156 cameras respectively, and the department is on Phase 3 of the project, which includes the deployment of 500 cameras.

Installation of CCTV cameras has mainly focused on TISH (Townships, Informal settlements, and Hostels) areas and busy streets of Johannesburg, which are often hotspots for crime.

Diepsloot, Tembisa, Kagiso, TSAKANE, Khutsong, Ratanda, Sharpville, Sebokeng, Boipatong, Mohlakeng, Krugersdorp, Mamelodi East and Atteridgeville are part of the townships that have benefitted with these cameras.

6 hostels that are owned the Provincial Government namely George Goch, Jeppe Hostel, Denver Hostel, MBA Hostel, Murray and Roberts Hostel[, and Rethabile LTE Hostel and including the Small Street in Joburg CBD, which is notorious for muggings and robberies also benefitted as well.

The CCTV cameras will monitor crime on a 24-hour basis, on major roads, business centres, as well as townships plagued with high criminal activities. The cameras are monitored law enforcement operatives at the Gauteng Safety Command Centre.

MEC for Gauteng Department of e-Government, Research and Development, Mr. Bonginkosi Dhlamini indicated that the CCTV cameras are installed in identified crime hotspots in all the Townships, Informal Settlements and Hostels (TISH).

“It is disheartening that every quarter when crime statistics are delivered, they are always increasing. As Gauteng Government we are supposed to come up with various crime fight mechanisms to deal with crime. We have implemented various initiatives which include panic buttons, crime prevention wardens and CCTV’s in high crime hotspots of the province, “said Dhlamini.

Diabetes Alert, be Smart and get Tested



World Diabetes Day was on Thursday 14 November 2024. Diabetes is a health condition that affects many people in the community.

Diabetes mellitus is a group of diseases characterised by high levels of blood glucose resulting from defects in insulin production, insulin action, or both. Diabetes can be associated with serious complications and premature death, but people with diabetes can take steps to control the disease and lower the risk of complications.

Diabetes often runs in families. If one of your parents has diabetes, your chances of getting it immediately become significantly higher. Certain population groups are also more prone to this condition, as are people who are significantly overweight. But if you are diabetic, it is by no means certain that your children will also be diabetics.

It is the leading cause of blindness in people between 25 and 74 years. Diabetic retinopathy is a disease affecting the blood vessels in the retina (the back layer of the eye). Uncontrolled blood glucose levels can cause damage to small blood vessels in the eyes, kidneys and nerves. Damage to larger blood vessels causes poor circulation and can eventually result in a heart attack or stroke.

Constant thirst, and increased appetite, frequent urination and constant fatigue are warning signs of diabetes. Blurred vision, slow-to-heal cuts, tingling or numbness in the hands and feet, and recurring skin, mouth and bladder infections could all be signs that you have diabetes.

Foods that have a high sugar or fat content, such as pastries, cakes, chocolates, chips, sweets and desserts should be avoided. If eaten at all, it should be in very small quantities. Stay away from oily sauces and high-fat dairy products. Low-fat proteins, whole wheat grains, fruit and vegetables, starches and low fat dairy products are recommended.

Go for a simple urine and blood test at your local clinic or doctor. This will show if you could have diabetes and require additional examination and treatment. Talk to a health worker about your health results. They will explain how your diabetes can be controlled.

Some people will require taking pills or insulin injections to control their diabetes. Many individuals can also control their diabetes by controlling their food intake (diet) and doing regular exercise. 'Remember', you can control diabetes.

Stay healthy and happy everyday with top health tips!

- Eat five fresh fruit and vegetables every day;
- Eat less sugar and salt;
- Practice safe sex and use a condom correctly and consistently;
- Get 30 minutes of exercise at least five days a week;
- Wash your hands with soap and water every time you use the toilet and before you eat;
- Drink at least eight glasses of clean, safe water a day;
- Remember to take your medicine as prescribed by your doctor;

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City of Ekurhuleni

Stop diabetes in its tracks!



Did you know? Over 800 million people around the world live with diabetes. However, not everyone has access to affordable treatment and the care they need.

Plus, diabetes causes blindness, kidney failure, heart attacks, stroke and lower limb amputation. Good news is though that diabetes can be treated, and its consequences avoided or delayed with diet, physical activity, medication and regular screening and treatment for complications.

Prevention

Lifestyle changes are the best way to prevent or delay the onset of type 2 diabetes:

1. To help prevent type 2 diabetes and its complications, people should:
2. reach and keep a health body weight
3. stay physically active with at least 150 minutes of moderate exercise each week
4. eat a healthy diet and avoid sugar and saturated fat
5. not smoke tobacco.

Get your minds straight Ladies!



By Thandi Mphundi

Are those 'Blessers' sweet enough to brighten your future. They are just there to promise you 'milk and honey', but sadly, the consequences are children raised by a single mom.

Does this ring a bell teenage girl?

We are living in times where most teenage girls have more needs than their parents or guardians can afford to fulfil. This leads to them ending up with older men who promise them heaven and earth.

Dating an older person because they are well off is simply the beginning of a stressful life that could easily jeopardize your future. Why sell your body for money to these elderly men - why make them your priority - do you really need part-time joy and pain?

Girls, you are worth more than any amount of money you can think of.

Poverty is not forever, you need to be more determined and focused on your studies as that will bear fruit with a brighter future, a fulfilling life and all the happiness in the world you deserve.

Away with illegal electricity connections and dumping in Zandspruit!



By Promise Mutunda

The energy crisis in the country has had its fair share of disappointment for commercial and private users and Zandspruit Informal Settlement has not been immune.

The challenge in community has been the illegal connections that residents have, and those law-abiding community members do get affected with the illegal connections when Eskom must be called to fix the problems- those with illegal connection find it hard to report and their illegal status might be discovered – this unfortunately affects the rest of the consumers of the electricity.

Illegal dumping in Zandspruit informal settlement happens daily that one wonders whether the community leadership and residents will ever get rid of this bad habit.

Illegal dumping is the disposal of waste generated at one location and disposed of at another location without legal permission of the property owner or the City of Johannesburg, in violation of the public health by-laws - this includes the disposal of trash, tyres, garden refuse, builder's rubble, furniture, appliances and other waste materials.

There are issues in the community of private companies coming to dump trees, old concrete and any wastes being cleaned from private households around Zandspruit into our community. During the week when most of the residents are at work, the community gets over 20 trucks dumping in the community.

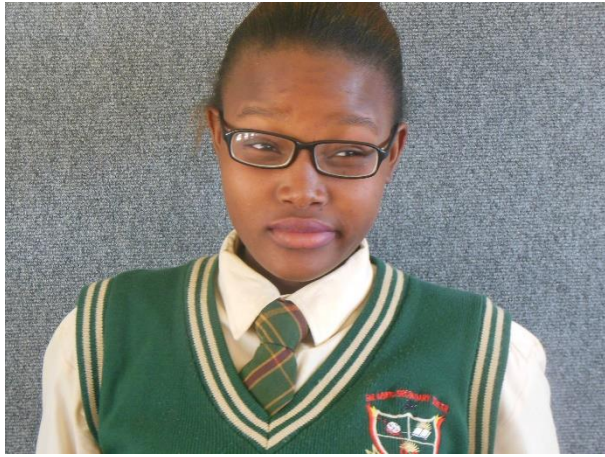
Asked about some solutions the community might have: We need street and block committees; we need equipment for us to be visible to the community. The Ward 114 Councillor must deploy the committee members and must involve the community and come with solutions together. Feedback from the local police is not sufficient; hence people are reluctant to report cases for fear of being victimized.

The biggest dumping site in the area is at Mbela section where some community members are getting money from the truck-drivers that come to dump in Zandspruit, and that had to be stopped.

There is a direct link between illegal dumping and health. Illegal dumping sites are excellent breeding grounds for germs that cause numerous illnesses. Bottles and tins can cause cuts and bruises that do not heal. Certain foodstuffs become poisonous when left in the open – illegal dumping sites pose a fire hazard.

Bubonic plague and myrine typhus fever are transmitted from infected rats to humans by fleas. Domestic rodents can potentially spread salmonella that causes food poisoning through their droppings. Rodents cause damage by gnawing and burrowing. ***Report illegal dumping at Environmental Health @ 011-761 0206 or JMPD @ 011 – 490 1547.***

Our schools must remain alcohol and drug free



By Lethabo Aphane

Alcohol and drug abuse as I see it today is eating away and destroying young people's lives.

What is more disturbing is the fact that the people that are selling and encouraging young people to use and sell these drugs in our schools are adults. This is totally unacceptable from where I am standing.

I am encouraged though that the Department of Basic Education, together with the social and law enforcement agencies launched a campaign to ensure schools are drug and alcohol free zones.

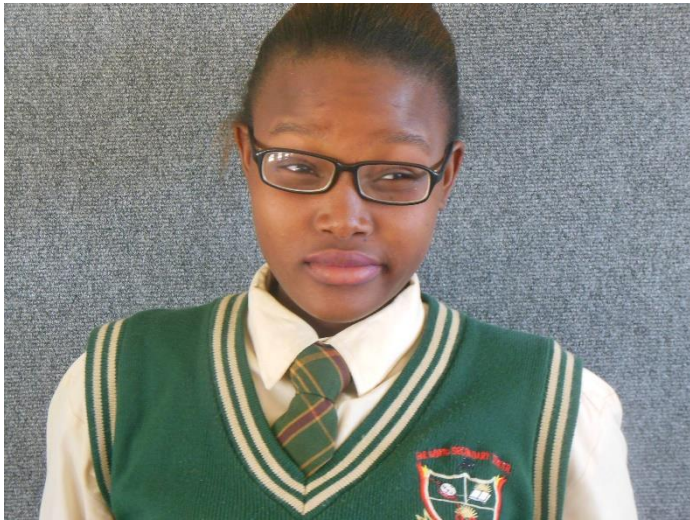
Alcohol and drugs are significant barriers to both teaching and learning. Abuse of these substances has been linked to academic difficulties, absenteeism, and drop-out from schooling thus impacting negatively on the attainment of quality basic education. Drugs are associated with a host of high risk behaviours including unprotected sex, crime and violence, traffic accidents, and mental and physical.

I am told the campaign targets secondary schools within hotspot areas where alcohol and drug abuse are prevalent. The focus is on learners in Grades 8-10 because of their heightened vulnerability to alcohol and drug abuse during the transition from primary to secondary school.

According to the department, this life stage coincides with the onset of puberty where developmentally, experimentation with risk behaviours increases. In addition, exposure to risk factors such as peer pressure also increases during this transitional period. The strategy focuses largely on the prevention of alcohol and drug use. It creates an enabling environment for those learners who have become addicted to alcohol and drugs to access treatment, care and support services.

As a nation let us all fight and discourage alcohol and drug abuse in our schools, this will destroy the future of our nation. Let's stay away from drugs and alcohol, PLEASE!!!

Dreams



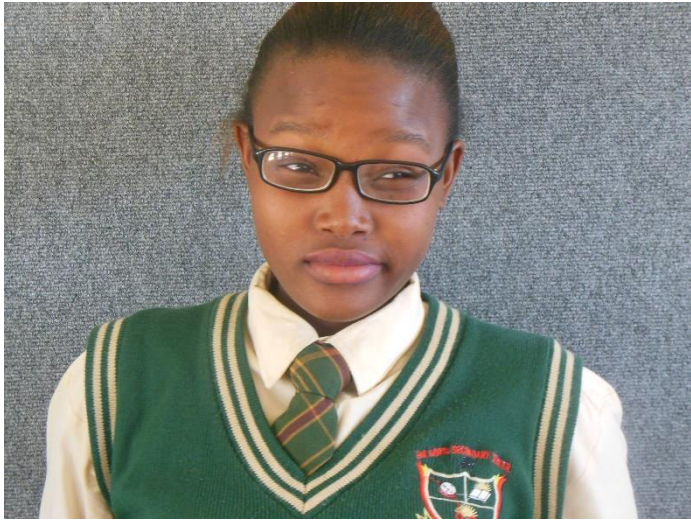
By Lethabo Aphone

Dreams help us set up our mindsets in order to know where we will be in the future. They uplift our self-esteem, trust and belief that one day we will be successful individuals.

Dreams allow you to choose which subjects to take in order to reach your maximum potential. They help you to concentrate, focus, be determined, and passionate about the work you do. Dreams help, build, mould and power us with hope of a brighter future.

Even though you might have big dreams, if you don't invite and include God, success cannot be guaranteed. Let God lead the way in your life and in all that you do and dream of for your life. A God-centred life will lead to success.

I am who I am!



By Lethabo Aphane

I am capable of anything

I know what I want in Life

I am unique, beautiful, ambitious, and I am a believer

I believe that I am the one who has to

Change my background

I am a survivor, I lived through negativity

And brought out the best in that

So, who are you to judge?

I honestly don't care what people say or

Think about me!

Believe me; I was born to make a difference

And not be a follower because that doesn't

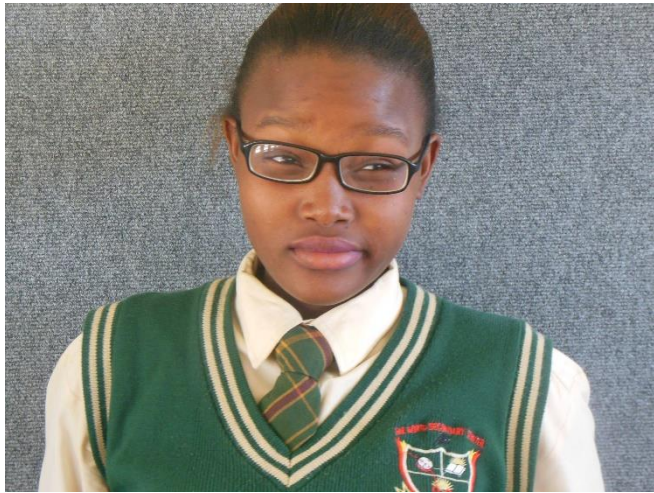
Determine who I am.

I am empowered, and I am living my Life

Because I was born to make a difference,

I am living that now!

Giving up is just not an Option!



By Lethabo Aphane

Giving up is not an option when you are determined to be a success. It doesn't matter how many times you fail in life as Jack Canfield said: "Don't worry about failure, worry about the chances you miss when you don't even try".

Failure will always be a great teacher and will give birth to wisdom – as they say, courage is the ability to move from failure to failure without losing enthusiasm. We all make mistakes, what is important is to learn from those mistakes to reach our destination. Self-belief is the most powerful trait that can raise your confidence levels and self-esteem.

"Build your own dreams or someone else will hire you to build theirs," said Farrah Gray, meaning you don't have to do anything to please others, do it for yourself. No one can change your life but yourself, even though things may be difficult, have enough trust and determination within to succeed at the end. If you can imagine it, you can achieve it. Every dream can be a reality, nothing is impossible if you BELIEVE!

WATER WISE CARES
USING WATER WISELY

- When washing your hands please do not let the water run. Turn the tap off when soaping your hands for 20 seconds.
- Avoid filling your bath to a depth greater than 20 cm. After your bath, reuse the water (which is called grey water) in your toilet cistern, garden or to wash your car.
- Water the garden before 6 am or after 6 pm and only for a short period. Place mulch (grass cuttings, bark chips, stones, etc.) over the soil to reduce water use by up to 70%.
- Turn off the tap while brushing teeth or shaving.
- Take short showers (2-3 minutes).
- Place a bucket in the shower to collect the used water which you can reuse in your toilet cistern, garden or to wash your car.
- Check for leaks and fix them immediately.
- Always wash fruit and vegetables under clean water. The used water can be placed on pot plants or the garden.
- Toilets are one of the biggest water users. To reduce the amount of water used per flush, place a closed bottle (filled with water) in the toilet cistern, away from moving parts.

For more information on being Water Wise please contact 0860 10 10 60 or log onto www.randwater.co.za and click on the Water Wise logo

#WaterWise #RandWater
#KnowBetterDoBetter

Water Wise
RAND WATER

My feelings on Freedom!



By Refilwe Kholoane

Freedom has brought many changes in our lives and country. Freedom has broken the chains and has brought equality, equality that took us from Bantu Education and brought us to equal education.

Now I can decide who can be my leader and President - because of the freedom of speech my voice can be heard. My perceptions are heard; I proudly stand on the mountain top of Modimolle and shout Halala Africa! In my democratic country, I have rights and responsibilities; I can protect myself from the hand that bruises, that spills blood and breaks the spirit of peace.

I have freedom; and now that I am free, I can proudly walk around the malls, the parks and I can enjoy and embrace the African nature and wild side. Because of freedom I no longer walk in fear - fear of being beaten for not carrying a Dompas, fear of being beaten for using the wrong train or toilet. Now that I'm free I can DREAM BIG, I have a bigger vision of my democratic countryMy South Africa!!

Hope for Zandspruit Informal Settlement!



By Linda Phaliso

On the remainder of portion 47 of the Farm Zandspruit 191 IQ on Beyer's Naude' Drive is a squatter camp as old as our democracy called Zandspruit Informal Settlement in the North of Johannesburg.

The informal settlement is marred by under-development, unemployment, poverty, health hazards in the form of illegal dumping by community members & companies nearby, the outside toilets are not emptied regularly, substance & drug abuse, illegal shebeens, crime, the non-delivery of housing and no electricity.

Zandspruit Informal Settlement falls under Ward 114 Region C of the City of Johannesburg Ward 114 comprises of places like Northgate, Northriding, Honeydew, Sundowner, Randpark Ridge and Zandspruit Informal Settlement lags behind in terms of development.

With an estimated population of +/- 100,000, half of which is unemployed, 38% foreign nationals, another portion of the population having had RDP houses provided to them from other areas; making it 75% of this population not qualifying for RDP houses.

The view is that there is a serious need for a mindset shift from community members and the leadership in Zandspruit to see the need for change in the community. This should be followed by meaningful public consultation and fixing the broken relationship between ANC Ward 114 Councillor and the leadership, so that Zandspruit Informal Settlement can have one voice behind the councillor and get the much-needed services delivered.

All the sections in the informal settlement do have water; unfortunately, some of the water pipes are stolen by community members, which begs the question of where accountability will come from. Street committees are there in the community, but the theft seems to be happening regardless.

In line with the vision of the South African Department of Health of, 'A Long and Healthy Life for ALL South Africans', and following the first official launch of "Healthy Lifestyles in South Africa" on Saturday 4 May 2013 at Thokoza Park in Soweto, stressing the fact that prevention is better than cure, Emthonjeni Community Centre, in Zandspruit Informal Settlement is there to provide community members with various health screenings, counselling services, measles and polio immunisations, HIV/AIDS testing and counselling, Tuberculosis(TB) education and Non-communicable diseases information sessions.

Proper sanitation is a major concern as the outside toilets are not emptied regularly by the City of Johannesburg. Housing is a serious talking point.

With proper community involvement, the community being vigilant not to add to the existing numbers into the informal settlement, blocking the way for essential service providers like the sewage trucks to have access and clean the VIP toilets introduced in 2005, housing and toilets will remain a problem.

Drug concoction 'Nyaope' is rife in the area, and residents even know the places that sell the drug, but there are no structures to do away with this bad habit in the area, affecting the youth and increasing theft for these young people to feed their bad habits. There is relief that there is a police station next to the informal settlement.

There are no recreational facilities at all in the area. Learners in the area attend Masakhane and Zandspruit Primary School and move to one of the four high schools in Cosmo City called Far North Secondary School (8150 Corner Ukraine & South Africa Drive, extension 7, Cosmo City) which serves the Zandspruit Informal Settlement community since its establishment in 2014.

Far North Secondary School is a Quantile one school with a feeding scheme. It has four Grade eight classes, four Grade nine classes, five Grade 10 and three Grade 11 classes and in 2016 will grow into Grade 12. When the school was established in 2014, there were 713 learners with 45- 50 learners per class and 16 classrooms in total. The school had over 800 learners in 2015. The school has no school library, hall and playing fields for the learners. Learners travel by buses from Zandspruit Informal Settlement to school every day, a 10-minute drive. Learners' ages range between 13 and 19 years.

Conclusion

Zandspruit Informal Settlement is as old as our democracy and the fact that 30 years down the line, we still have concerns around housing, unemployment, under-development, poverty, crime, drug & substance abuse, crime and no electricity. There is a serious need for the current leadership to work together with the councillor and not against to deliver services.



Let's have an Active & Participatory Environmental Movement in Africa to save our planet!



By Mzukona Mantshontsho

Njeri Kabeberi is an environmental activist on a mission to work with others to foster environmental consciousness where Africa's people seek social and economic prosperity in ways that protect the environment for the benefit of humans, the planet and the future.

Yo School Magazine recently spoke to her about her personal, professional and activism journey.

Tell us about your early life

I have travelled widely in the African continent and the rest of the world. I haven't been to all the countries of the African continent, but I am familiar with the regions - majority of the places I have been by default through my work rather than by design. I also have my human rights activism experience in the continent.

What advice do you have for younger professionals who are looking to join the profession?

This is a good place to be; let us behave responsibly towards our environment. We need to safeguard our environment with all we have. Our efforts towards social justice should be at par if not doubled when it comes to environmental concerns, let us strike that balance, and let us have more volunteers in efforts to salvage our continent from pollution and climate change.

What initiative (if implemented) would leave the greatest impact for you and for Africa as a whole?

All our four main campaigns are extremely important for each of the four regions. A plastics campaign would however gain momentum across the continent. Africa needs to eliminate PLASTICS!

What would you say are the most critical resources for your successful leadership?

I consider my staff leaders at every level in the organization; irrespective of title and or position, I am therefore counting on their renewed commitment towards the realisation of a vibrant green movement in Africa. We will be seeking partnerships with other environmental organisations in the continent at community, national and regional level. I am counting on African governments to understand the damage we are doing to mother Earth and have the relevant policies to salvage the continent. Financial resources are important in the work that we do; it is a priority; hence we have a dedicated fundraising team working tirelessly.

I want to see all our Environmental Affairs Ministries in the continent becoming leaders in the environmental and greening movement that we are championing. Corporate are unfortunately corrupting our governments hence we constantly have issues around pollution and climate change – corporate need to understand their responsibilities to saving the environment as well for us all.

How would people describe you as a Leader?

I have an open-door policy; my team can tell you! Teamwork and teams are important to me for success.

What legacy would you want to leave by the time you retire?

The Environmental Movement in Africa is about; a common vision for Mother Africa as environmental, humanitarian and human rights activists, the governments and the private sector and the everyday citizen to reduce oppression, inequality, hunger, poverty and most of all the damage we are causing to our environment – bringing all these voices together would be the legacy I would want leave behind.

How do you strike the balance of career, business and interpersonal skills?

I bring a style of Leadership where I seek a buy-in from all stakeholders. When people understand where you are going it is easier to support you and everybody is happy. I like to build strong teams; if my team is weak, I can never be able to deliver on my mandate, it's that simple.

How do you maintain ethics, integrity and professionalism?

Our Board has instituted an Ethics Committee to play the oversight role in that area. If we don't conform, we may be seen as corrupt and turning a blind eye to issues such as sexual harassment in the workplace, insensitivity to minority cultures and any form of discrimination in the work spaces.

How do you participate in mentorship, if you do?

I am always encouraging people to be Role Models in whatever positions they hold. I also hope to be that Role Model in my daily interactions with people I interact with.

What makes you tick or keeps you awake at night?

The sense of urgency to change the mindsets of Africans to the importance of environmental matters, things aren't happening as fast as I would like them to. I'm always asking God to give me time to implement the changes that we set out in our strategic plans, time to deliver on our vision and mission, time to build that Environmental Movement for Africa.