



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **A Path of Healing to celebrate memories**

"If ever there comes a day when we can't be together, keep me in your heart, I'll stay there forever." *Piglet to Winnie the Pooh*

Four years ago on August 24<sup>th</sup> 2011, 14 Primary school children and one adult lost their lives in a tragic bus accident at Kassat-se-Drift on the Rheenendal Road. With the anniversary of this sad day coming up, the Speaker of the Knysna Municipality and councillor for Ward 5, Cllr Eleanore Bouw-Spies, is creating a remembrance walkway with the parents that will hopefully help those affected with their healing process.

She said they want to help the families affected to lessen their grief with some hope and loving memories. "When I read the quote above from Piglet, I wanted to create something tangible to honour them. Interacting with the affecting families also made me realise that healing is the most important aspect for them at the moment. For me, nature has a natural healing force, and that is when the idea for a healing path was created."

She explained that benches and trees will be added in the Rheenendal area to celebrate the memories of these lives lost so prematurely. "We will also add paving stones as stepping stones to healing along the way with words like "Remember", "Soul", "Harmony", "Love", "Peace", "Hope", "Honour", "Spirit" and "Joy" on them."

A memorial service will be held on Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> August, and Bouw-Spies said they are planning to put the first benches in place as part of the ceremony. "The service will start at 14:00 at the Community Hall in Rheenendal and everyone is welcome. The incident united the community of Knysna four years ago - our hearts went out to the families that lost loved ones. This year we want to not only acknowledge these lost lives, but also celebrate their memories. The public, who showed tremendous support four years ago, can also get involved, either by a donation which will be used towards the purchase of the benches or trees, or even by donating a tree, a bench or plaque. Any help will be greatly appreciated."

Kathleen Wessels, one of the parents and the representative of the families affected by the accident, said the parents love the idea. "We have memories of the lost children at our homes, but remembering the children outside, by beautifying the area, is a wonderful gesture. I believe it will bring the community together once again and give us a way to heal, to acknowledge our sorrow and hopefully to move on. This way they can be always remembered, and in a beautiful and special environment."

Bouw-Spies said people interested to help can contact her directly. "Help me to bring some positive and healing energy to the Rheenendal area to celebrate these fifteen lives lost, and to keep them in the hearts of the Knysna community, forever."

Trees can be purchased from Rheenendal Prospect Nursery who will also beauty and maintain the memorial garden which will be established shortly.

For more information or to donate an item, please contact Eleanore Bouw-Spies at the office at 044 302 6580 or on 076 519 4485 or e-mail [ebouw@knysna.gov.za](mailto:ebouw@knysna.gov.za)

**ENDS**

**Knysna Municipality Communications Department**

P O Box 21. Knysna. 6570. Western Cape. South Africa

Tel +27 (0)44 302 6300 (switchboard) or 302 6471 (direct)

Fax +27 (0)86 215 4818 e-mail [communications@knysna.gov.za](mailto:communications@knysna.gov.za)