



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **MUNICIPALITY AND PARTNERS CHANGING LIVES ON MANDELA DAY**

Knysna Municipality invites Greater Knysna community to celebrate Mandela Month by showing the personification of Nelson Mandela's legacy of compassion, tolerance and humanitarianism that continues to inspire the world.

In celebration of Madiba's birthday and the spirit of Ubuntu, Municipal staff and business partners will participate in a number of activities dedicated to those in need in and around 18 July.

Thanks to the generosity of the municipal business partners; Cape Island Homes, Bukho Construction and local Govan Mbeki Award Winner, Nyameko Trading, the Municipal Integrated Human Settlements department are able to start the construction of three BNG (Breaking New Ground) housing units in Greater Knysna. These homes will offer much needed support for vulnerable households and persons with special needs.

"On behalf of the Knysna Municipality, I sincerely thank Cape Island Homes, Bukho Construction and Nyameko Trading, for the much-appreciated sponsorship they provided for our BNG Housing Project for those less fortunate. Thanks to their generous sponsorship, we are able to make an enormous difference to the lives of desperate families within Greater Knysna. Your generosity is a prime example of Ubuntu, and we thank you from the bottom of our heart, without your help it would not have been possible to deliver these homes," said Knysna Executive Mayor, Mark Willemse.

The municipality's technical services directorate chose align their 67 minutes with one of the municipality's core business functions by fixing potholes. Senior managers and other technical staff who know how to fix potholes will be out in Sedgfield, George Rex Drive and Wards 6 and 11. The municipality's Fire department together with Correctional Services, the Police and other stakeholders will do a house numbering drive in Hornlee to highlight the importance of house numbers especially in an emergency.

Nelson Mandela believed that nobody deserves to go to sleep while hungry, and keeping that in mind, the Rheenendal's Community Vegetable Garden will receive much-needed attention on the 18<sup>th</sup> as well. This garden was started back in 2016 and by now the soil needs to be replenished and new vegetables planted. "Making a difference in our communities is a cause close to our hearts, and this community project can make a small contribution towards helping the plight of our poorer residents," said Willemse and added: "By giving children and teens the tools they need to grow their own food, this will not only steer our youth away from trouble, but could also be giving them the keys to their own food security and financial futures as well."

Rheenendal will be a hive of activity on 18 June when the Library staff, joined by the Rheenendal Women's Group take a group of 60 disadvantaged and marginalised children under their wing. Because some of them are not enrolled in any Early Childhood Development (ECD) facilities, this programme aims to nurture a love for reading and encourage them to attend school to better themselves. This programme will kick off at 11:00 at the Rheenendal Library.

"The whole world opened up to me when I learned to read and what better way to introduce troubled youth to the secrets that lie between the covers of a book, a secret world that will open doors to allow in more light into often difficult lives. What a wonderful gift reading is, a gift that allows the imagination to be stretched, a gift that will help to make sense of their own lives and encourage them to reach out toward people whose lives are quite different from their own. This will be the start of a beautiful journey, a journey that starts with a warm cup of soup. Thank you to our staff and ladies of Rheenendal," Willemse said.

To further assist in alleviating hunger within Greater Knysna, the Knysna Municipal Social Development Department, in partnership with the Knysna Women's Forum, are planning a Clothing and Soup Drive on 20 July, for the benefit of the homeless. "The streets can be a very hostile environment, offering little respite, especially during the cold winter months. I am extremely grateful to the Knysna Women's Forum for joining forces with us in providing some much-needed relief to these homeless souls. I ask that the public dig through their wardrobes for possible men, women and children's clothing that could be distributed on this day."

The first global celebration of Mandela Day took place 18 July 2009, Mandela's 91st birthday, making this year the 10<sup>th</sup> year of this tradition. "We would be honoured if residents would join us in celebrating Madiba's life and in doing so bringing together our communities while fighting poverty and promoting peace, reconciliation and cultural diversity. Like our beloved Madiba, we should give life to the true ethos of *Ubuntu* – 'the quality of being human', Let us look beyond what has been done and live every day with Mandela's mind-set, and do whatever we can do to make Greater Knysna, and our communities a better place for all," concluded Willemse.

Knysna municipality invites one and all to become involved in showcasing a community that is inclusive, innovative and inspiring by extending a hand to help someone less fortunate this Mandela day. For further information on the various Knysna Municipal Mandela Projects, contact Nandipha September at 044 302 6430 or email [pr@knysna.gov.za](mailto:pr@knysna.gov.za)

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