



MEDIA RELEASE

Friday 18 September 2015
EMBARGO: Immediate

Rheenendal Hosts Successful Workshop for Persons with Disabilities

Knysna Municipality in collaboration with the Association for Persons with Disabilities (APD) and the Department of Social Development (DSD) hosted a successful workshop for persons with disabilities on Friday, September 11th, in Rheenendal.

A door to door survey was done to establish the number of people living with disabilities in ward 5. Based on those results, it was decided that it would be in the best interest of the community to host a workshop for the disabled.

The aim of the workshop was to do a need assessment in order to look at implementing an action plan on rendering services for disabled people. APD's objective is to establish a Disabled Forum to ensure that services are rendered in a sustainable manner and to ensure capacity building for members belonging to the Forum.

Addressing the workshop participants, Speaker and ward 5 councillor, Eleanore Bouw-Spies, spoke on the significance and the reasoning behind hosting the workshop. "We are here in support of you, we want to help you support each other and learn how to sustain yourself", she said.

"I want us to achieve something out of this workshop today. I want you all to point out the challenges you are faced with as individuals and I want us to find practical solutions which we can utilize and set in motion", she continued.

During the opening address motivational speakers had encouraging words for individuals. Motivational speaker Francios Smith, visually impaired himself, boldly stated, "Don't pity yourself, it only hurts you and keeps you back". APD Peer Support representative, Carol Bernardo urged parents not to be ashamed of their child living with a disability. She encouraged parents not to shield their child from the world but to rather have them form part of their community.

"I know we will not be able to find solutions to your various challenges in such a short amount of time", Ms. Bouw-Spies said. "That is why we intend to have a group get together once a week coupled with apt activities. If we work together we can utilize what we have learnt from this workshop to help improve your lives, and in the process create a more unified community", she concluded.

Photo caption: (Left from back) Daniel Pompies, Sarah London (Knysna Social Development) Speaker and ward 5 councillor, Eleanore Bouw-Spies, Carol Bernardo (Peer Support APD), Lizel Smith, Cherien

Felix (APD). Front from left: Nico Devos (Vermont Centre), Hendrick Blaauw (Vermont Centre), Tessa Lezar (Epilepsy SA).