



Knysna

Municipality || Munisipaliteit || uMasipala

inclusive || innovative || inspired

FROM TOWN HALL

DATE: Tuesday 4 May 2021

How to create a flourishing community? With a community, of course...

The Native Americans (Sioux) said “With all things and in all things, we are relatives.” Cicero said “We were born to unite with our fellow men, and to join in community with the human race.” There is a Moroccan folklore saying “Make a bed for the children of other people in the place where your own children sleep.” In Southern Africa we say “Umuntu Ngumuntu Ngabantu” or “I am, because you are”. Ubuntu. We are all connected and that one can only grow and progress through the growth and progression of others.

For centuries, in all languages and cultures, the inter connectedness of communities have been acknowledged. We are fortunate that Knysna have many individuals that work effortlessly to improve the lives of those around them, connecting communities.

Teach a man to fish (or garden in this case)

Growing Upwards is a food garden project initiated by a group of local women. The initiative was started during lockdown with the main aim to provide food security in poorer communities by creating community food gardens where it is needed most.

Since its inception in September 2020 the project has transformed eight spaces in vulnerable areas into functioning food gardens. These include food gardens at the Learning Tree, Humpty Dumpty Educare Centre, Dorothy Broster Children’s Home, the Brackenhill soup kitchen garden, Bitou crèche garden, KET Melrose House garden and The Hope Project (supported by the Methodist Outreach), as well as the AGS and Bitou soup kitchen gardens in Hornlee.

Zandile Meneses and Sue Torrance (Gouna Gardens) from Growing Upwards said that training is an important part of their project plan. “Once the garden is established, the team let the community run it, but return after a certain period for some after care and training. Where needed certain areas are replanted, and seasonal appropriate seed and seedlings planted. Residents are trained in soil quality, how to take care of pests in an organic way and how to rotate their crops.”

In addition to feeding many hungry mouths, they have also introduced an entrepreneurial side and some of the gardens supply fresh produce to local supermarkets. Zandile said the Hope Project Garden at The Village in central Knysna is selling their produce at the Granny’s Attic. “The garden is supported by the Methodist Church Outreach and it would be great if the public could support them – for them this could also be a step towards financial independence.”

She said they are raising more funds to establish more gardens and provide opportunities for people in need in the area. “Growing Upwards is now a registered NPC and will focus on fundraising, aftercare and training at the eight existing gardens during the winter months. There is a waiting list for potential new gardens and we hope to establish new food gardens and continue with the training, and encouraging entrepreneurial skill.”

“Any assistance is welcome. Please get in touch if you are interested to help - whether it is monetary, man hours, training or “plant” power – all is welcome.”

For more information please email Zandile on zandile@karootocoast.com

ENDS