



# WOFIRE NEWS

SAVING LIVES • PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT • RESTORING DIGNITY

## Garden Route Rebuild initiative making headway



WOF teams working on the stabilisation of slopes in Knysna alongside Working for Water participants and SANParks contracted workers



Soil blankets are being used to stabilise soil and prevent mudslides

Following the devastating fires of June 2017 which caused major damage to properties and public infrastructure as well as loss of lives, Working on Fire teams in the Western Cape have started work on the Garden Route Rebuild initiative (GRR).

The GRR was launched by the Western Cape Government to coordinate all the public and private efforts to rebuild the Garden Route. Various areas of work are being coordinated through the GRR initiative.

Some of the key challenges are to stabilise the burned slopes which have created a risk of mudslides, dealing with the re-growth of alien vegetation and the continuing fire risk of people living next to wildlands.

Working on Fire has already deployed 45 firefighters and managers to start work on a fire buffer zone in the Knysna area. Other WOF teams will be stabilising high-risk slopes and working on fire risk mitigation interventions between Riversdale and Nature's Valley. These teams have been bolstered by the support of contractors from SANParks and Working for Water participants.

The GRR initiative is working closely with relevant provincial and national stakeholders, such as the national Department of Environmental Affairs and the Southern Cape Fire Protection Association.

## Giving 67 minutes for Mandela



Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa and Health Minister Aaron Motsoaledi joined the Working on Fire Mookgophong Team in Limpopo at the official handover of the Ramadimetja Sophia Mogotlane Early Childhood Development Centre

**In the week preceding International Nelson Mandela Day, President Jacob Zuma called upon South Africans to use Nelson Mandela Day on July 18 to intensify the fight against poverty. This year's Mandela Day theme was #ActionAgainstPoverty.**

President Zuma highlighted the Expanded Public Works Programme's successful role in the government's strategy to ensure effective poverty alleviation.

"During 2015/2016, more than 61000 work opportunities were created through environmental programmes such as Working for Water, Working for Wetlands, Working on Fire and Working for Ecosystems," President Zuma said.

The Department of Environmental Affairs' Working on Fire has over the past 14 years contributed significantly to poverty alleviation through creating work opportunities for young men and women.

Several stories in this newsletter show how, largely because of the training and development offered in Working on Fire, former participants are now employed in the formal sector.

On Mandela Day Working on Fire teams throughout the country joined various community-based institutions such as old age homes and special needs schools and assisted the elderly by cooking, cleaning their homes, and providing food parcels and clothing. Pages 6-7 show how some of our participants used their 67 minutes for Mandela to demonstrate that they care.

## Busy Winter Fire Season across the country

With the 2017 winter fire season in full swing firefighting teams across the country have been kept busy suppressing fires which threatened lives and properties.

Provinces have experienced High Fire Danger Index (FDI) days and in KwaZulu-Natal, close to 250 firefighters successfully fought 23 fires in the week of 15-21 July.

The KwaZulu-Natal teams also worked on the N3 Project, where they conducted block burns along the N3 from Cedara to Lions River at Howick.

In the Eden District of the Western Cape, which experiences an all-year fire season, firefighters assisted landowners with fire suppression in Knysna, Plettenberg Bay, Swartberg, Keurfontein, George and Wilderness.

In Gauteng firefighters have suppressed more than 50 fires since the beginning of July which damaged about 3000 hectares of vegetation.



Firefighters on the fire line during recent fires in the Eden District, Western Cape

Since the start of the winter fire season, aerial support has been instrumental in the suppression of many fires, with pilots putting in countless flying hours to save the lives of citizens and protecting the environment.

Written by the Editorial Team

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### STOREKEEPER HOLDS BACHELOR'S DEGREE



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### PARTICIPANT BUYS HIS 'FIRST VEHICLE'



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# Editorial

Welcome to our July newsletter and thank you for taking the time to read our latest edition.

In this edition we cover the measures taken in the current winter fire season by the Department of Environmental Affairs Working on Fire teams across the country to suppress fires and limit their economic damage.

Our teams have been conducting fire awareness workshops for community members to ensure that they take responsibility for their fire risks and how to mitigate these risks.

You will also read about how the heroic firefighters who battled the Knysna fires on the Garden Route have been honoured for their service.

Our newly appointed National General Manager has begun conducting standardisation workshops which are being rolled out across the country.

The Working on Fire programme is about protecting communities and improving the lives of our participants. In this issue, read the inspiring stories of how our participants are using the stipend the programme provides to better and empower themselves through further education, entrepreneurship or relieving economic pressures on their families. Working on Fire helps its participants achieve life-long dreams which seemed impossible before they joined the programme.

We report on firefighters who have transitioned to formal employment at the South African Police Service and local municipalities and the welcome addition of a cohort of new Crew Leaders in the Eastern Cape. We wish all of you the best in your new roles.

Happy reading!

## MD Message

**Trevor Abrahams**



We are now firmly in our winter fire season and our teams across the country have been kept busy with both fire suppression and prevention work during the past few months.

On behalf of our management I want to thank all our firefighters who are continuing to do great work, especially on the fire line. I also want to urge our firefighters to remain vigilant on the fire line, to always put safety first above everything else and to look out for each other, particularly during difficult operations.

Last month during the Knysna fires, two Free State firefighters, Thabang Moeletsi and Monde Ndobela, came to the rescue of one of their team members. Through their selfless actions, they helped Gaecious Malake, who was injured on the fire line. Their commitment to helping their team member during his time of need is the type of comradeship that we want to encourage in Working on Fire.

I am glad to note that our firefighters have returned to Knysna to work on the Garden Route Rebuild Initiative (GRR) which is spearheaded by the Western Cape government and includes stakeholders from both national and local government. The GRR was launched to coordinate all the public and private efforts to rebuild the Garden Route after the devastating fires.

I recently returned from a successful visit to Canada where I was hosted by the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre (CIFFC) and Forest Canada. The purpose of my trip was to continue discussions of future cooperation agreements on providing fire management support between our two countries. The visit included a courtesy visit to the Alberta provincial government's Department of Agriculture, which manages this province's fire management programme.

I was well received by my Canadian hosts and all augurs well for possible future deployments to Canada when the need arises.

Working on Fire has always placed a strong emphasis on the need for everyone involved in the programme, from management to participants, to always show respect towards each other. Over

## Standardisation workshop rolled out nationally

Newly appointed Working on Fire National General Manager (NGM) Shane Christian is conducting standardisation workshops in all the provinces. The workshops are aimed at emphasising the back to basics message and ensuring that all provinces are on the same page regarding the programme's developments and processes.

On 4 July, the NGM's first stop was in the Eastern Cape where he conducted the four-day workshop with provincial management. Christian says, "The workshop seeks to ensure that management and participants get the same message, to address certainties and uncertainties and also ensure that everyone understands the WOF programmes."

Clarifying how the workshop will impact on WOF he says, "The system that will be implemented at provinces will be measurable for every team and every individual in the respective provinces. It will enable us to monitor, evaluate and present a portfolio of evidence ensuring value for money. It will also allow General Managers to see provincial performance on a monthly basis."

The NGM called on all Working on Fire employees to live the values of the programme – making a difference, teamwork, excellence, accountability and adaptability.



National General Manager, Shane Christian, conducts the first standardisation workshop with Eastern Cape management

The NGM will host the workshop in North West in the coming weeks. KwaZulu-Natal next followed by Limpopo, Free State, Western Cape, Mpumalanga and

Written by Editorial Team

## Free State firefighters praised for rescuing team member

Two Free State firefighters, Thabang Moeletsi and Monde Ndobela, recently received high praise from Working on Fire Managing Director, Trevor Abrahams, for their selfless actions in helping a fellow firefighter, Gaecious Malake, who was injured on the fire line during the Knysna fires in June.

"Your heroic and decisive decision making on 14 June 2017, while assisting Gaecious when a tree fell on him during fire suppression activities in Knysna, portrays the safety consciousness and teamwork that we value here at Working on Fire," Abrahams said.

"Your ability to remove the tree and stabilise Gaecious before moving him to get medical treatment makes you heroes in our eyes."



Thabang Moeletsi and Monde Ndobela were recently honoured by Working on Fire for their bravery in coming to the aid of an injured team member

the past 14 years we have made great strides in this regard and one of our key missions is about restoring the dignity of our participants in the programme.

Discipline is the other key value which has underpinned the success of the Working on Fire programme and must not be compromised if we are to rebuild the character and proud record of the WOF programme.

I trust I can count on all WOF personnel to join us in promoting and living these values of respect and discipline in the WOF programme.

In conclusion let me also thank those participants and management who participated in various 67 Minutes for Mandela activities on 18 July 2017.

It was heartwarming to see how our WOF teams made their contribution to the #ActionAgainstPoverty theme by helping those less fortunate, donating food hampers and planting vegetables gardens to ensure steady food availability.

## Back to Basics: Rebuilding Working on Fire

**Trevor Abrahams**

The Working on Fire programme is an award-winning government Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP). It has a proud record founded on respect and discipline, which has seen many programme participants rise up in the ranks of WOF management and others get gainful employment in the public and private sectors. It is critical that our "Back to Basics" campaign revitalises these two important foundation stones of WOF's past success.

Respect simply means that you treat others as you would want to be treated yourself, irrespective of your position in WOF.

Discipline is a non-negotiable part of firefighting and can mean the difference between life and death on the fire line. Discipline is something we cannot compromise

Some teams focused on acts of kindness, visiting the elderly and doing their household chores, which included doing laundry, fetching water and firewood and donating food.

This was a huge gesture and has once again shown that Working on Fire is indeed a caring organisation.

in an organisation like WOF and must be the standard by which we are all measured. Unwarranted work stoppages, intimidation and other actions intended to disrupt WOF programme activities will not be accepted and will attract concerted disciplinary action.

In cases where WOF personnel commit misconduct, the WOF disciplinary policy provides a framework for addressing such misconduct in a transparent and fair manner. We should emphasise that the WOF disciplinary policies aim to clarify what conduct is unacceptable in WOF, ensure the institution of corrective actions and, if necessary, ensure that there are consequences for wilful, repeated or serious misconduct.

We have become aware that some of WOF's disciplinary actions in the recent past did not

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Working on Fire is on Social Media  
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Working on Fire is an Expanded Public Works Programme which resides within the Department of Environmental Affairs.





# Community members taught about fire prevention

The Eastern Cape Fire Awareness Facilitator, Thulani Mkhosi, recently conducted fire awareness for Upper Zeleni community members.

The aim was to educate community members about the Working on Fire programme and how it works to prevent and suppress unwanted fires. Residents also learned how to identify fire risks and how to minimise them.

"The province is already in the winter fire season. Community members need to learn about fire prevention so that they can prevent unwanted fires," Mkhosi says.

He urged community members to remove dry leaves and overhanging tree branches around their homes as these can help fuel fires and cause damage to property.

"Community members must make sure they dispose of cigarette butts safely and be sure they



Upper Zeleni community members learn about fire prevention

put them out before disposing of them," says Mkhosi.



Nthabiseng Mokone, Provincial Communication Officer, Eastern Cape

# Harding Team targets communities to reduce fire risks

The KwaZulu-Natal Harding Team has been educating various communities on how to be firesafe and reduce the risk of wildfires this winter fire season. The team visited the Mkhoba, Ndaka, Khwezi, Ndakeni, Mawane and Nkungweni communities.

Harding's Base Communication Representative Lucky Ncobela says, "We split the team in two and targeted two communities per day to educate as many households as possible."

The team emphasised that community members must construct firebreaks with their neighbours, and understand the Fire Danger Index to know when they can make a fire.

"We asked people to cut down overhanging tree branches close to their properties and also to ensure that they have the contact details of



Firefighters conducting the door-to-door campaign

their local fire authorities at hand should there be a fire emergency," says Ncobela.

"Because of their visit to our homes we now know exactly what to do when there is a fire," said a community member.



Nompilo Zondi, Provincial Communication Officer, KwaZulu-Natal

# Team ready for its first fire season

Since its inception last year, the Rooiberg Team has been working tirelessly to put up fire prevention measures in fire-prone areas.

The team is facing its first fire season which will see the participants dispatched to the fire line for fire suppression. The young firefighters have worked very hard within their community to implement integrated fire management services (IFMS), including fire prevention, fuel load reduction, fire detection, fire awareness and fire suppression.

"The area had a high fuel load, such as thick dry grass, and limited education about the impacts of fires. As a team we worked very hard alongside the Fire Protection Association implementing IFMS for landowners and community members," says Type 1 Crew Leader Sehlare Foster Mabeba.

The team has been running fire awareness campaigns at schools and communities aimed at educating communities on how to be



The Rooiberg Team conducting a block burn at Thaleni Game Lodge

firesafe during the fire season and to prevent unwanted veld and forest fires.

Communities were urged to remove unnecessary rubble and overhanging tree branches on their properties, which can pose a serious fire risk, and to ensure that there were sufficient firebreaks between houses and adjacent grasslands.



Matema Gwangwa, Provincial Communication Officer, Limpopo

# FireSafe workshop presented to Working for Water participants



Working for Water participants attending a FireSafe workshop facilitated by the Community Fire Awareness Officer in Mpumalanga

Mpumalanga Community Fire Awareness Officer, Mbuso Siwela, hosted a two-day FireSafe workshop for close to 60 Working for Water (WfW) participants on 6-7 July 2017. The workshop was held for Eco-Furniture Programme participants in Graskop.

WfW is a government-funded programme that uses invasive alien vegetation to create school furniture for poor schools around the country.

"The purpose of the workshop was to educate WfW participants about ways to mitigate and prevent the impact of unwanted fires," says Siwela.

Siwela also educated the attendees on how to conduct fire risk assessment plans and assisted with ways to develop fire management plans.

The Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) funds both the Working for Water and Working on Fire programmes through its Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP).



Lebogang Maseko, Provincial Communication Officer, Mpumalanga

# Back to Basics: Rebuilding Working on Fire

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always follow the intent and prescription of WOF's disciplinary policies. WOF hence convened an urgent Industrial Relations refresher workshop for all senior WOF and HR personnel, to ensure greater consistency in the application of WOF disciplinary and grievance policies. This workshop is being rolled out in all the provinces.

WOF recently experienced a rise in union activity among WOF firefighters, particularly where the disciplinary policies were not applied properly. We wish to reiterate that all WOF personnel enjoy the constitutionally protected right of freedom of association. WOF will not stand in the way of any WOF employees wishing to join a union of their choice.

WOF has in fact been approached by four trade unions and has had a series of meetings with NUMSA and NPSWU, in which we have clarified that WOF was an Expanded Public Works Programme. As such, WOF management served as the Implementing Agent for the Department of Environment Affairs and could not negotiate the issue of wages with the unions. This has not stopped the unions going to the CCMA to seek relief. WOF management will continue to present the CCMA with the facts about WOF and explain why we cannot enter into wage negotiations with unions.

Firefighters must also make an effort to understand the laws governing labour union

activities in and around the workplace. Simply belonging to a union does not mean every labour action is protected in law. Any unlawful action by WOF personnel will be addressed through the WOF disciplinary process, whether or not such personnel are members of a union.

I would like to caution WOF personnel regarding a WhatsApp message inviting all KwaZulu-Natal 2016 Canadian deployees to the NUMSA offices in Durban with the allegation that WOF had agreed to this arrangement. Please do not accept such statements on behalf of WOF unless expressed in writing directly by WOF management. Fortunately we were able to issue a refutation of this statement to all our KZN personnel and consequently no firefighters travelled to the NUMSA offices in Durban for these purposes.

There have also been other instances in which firefighters reported that they were acting in accordance with the advice or instruction of union personnel. I urge all firefighters to be clear regarding what is legally permissible for trade unions, particularly where there is no recognition agreement between WOF and the trade union, and to avoid engaging in actions which may see them being charged with misconduct and losing pay for days absent from work without authorisation.

# Restoring Knysna through fire awareness



During the workshop community members were taught how to draw up an evacuation plan

Following the recent fires which engulfed Knysna, the Western Cape Community Fire Awareness Officer (CFAO), Rayganah Rhoda, and Fire Awareness Training Officer (FATO) Androlene Killian, conducted a FireSafe workshop in Knysna for 30 members of the Kleinkrans and Syferfontein communities.

The workshops, hosted at Lawaaiikamp Community Hall on 19 and 20 June 2017, marked the beginning of a series of fire awareness, door-to-door, and risk reduction campaigns that will take place across Knysna.

Rhoda says, "FireSafe workshops increase the awareness of fire risks and how communities

can mitigate these risks. It is vital to educate communities and children in this regard. The focus of these workshops was on safe evacuation plans within the community, risk evaluations and the importance of risk reduction. A well-informed community will ensure a safe and speedy evacuation plan which could result in the minimal loss of lives as well as the safety of everyone."



Lauren Howard, Provincial Communication Officer, Western Cape



# WOF Eastern Cape welcomes new Crew Leaders

The Working on Fire programme in the Eastern Cape welcomed back 21 Crew Leaders who recently completed the Type 2 Crew Leader course.

The young men and women left the province to attend the Type 2 Crew Leader course which ran from 24 May to 14 July.

Ground Operations Manager of the province, Vuyo Poponi, says the province is proud of the new Crew Leaders and decided to have the celebration to ensure that they start their work with a positive mindset.

He says this was the first time the province had sent such a large group to the Crew Leader course and they had all passed.



WOF in the Eastern Cape welcomes 21 Type 2 Crew Leaders

“We also conducted a standardisation workshop for these new leaders so that they understand the programme, the day-to-day running of the business as well as to ensure that the same message is relayed from their level down to participants,” Poponi says.

At the celebratory dinner after the workshop the General Manager, Monde Maqula, wished the new leaders well for the future.



Nthabiseng Mokone, Provincial Communication Officer, Eastern Cape

# Ermelo team attends financial management workshop

The Ermelo Team in Mpumalanga recently attended a financial management workshop aimed at empowering firefighters with the knowledge and skills to make informed financial decisions.

The workshop was facilitated by Social Development Practitioner Condrick Mukhudwani, who shared short and long-term financial plans with the team.

“It is important that you know what you are saving your money for and always stick to your plan. This will help you a lot to be free from financial debts,” says Mukhudwani.

Type 1 Crew Leader Manyoni Simelane says, “I found the workshop to be informative because I have already started implementing financial tips provided by Condrick.”

WOF promotes capacity building among participants and runs various social development programmes that help to develop the life skills of participants.



Lebogang Maseko, Provincial Communication Officer, Mpumalanga



The Ermelo Team participating in the financial management workshop at their base

# WOF partners with provincial government for fire season



Working on Fire teams, with representatives of COGTA, DAFF and FPAs, attending the official opening of fire season

Working on Fire (WOF) in Mpumalanga partnered with the Mpumalanga Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) and the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) to launch the official opening of the winter fire season on 30 June 2017.

The launch saw a number of Fire Protection Associations (FPAs) under one roof discussing ways to mitigate and minimise the risk of veld and forest fires in the province.

Provincial General Manager Martin Bolton commended government departments, disaster management centres, FPAs and landowners

for their continued support and partnerships in addressing an integrated approach to fire management.

“It is through these partnerships that WOF in Mpumalanga had a significant drop in the number of fires recorded between 2015 and 2016,” says Bolton.

There are over 600 firefighters in Mpumalanga who are fit and ready to be safely deployed throughout the province to minimise the negative impacts of fire.



Lebogang Maseko, Provincial Communication Officer, Mpumalanga

# Firefighters honoured for their dedication

The leadership of the Aloe Ridge Apostolic Faith Mission Church in Riversdale held a thanksgiving service to acknowledge the contribution of the Working on Fire firefighters to fighting the devastating fires in Knysna.

“It’s an extremely challenging task to perform day by day and we realise the importance of firefighters in our area. We are grateful for this group of firefighters from Working on Fire as you

have such passion for your work. We appreciate your efforts and thank you for the work done in saving Knysna,” said Pastor Johan Gertse.

Following the service, the Riversdale Team was treated to cake and refreshments by members of the congregation.



Lauren Howard, Provincial Communication Officer, Western Cape



Pastor Johan Gertse and his spouse joined the Working on Fire firefighters from the Riversdale Team



# Storekeeper earns a bachelor's degree

Tshibanyane Mofokeng from the Bethlehem Team has achieved something that not many in his position have.

Mofokeng obtained a Bachelor's in Governance and Political Transformation degree from the University of the Free State. Tshibanyane and his twin brother are the first in their family to achieve degrees.


Mofokeng was born with B3 visual impairment, and has difficulties with most daily activities taken for granted by others, such as driving, reading, socialising and walking. Although he has struggled with his sight his entire life, this has not stopped him from reaching the goals he has set for himself.

"Even though I have a visual impairment I did not allow that to stop me from obtaining my first degree and it will not stop me from obtaining another qualification. I would like to thank the Department of Environmental Affairs for initiating the Working on Fire programme because it serves as a stepping stone for us to reach our goals," says Mofokeng.

He aims to become a political analyst in the future and is currently saving part of his stipend to do his honours degree.



Tshibanyane Mofokeng says his visual impairment will not hold him back from achieving his goals

 Wayne Mkhethi, Provincial Communication Officer, Free State



Gaecious Maleke is recovering well at home

## Injured Knysna fire hero becomes a father

Gaecious Maleke became a father on 6 July. A Working on Fire (WOF) firefighter from the Bloemfontein Team, Maleke was injured in the line of duty when a burning tree log rolled over him during the fires in Knysna in the Western Cape. He sustained soft tissue damage to his left ankle.

The baby boy has been named Hlonolofatso, meaning 'Blessing'.

"I cannot describe the emotions I'm feeling but I would like to thank my team members from the Bloemfontein Base for making it possible for me to welcome my child into the world. They did not hesitate to risk their own safety to free me from being trapped under that tree log," says Maleke.

Monde Ntobela, a Type 1 Crew leader, and First Aider Thabang Moeletsi, both from the Bloemfontein Base, received commendations from WOF Managing Director

Trevor Abrahams for their bravery in assisting Maleke.

"It feels great to be recognised for the work that we do. However, I must say that it was a team effort and that the whole team came together very quickly to help our injured team member and get him to safety," says Moeletsi.

Ntobela says, "While we were on the fire line that evening we observed all safety protocols. However, because we work under dangerous conditions, things happen that we cannot control. That is what happened to Gaecious. Because we wore our protective clothing, the injuries he sustained were minor in comparison with what could have occurred without it."

 Wayne Mkhethi, Provincial Communication Officer, Free State

## Participant says WOF became a parent to him



Given Kobo says that the WOF programme rescued him from poverty


Given Kobo of the Dr JS Moroka Team says the Working on Fire programme provided for him when his parents passed away.

"I did not have anyone to care for me when my mother and grandparents died. I depended on them because jobs were scarce," he says.

Kobo says, "The work opportunity in the programme restored my dignity and that saved me from poverty. The monthly stipend helped me buy clothes and food and upskill myself. It changed my life for the better."

Being able to make his own living has given him pride. Kobo says that the bank SMSes that beep on his cellphone every month put a smile on his face.

"My friends always ask me about this job opportunity. This makes me feel valuable again," he says.

 Parapara Makgahlela, Provincial Communication Officer, Gauteng

## WOF assists participant to further studies



Sarah Hlako is doing her practicals for her National Diploma in Business Management at the provincial office

"I am living testimony that hard work, passion, dedication and perseverance are keys to a brighter future," says Sarah Hlako, a firefighter from Blouberg Base in Limpopo.

Sarah joined WOF as a firefighter at Blouberg Base in November 2016, when she was already pursuing her N6 National Diploma in Business Management at Capricorn TVET in Bochum.


As with other young people WOF recruits from previously disadvantaged communities, she underwent training in integrated fire management services before being placed at her base. This didn't affect her studies as she was attending afternoon classes.

After completing 18 months of theory studies she applied to WOF for placement to do the

18 months of practical experience required to complete her diploma. Her application to conduct her practicals at WOF's Limpopo provincial office was granted in June.

"It was not easy, but because I knew what I wanted, I persevered and am making sure I learn as much as I can from provincial management," says Hlako.

Sam Maepa, the Provincial General Manager says, "Sarah is an example to other firefighters who are pursuing their studies. This also gives us the opportunity to give back and to contribute in the uplifting of our participants."

 Matema Gwangwa, Provincial Communication Officer, Limpopo



# MANDELA DAY 2017

A special week as the Department of Environmental Affairs Working on Fire teams throughout the country celebrated Mandela Day under the theme #ActionAgainstPoverty. WOF teams made their contribution by helping those less fortunate, donating food hampers and planting vegetables gardens to ensure steady food availability. While some teams purely showed acts of kindness, visiting the elderly, doing their house chores which included doing laundry, fetching water and fire wood and donating food.



The Working on Fire Bloemfontein Team and the Free State provincial staff spent their 67 minutes of Mandela Day at Dikonyana Orphanage and Crèche in Namibia township in Bloemfontein. They handed out food parcels and clothing items and worked in the vegetable garden.



A firefighter from the Carletonville Team planting seedlings at Zanele Mjali home-based care in Khutsong.



A crew member of the Dinokeng Team helps to clean the Kekana Gardens old age home.



The Kwambonambi Team assisted at Ethembeni Care Centre by cleaning the yard, weeding and planting in the garden and also painting the centre's chairs.



The Ladysmith Team visited an orphanage and donated sanitary towels.



The Western Cape staff and the False Bay Team conducted a clean up at the Baphumelele Childrens Home in Khayelitsha. All participated in cleaning 12 dorms, donated clothes and toys for the children, as well as cooking and feeding kids.



Provincial staff assisted the Golden Age home for the elderly with cooking, cleaning and groceries.



Lusikisiki HAT helped an elderly resident with the day-to-day household chores and donated food.



The Working on Fire Senekal Team celebrated Mandela Day by donating food parcels and doing household chores for an elderly resident.

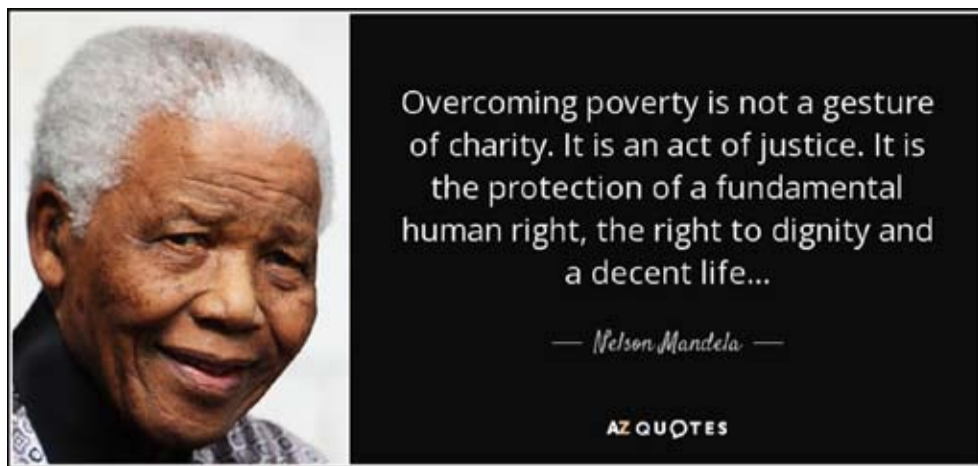


The Kleinmond Team and the Overstrand Fire & Rescue Services conducted a cleanup at the Kids Can Child Care. The Team also assisted the children with their daily school activities.



The Jansenville Team spent their time cleaning and painting a daycare centre.







# WOF participant purchases his first vehicle

Keketso Mofokeng, from the Working on Fire Theunissen Base, recently achieved a special milestone that older people tend to fondly remember. He has purchased his first car. The proud owner of an Opel Astra says it is a big achievement as few members of his immediate family own a vehicle.

"I've been saving part of my stipend for a very long time to buy this car and I can finally breathe a sigh of relief now that I have reached my goal. I'm thankful to WOF because when I joined the programme, we were taught how to budget and how to be financially responsible

with the stipend that we would be receiving," says Mofokeng.

He is happy that he is now able to assist his mother when she does grocery shopping which saves her using public transport while carrying the heavy plastic bags.

"I would like to encourage my colleagues to work wisely with their income and to set achievable financial goals that will assist them in reaching their short-term and long-term goals," says Mofokeng.



Wayne Mokhehi, Provincial Communication Officer, Free State



Keketso Mofokeng is proud of his achievement

# Former firefighter exits programme

A former firefighter at Krugersdorp Base has exited the programme to become a petrol attendant at a Shell filling station in Soweto.

Twenty-five-year-old Tsakani Maluleke joined the programme in 2012. Maluleke says she joined the programme because she needed work experience and skills and that being part of the award-winning programme had been a pleasure.

Maluleke saw the work opportunity in the programme helped her progress towards a career and a better life.

"It is tough to be a firefighter but it was better than sitting home doing nothing. It helped me lessen the burden on my parents as I could provide for myself," she says.

She says she took advantage of opportunities to gain skills and knowledge through WOF.

"My biggest interest as a firefighter was in first aiding because I want to pursue a career as a paramedic in the long run," says Maluleke, who is a qualified Basic Ambulance Assistant. She hopes that her new employment will lead to landing her dream job in future.



Tsakani Maluleke, a former firefighter at Krugersdorp Base, has exited the programme

Parapara Makgahlela, Provincial Communication Officer, Gauteng

# Former participant lands job at SAPS



Mavis Mabena in her SAPS uniform

Mavis Mabena is now a policewoman in Mpumalanga. She says she has put what she learned in the WOF programme to good use in her employment at the South African Police Services.

"The programme prepared me well for the tough labour market. It helped build my confidence," she says. Mabena also appreciates the skills in financial management and industrial relations she acquired at WOF and the work ethic and importance of team work that were stressed at WOF.

The former SHE representative at Leeuwfontein Base says safety in the work environment is still important.

"As a firefighter I sometimes thought safety rules were a futile exercise. They matter most now," she says.

"I put on a bulletproof vest like firefighters dress up in their personal protective clothing for safety reasons. I can't compromise my safety."

Mabena says firefighters in the WOF programme should not underestimate the impact and value of the skills the programme offers them.



Parapara Makgahlela, Provincial Communication Officer, Gauteng

# Naledi Team celebrates six years of service



Naledi team members

Early this month the crew members of the North West Naledi Team celebrated six years of providing excellent services to neighbouring communities. The team had breakfast at a local Wimpy where they discussed new strategies going forward. The team also looked at their impact in the community and how to

further assist communities in the winter fire season.

The Naledi Team Base Communications Representative says, "We are glad that our team is still standing strong six years later, which means this community is seeing value in us. We are pleased that community members are

learning what we are teaching them about fire safety as we have seen a decrease in fire incidents."

Working on Fire is a Department of Environmental Affairs-funded Expanded Public Works Programme.

Written by Editorial Team