



The Working on Fire National Communications Team, together with the Western Cape Provincial Office staff, dropped off Santa Shoeboxes

## Making a difference

Working on Fire employees strive to live the programme's values of Accountability, Teamwork, Excellence, Adaptability and Making a Difference, and often their efforts bring a smile to the faces of those who are less fortunate.

Recently, management members and teams demonstrated how to 'make a difference' by participating in the Santa Shoebox Project. They donated money which was used to buy clothing, toiletries and toys.

These necessities were then beautifully wrapped in gift boxes which will be handed over to underprivileged children over the festive season. On 10 November, Working on Fire delivered the Santa Shoeboxes to allocated drop-off points in the Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal.

According to the Santa Shoebox Project website, the project began in Cape Town in 2006 with just 180 shoeboxes. Within 10 years the number of Santa Shoeboxes donated reached a total of 652 180. The shoeboxes are distributed to more than 1000 facilities each year, through more than 60 satellites around South Africa and Namibia.

Written by Editorial Team



## Count me in: together moving a non-violent South Africa forward



The 16 Days of Activism for No Violence against Women and Children campaign is currently taken place from 25 November to 10 December 2017.

Over the period government will convene a series of dialogues on violence against women and children to focus on the problem, discuss the causes and to find appropriate solutions. Through the dialogue sessions government will interact with community members who experience violence and abuse.

Working on Fire teams joined marches around the country against this social ill targeting communities that have had incidents of women and children abuse. They called on victims to break the silence and speak up on abuse and encouraged community members to not turn a blind eye to women and children abuse in their communities.

## Firefighter recognised for bravery

Teamwork among firefighters is one of Working on Fire's most important values as wildland firefighting can be a dangerous occupation.

Sinah Peterson, a firefighter from the Boskop Base in the North West Province, proved the value of teamwork on 16 August when she saved teammate, Maria Khanzi, who was trapped by the fire they were fighting when the wind suddenly changed direction on the fireline. Khanzi says, "I fell in a hole while trying to run to safety. That's when I screamed for help. If it wasn't for Sinah, I wouldn't be standing here today. Thank you Sinah."

Peterson says, "I heard my colleague Maria screaming and I went back to the fire to rescue my teammate. The training I received from WOF was helpful. I didn't panic, I just went in bravely because I have been fully trained for this kind of work."

North West General Manager, Nolvuyo Mashologu, said the province was very proud of Peterson and her bravery was honoured. Peterson and Khanzi sustained minor burn injuries to their legs and arms but have fully recovered.

Written by Editorial Team



Sinah Peterson during simulation exercise showing how she helped her teammate. Inset: photograph of Sinah Petersen





# Editorial

Dear reader

Welcome to our November Newsletter and thank you for taking the time to read our latest edition.

Working on Fire’s Social Development Practitioners conducted health and wellness workshops for teams to mark World Diabetes Day. You can also read about the firefighting interventions made by teams in preparation for the next winter fire season.

If you’ve always wondered what our firefighter do when not fighting fires, read about how some are making a difference in their communities. Several participants also show how they have managed to use the skills acquired in the programme to secure job opportunities beyond the programme, while others describe how they are using their monthly stipends to further their studies and help support their families.

We would like to wish all the best to the participants who have exited the WOF programme to take up new positions elsewhere, and to those who continue to take advantage of the opportunities provided in the programme

**Editorial footnote:** Following the death last month of MacDonald Mampuru Thobejane, one of his former colleagues, Alwyn Krueger, paid this tribute to him:

*A huge man with a big heart has said his last farewell in Limpopo. Words cannot describe the feelings I have. I worked with MacDonald, called him Mampuru. Great ethics and discipline was his strong points. A huge loss, for humankind. A huge loss for me. Memories remain and will be treasured. Rest well my friend. We will always remember you as a true “huge man”.*

## MD Message:

Trevor Abrahams



This month I want to continue the discussion around our values, which are becoming ever more critical to ensuring that Working on Fire continues saving lives, protecting our environment and restoring the dignity of our firefighters.

This newsletter celebrates the bravery of Sinah Peterson, a female firefighter from the Boskop Base (North West), who went above and beyond her call of duty to help save a teammate trapped by fire during firefighting operations in August.

**Teamwork** is one of our most important values and Sinah’s unselfish act is a wonderful example of teamwork in action. I am encouraged to see that she was recognised for her bravery.

Our value – **‘Making a Difference’** – drives us as we seek to change the lives of our firefighters, management and the communities that we serve and protect.

This is the 19th year that the annual 16 Days of Activism for No Violence Against Women and Children campaign has been conducted Beginning on 25 November, our Social Development Department will organise our firefighters and management to make a difference in communities throughout the country by participating in community events to support this campaign.

These values are important as we grow Working on Fire while developing our participants and making a significant contribution to protecting our environment and communities.

### 2017 Azishe Sports Games

In May this year we embarked on a ‘back to basics’ campaign to ensure that we do things as we have done in the past, including providing opportunities for our firefighters to showcase their sporting talents in national sports and games.

I am excited that we will be hosting our 2017 Azishe Games in Gauteng from 7 to 10 December with all our teams, including the HATs, participating. There is great excitement already building up and I am looking forward to seeing all those who have been selected to represent their provinces at these games.

# Putting people first

Natalie Sauls is the new Executive: Human Capital Management of Working on Fire.

The appointment of the highly experienced executive in November 2017 has been widely welcomed at WOF. She brings nearly two decades of experience in the Human Resources field with extensive knowledge of talent acquisition, human capital management and the employment of skills development strategies.

We asked Natalie to unpack a little about herself and her new role at WOF.

### Tell us more about your background and your vision for human capital management at Working on Fire?

“I have worked in an enabling capacity in industries such as media, legal, aviation, forestry and road freight for close to two decades.

“In 2008, I was appointed Human Resources Manager for Caxton Magazines, a prominent media company based in Johannesburg, where I expedited systems and processes, servicing 12 magazine titles. During my tenure, I made use of my strong generalist skills by collaborating with senior management and HOD teams on efforts to improve consistency, particularly those related to labour relations.

“I am passionate about service delivery and I like to keep processes streamlined. Although Human Resources may have evolved I am confident that, together with my new team in human capital management, we will play a big role in strengthening the business objectives of Working on Fire.

“It is thus my vision to ensure that Working on Fire performs optimally in all facets of the business through the interactive and strong supporting role of human capital management.”

### What influence does family have in your life?

“Although I may be from Johannesburg, Nelspruit is no stranger to me. I have family roots in Barberton, Lydenburg and Sabie. I also have my beautiful 11-year-old daughter Jessica, who is already showing signs of being the psychologist at home. She always keeps me grounded as I know I have to be a role model to her and we just enjoy being together as a family.

“I come from a very close-knit family, supported by my mom who is now retired, my sister (a teacher) and my niece. I unfortunately lost my dad to cancer seven years ago and this has certainly brought us closer together as a family. In this tough business and work environment it is important to have a loving and supportive family behind you.”



### Why did you choose Human Resources as a career?

“I was tasked to do a case study at a company where I worked closely with the HR Director. She encouraged me to pursue my career. She said never deviate, always grow and learn, look for improvements within your own personal development, foster strong working relationships and make sure you make a difference.

“To this day, I can hear her voice whispering, pushing me, steering me. She never gave up on me. Little did I know – let alone realise that there was a bigger depiction – that someday I would be in a position to do exactly that.”

### How do you feel about transitioning to your new career ‘home’ at Working on Fire?

“The transition from Johannesburg to Nelspruit seemed daunting at first. I was introduced to the team at Working on Fire and suddenly the move couldn’t have happened any faster. I want to be part of making that difference where our business is people and people are our business.

“Working on Fire plays a significant role in changing the lives of the South African youth and through a range of our various interventions, it always remains our objective to restore the dignity of these brave young men and women in the programme.

“It will be my mission to ensure that our Human Capital Management department always puts them first in whatever services we must deliver to them.

“Thank you for having made me feel at home during my first month at Working on Fire.”

## WOF firefighter reunites homeless man with his family

The KwaZulu-Natal eThekweni Team displayed compassion when they helped an elderly homeless man find his family.

During a routine firebreak operation on one of the eThekweni controlled sites, Assistant Project Manager Howard Mathebula and his team noticed a makeshift shelter. A community member told them an elderly man lived in it and that he could barely walk.

“While constructing the firebreak, we ensured that the shack was not burnt. I saw that one of my firefighters, Mandisa Nozulela, looked saddened at seeing the elderly man in the shack. I then requested her to ensure all signs of fire were extinguished around the shack as the firebreak passed the elderly man’s dwelling,” says Mathebula.

Nozulela started to talk to the elderly man, to try to find out who he was, where he was from and what had happened to his family. Discovering that she did not live far from the area that the elderly man said he was from, she informed Mathebula and suggested finding the man’s family.

“We agreed as a team to assist him in finding his family, failing which we were going to try get him into an old age home. When Mandisa found the man’s family, they



Family members assist former homeless man to pack

were in disbelief as he had been missing since 1981 and they had thought he had passed away,” says Mathebula.

The elderly man had survived on his own and depended on the generosity of neighbouring residents who brought him food and washed his clothes.

“It was heartwarming to find that the elderly man still had a family that cared for him. He has five siblings who had thought they would never see him again,” says Mathebula.



Nompilo Zondi, Provincial Communication Officer, KwaZulu-Natal

### Introduction of Editorial Team

#### Editor-in-chief:

Linton Rensburg  
*National Communications Manager*

#### Deputy Editor:

Olwethu Mpeshe  
*Communications Coordinator*

#### Provincial Communication Officers:

Parapara Makgahlela  
Matema Gwangwa  
Nompilo Zondi  
Lauren Howard  
Wayne Mokhethi  
Lebogang Maseko  
Nthabiseng Mokone

#### WOF TV Video Journalists:

Christalene de Kella  
Rethabile Selepe

### General contacts for WOFIRE NEWS

Tel: +27 21 418 2569 • Cell: +27 82 508 0990 • Email: [news@wofire.co.za](mailto:news@wofire.co.za)

Working on Fire is on Social Media | [facebook](#)

Working on Fire is on YouTube (Working on Fire TV News)



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



Our premium news products, WOFire News and WOF TV, have the single objective of being informative!

They are there to keep our participants informed about what’s happening in WOF across the country.

WOF TV News and WoFire News are dedicated to the hard work of our participants and aim to focus on their stories, not only in relation to their work in WOF but also how they have grown and developed in the Programme.

Furthermore we feature many stories of participants who took responsibility for their own lives and also extended their compassion to others.

Readers are welcome to send us their stories in their home language and we will assist with translation and editing.

Please e mail your story to [news@wofire.co.za](mailto:news@wofire.co.za) or submit them via your local Provincial Communication Officers, Regional Managers, Base Managers or Crew Leaders.





Fire in Gordon's Bay

# Western Cape Fire Season well underway

Working on Fire, the Department of Environmental Affairs' programme to help fight veld and forest fires, was hard at work throughout the past month as firefighters fought fires across the Western Cape.

The province has experienced an early start to its 2017 veld fire season. Since 30 October 2017, more than 350 WOF firefighters as well as firefighting aircraft have been actively assisting partners such as the South African National Parks, the Southern Cape FPA, the Cape Peninsula FPA and CapeNature, in suppressing 20 fires in the Western Cape.

During the winter fire season, which ran from May to October, more than 1 000 firefighters assisted partners in suppressing 40 fires, limiting the hectares burnt to just under 42 405. This winter season, the WOF firefighting aircraft played a significant role in fire suppression, racking up 329 flying hours battling blazes across the Western Cape, including 238 flying hours containing the Knysna and Tsitsikamma fires of June 2017.



Lauren Howard, Provincial Communication Officer, Western Cape

# High Altitude Teams make strides in environmental sector



HAT participants in the field in Graskop, Mpumalanga

With more than 400 participants situated at 31 bases in five provinces, High Altitude Team (HAT) participants perform a crucial environmental service by clearing alien invasive plants in areas that are difficult to access.

They were kept busy this past winter fire season, clearing alien invasive plants that increase the risk of veld and forest fires. "Our teams in Mpumalanga have cleared 256 hectares in the past six months and about 1 800 hectares since the project started six years ago under WOF," says HAT Ground Operations Manager Hannes de Lange.

According to De Lange, the clearing of invasive plants is a continuous process and therefore teams are always in the field working tirelessly to protect the environment as part of DEA's primary objective of nature conservation.

De Lange says that HAT teams work closely with environmental stakeholders, provincial government departments, local municipalities and sister programmes such as Working For Water.



Lebogang Maseko, Provincial Communication Officer, Mpumalanga

# Potch FPA's perspective on the winter fire season

With the winter fire season behind us, Potchefstroom Fire Protection Association chairperson, Dr Kobus Roux, says that while the province had anticipated an intense winter fire season due to a high fuel load following good rainfall in 2016, the fire season was below normal intensity.

"Together with WOF teams and the North West Umbrella FPA (NWUFPA), we hosted fire awareness programmes, ensured efficient firebreaks in strategic places and efficient firefighting equipment, and trained farmers and farm workers on prevention and extinguishing techniques of veld fire," he says.

Dr Roux thanked the teams for their professional and excellent service. "The WOF teams, especially in Potchefstroom, are always of a very high standard, well trained, under good crew leadership and well behaved. It is an honour for us to work with these teams in Potchefstroom. In the rest of the province the partners are also very happy with the performance of the teams."

*Written by Editorial Team*



Potchefstroom Fire Protection Association chairperson, Dr Kobus Roux

# Fort Cox students equipped with fire safe techniques

Fifteen students from Fort Cox College were equipped with fire safety techniques during the FireSafe presentation that was conducted by the Community Fire Awareness Officer of WOF Eastern Cape, Thulani Mkhosi.

Working on Fire protects the environment through Integrated Fire Management which includes fire prevention, suppression and fire awareness. The FireSafe presentation is part of WOF's community awareness strategy.

The Working on Fire programme was explained to the students and they were

educated about how WOF helps with fire prevention.

Mkhosi said the objective was to educate students on how to be fire safe. Students were encouraged to identify fire risks in their areas and find ways to mitigate them.

The students appreciated the presentation and committed to using what they learned to minimise fire risks in their communities.



Nthabiseng Mokone, Provincial Communication Officer, Eastern Cape



Community Fire Awareness Officer Thulani Mkhosi educates students on fire safety

# Efforts to raise fire awareness continue

Although KwaZulu-Natal officially concluded the winter fire season at the end of October, Community Fire Awareness Officer Simphiwe Dlamini remains committed to raising awareness about the danger of fires and the importance of being firesafe.

Working on Fire participated in the Groutville Public Awareness Day with the ILembe District Disaster Management Centre, KwaDukuza Disaster Management Centre, KwaDukuza Social Crimes, KwaDukuza Fire and Rescue, KwaDukuza beach lifeguards and Community Care Givers.

"Even though we are in the summer season there are still risks of unwanted fires in communities, due to thunderstorms, strong winds, flood rains and also electrical household fires," says Dlamini.

The aim of the event was to raise awareness about the risks community members face this festive season, including fire risks. It also gave community members a chance to seek information from the various government departments and organisations present.

"I emphasised the importance of understanding the causes of fire and how community members can reduce the risk of unwanted fires. I taught them about the types of fires and how to extinguish them to ensure that they will be safe this festive season," says Dlamini.



Nompilo Zondi, Provincial Communication Officer, KwaZulu-Natal



Several speakers gave presentations to community members



# Teams encourage a healthy lifestyle on World Diabetes Day



The Aganang Team engaged in fitness activities on World Diabetes Day to encourage healthy living

The Department of Health and the private health sector encourage the raising of awareness about diabetes on 14 November, World Diabetes Day.

Working on Fire Limpopo’s Provincial Social Development Practitioner, Michael Ramatsea, partnered with various government stakeholders in organising activities at the bases for the WOF participants to mark World Diabetes Day.

“The objective is to educate people about diabetes, how it develops, the symptoms and how to prevent this chronic illness,” says Ramatsea.

Although WOF participants are always engaging in physical fitness training to stay fit and healthy, being afflicted by diabetes might negatively impact on their productivity in the workplace.

At Rooiberg Base the nurses from the Rooiberg clinic gave an informative presentation about diabetes, while the participants at the Aganang Base and hospital personnel engaged in aerobics and fun exercises to promote a healthy lifestyle.

“Living a balanced lifestyle, following healthy eating habits and exercising regularly can decrease the risk of diabetes,” says Ramatsea.



Matema Gwangwa, Provincial Communication Officer, Limpopo

# WOF Mpumalanga workshop clarifies myths around cancer

Marking the end of Breast Cancer Awareness Month, Social Development Practitioner in Mpumalanga, Condrick Mukhudwani, organised a Breast Cancer Awareness workshop on 30 October 2017 for Working on Fire provincial staff and the Ermelo and Graskop teams.


This was aimed at teaching staff members how to detect the disease early and to equip them with the necessary knowledge of how to manage the disease.

“Because breast cancer affects both men and women, it was only fitting that I ensured this workshop happened for both our participants and management,” says Mukhudwani.

He says the workshop provided a platform to share knowledge of the disease and demystify the stigma and myths associated with breast cancer.

The workshop was facilitated by Ramposi Shawe, who works as a CANSA Community Mobiliser in Nelspruit and the surrounding areas.

WOF’s Graskop and Ermelo teams also had the opportunity to attend similar workshops at their respective bases, facilitated by health practitioners from the Provincial Department of Health.



Lebogang Maseko, Provincial Communication Officer, Mpumalanga



Working on Fire’s provincial management in Mpumalanga attending the breast cancer awareness workshop

# Firefighters and families get free medical check-up

As the world commemorated Diabetes Day, KwaZulu-Natal Social Development Practitioner Hloniphile Ndlovu, in partnership with Expectra, conducted a health and wellness check-up for Albert Falls participants and their families.

The aim of the Expectra Health Education Campaign is to educate community members about diseases like hypertension, diabetes, tuberculosis and HIV, and male medical circumcision.

As November was Diabetes Awareness Month, participants were being encouraged, together with their families, to have regular check-ups and promote a healthy lifestyle.

“One of the reasons I introduced this project is that many of our firefighters and their families don’t have regular medical check-ups. If no one is seriously ill, it is assumed that all is well,” says Ndlovu.

Diabetes can afflict anyone. However, people who have close relatives with the disease are more likely to develop it. Risk factors include obesity, high cholesterol, high blood pressure and physical inactivity.

“I hope to encourage family health values. A healthy family is a happy family,” says Ndlovu.



Nompilo Zondi, Provincial Communication Officer, KwaZulu-Natal



An Expectra representative attends to firefighters’ family members during the health and wellness check-up

# Fitness exercises benefit participants

Fitness exercises in the WOF programme have health benefits, says Kedibone Maine from the De Wildt Team. She says the exercises keep her energised and allow her to perform her duties to the best of her ability.


With obesity increasing among young people, Maine feels the programme’s fitness exercises can assist participants to counter health challenges, as fitness reduces the chances of lifestyle diseases such as high blood pressure, diabetes and strokes among firefighters.

While many people her age can’t even run 500 metres, at the age of 34, Maine completes the 2.4km run in 13 minutes. She attributes her healthy body to the fitness exercises, noting



Kedibone Maine says she benefits positively from the fitness exercises in the programme

that while gym membership is costly, the programme offers health and wellness to employees free of charge.



Parapara Makgahlela, Provincial Communication Officer, Gauteng

# Free State hosts Health and Wellness event




While health is defined as the absence of disease, wellness concerns the lifestyle choices a person makes to stay healthy. Regular exercise, healthy relationships and avoiding risky behaviours such as smoking are all elements of wellness.

WOF Social Development arranged a wellness day for Free State provincial staff and the Bloemfontein Team. There was an Uncommon Warrior mobile gym as well as a personal trainer who conducted an aerobics session with all those who attended. The Free State Department of Health performed free

health checks on the day, testing for HIV, blood pressure and diabetes.

Social Development Officer Selaelo Mathokwane says, “The event was a success and it highlighted the importance of wellness in the workplace. I hope that through this initiative health and wellness will become a goal and that each individual who was present will become a champion of wellness.”



Wayne Mokhehi, Provincial Communication Officer, Free State



# HR training for Free State WOF staff



Provincial and regional staff during the five-day training workshop

The Free State Working on Fire’s provincial and regional staff recently attended a five-day Human Resources and Industrial Relations Workshop.

The workshop was intended to increase understanding and knowledge of management. Training included basic incident investigation and statement taking in the workplace.

The training equipped the staff with the skills and knowledge to handle all proceedings and processes involved in employee relations and developed the management staff by building the competencies they required to unleash optimal productivity in the Working on Fire programme.

The accredited programme, facilitated by subject matter experts, used practical and interactive training methods to involve participants in real-life scenarios, ensuring the instant application of critical management skills.

Provincial Dispatch Coordinator Gillian Anderson says, “The training was informative and useful and as management in WOF we will aim to put into practice what we learnt.”



Wayne Mokhehi, Provincial Communication Officer, Free State

# Management regroups to better serve participants



Limpopo provincial management works toward its goal of uplifting the province during the management teambuilding workshop

Working on Fire Limpopo managers attended a five-day teambuilding workshop aimed at improving the working relationship of the provincial management and building a better province.

“For us to render good service and support to our participants, we need to regroup and build a solid foundation that will assist us in taking WOF Limpopo forward,” says Michael Ramatsea, the Social Development Practitioner.

The workshop started with the team identifying the challenges affecting its

working relationships. As part of the activities, participants were given tasks to improve their thinking skills and to encourage them to work jointly in finding solutions.

“What I’ve taken from this training is that improving self-awareness and understanding various management styles will impact positively on our teamwork,” says Daniel Mokitlane, the Human Resources Administrator.



Matema Gwangwa, Provincial Communication Officer, Limpopo

# Stakeholders unite for integrated fire management



Working on Fire and various North West fire fraternities teamed up during the province’s first quarterly stakeholders’ workshop last month in Potchefstroom. In attendance were representatives of the North West Umbrella Fire Protection Association (NWUFPA), District and Local FPAs, DRLDR, Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF), North West Parks Board, Provincial Disaster Management Centre (PDMC), District Disaster Management Centres, Fire Safety & Prevention and local and district municipalities.

The workshop discussed future relationships between these stakeholders and future plans for the province. Working on Fire National General Manager Shane Christian extensively explained what Working on Fire was and the

integrated fire management services WOF offered. He further reaffirmed WOF’s commitment to working with FPAs for an integrated approach to firefighting and prevention.

NonzameGobodwana from DAFF and Mr Motloane from the PDMC discussed their roles in integrated fire management, before NWUFPA chairperson Danie de Villiers made final remarks.

A resolution was taken to convenethis gathering quarterly with DAFF acting as the lead department to ensure the effectiveness of this body.

Working on Fire and NWUFPA thanked all the stakeholders for their positive attitudes in planning and working together.

*Written by Editorial Team.*

# Working on Fire drivers undergo training



About 70 Working on fire drivers attended the driver training

Head of Transport at Working on Fire, Amor Adlem from Kishugu Fleet, and Pieter Esterhuizen, an instructor at Action Saver Driving School, conducted a Driver Yellow Card training course for 70 drivers in the Western Cape ahead of the 2017/18 veld fire season.

Our valued transport department is an important component of the success of our teams when out fighting fires. Our team of drivers is responsible for safely transporting our firefighters to and from the fireline, which also sometimes means undertaking long journeys to drive teams to assist in other provinces.

With this yellow card, our drivers are acknowledged as fully competent drivers in the Working on Fire programme. The training

covered being aware of the rules of the road, fuel card use, fireline safety, pre-trip inspections, defensive driving, vehicle equipment capabilities, vehicle water delivery, practical demonstrations of pumps, hand signals, communication and safety procedures when transporting participants and demonstrating competent driving skills.

Esterhuizen says,“The purpose of training was to refresh our drivers to a point of vehicle manager. The outcome was exceptional and they all passed and are ready to tackle the upcoming fire season.”



Lauren Howard, Provincial Communication Officer, Western Cape



# Team’s vegetable garden to help local school

“Grow your own vegetables, improve your health, save money and help those in need,” says Mzikhulu Mdladlamba, a firefighter from the Cedarville Base in the Eastern Cape.

Mdladlamba says the team decided to start a vegetable garden earlier this year.

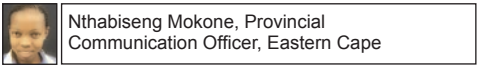
“We have been planting vegetables that we use as the team as we stay around the base,” he says.

As the garden produced more vegetables, the team decided to donate their next harvest to the Sive School for the Deaf.

“The learners at Sive School stay at the school, so we decided to assist as part of giving back to our community,” says Mdladlamba.

Mdladlamba believes eating fresh vegetables helps build a healthy body. “We plant vegetables to counteract the increasing price of food in the country,” he adds.

The team members use their spare time to work on the garden, remove weeds and plant vegetables.



Cedarville Base has decided to donate the next harvest to a school in the community

# Azishe Games to boost morale



The Azishe Games are officially back and kick off from 7 to 10 December in Gauteng.

All the provinces will be represented with male and female firefighters participating equally in all the sporting codes during the games.

The Azishe Games are a team building exercise for the firefighters, says Larry Mathaba, a Regional Manager in Gauteng. The firefighters will interact with their colleagues from other provinces during the games.

Mathaba says, “We were longing for the Azishe Games to be returned, a wish granted.”

He commends Managing Director Trevor Abrahams for his call for the return of the games.

These games are important to firefighters because they help them unwind, Mathaba says, noting that firefighters were able to engage with each other in an informal setting.

Firefighters will battle it out in the Mr and Ms Azishe pageants, choir competition, soccer, archery, 2.4km run, sit-ups, push-ups and golf.

“The games will boost the morale of the firefighters as they have just wrapped a tough winter fire season,” says Mathaba.



# Provincial staff donate to underprivileged children



Staff decorating the boxes and putting in goodies for the children

As the Christmas season approaches, many underprivileged children across the country will not be receiving gifts.

The WOF KwaZulu-Natal provincial staff decided to pledge 10 Santa Shoeboxes that they will be donating to these children. The KwaZulu-Natal staff decorated the boxes and filled them with items of clothing, toys, sweets, a toothbrush, facecloth, toothpaste and soap.

The province plans to make this an annual activity as the staff were happy to make a difference and put smiles on kids’ faces this Christmas.



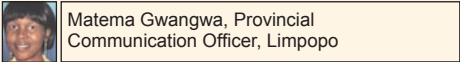
# WOF stands against the abuse of women and children

Working on Fire Limpopo’s Social Development Practitioner (SDP), Michael Ramatsea, has embarked on a campaign to fight the abuse of women and children.

The workshop programme in November precedes the beginning of the ‘16 days of activism’ campaign which focuses on the abuse of women and children. WOF’s SDP is hosting the educational workshops to raise awareness about the abuse of women and children.

“These workshops are build-up campaigns for the main launch that we will host at Lepelle-Nkumpi, where four WOF teams will be taking part. The focal point is on alerting the participants that once something is broken it’s never easy to take it back to the original form,” says Ramatsea, who adds that abuse may change the entire lives of an abused woman and child as it is difficult to revert to their original life prior to the abuse.

In most cases it’s those who are supposed to love and care for women and children that tend to be the ones abusing them, and as a result they feel betrayed.



The Mogalakwena Team attending the abuse awareness workshop hosted by the Social Development Practitioner



# Participant earns a tertiary qualification

Christina Kalane, a Working on Fire participant who joined the Working on Fire Kroonstad Base almost two years ago, recently graduated with a tertiary qualification in business management.

She originally enrolled for the Business Management course at the Goldfields FET College but completed the course at Flavius Mareka FET College. During the two years it took to complete the course, Kalane had to work hard and smart to balance all her commitments. She was motivated to further her education so she could provide a brighter future for her six-year-old daughter.

“I’ve been patient in saving part of my monthly stipend. I knew what I wanted to do

and I went for it. I feel overwhelmed and ecstatic about what I was able to achieve. I want to encourage people to never give up on their goals and dreams. Be patient and everything will work out just as planned, and never forget to put God above everything,” says Kalane.

As well as her academic achievement, Kalane also became the Kroonstad Base Communications Representative (BCR) at the beginning of this year.



Wayne Mokhethi, Provincial Communication Officer, Free State



Christina Kalane in her graduation gown

# WOF paves the path to a better education

Twenty-six-year-old Thulani Magagula from Sterkspruit, outside Nelspruit, grew up in a close-knit and God-fearing family that instilled the values of hard work and determination in him.

Magagula said 2017 has been his best year thus far and attributes this to the fact that he had set goals for himself.

“I literally wrote down what I wanted to obtain in 2017,” he says, adding with a beaming smile, “these included marrying the love of my life and registering for a short course.”

Magagula joined WOF in 2011 and has received specialised training in wildland fire-fighting, Occupational Health and Safety skills

and training, as well as leadership training. He is presently a Type 2 Crew Leader at the Sterkspruit Team in Mpumalanga.

Magagula saved money from the stipend he received in the Working on Fire programme to pay for a project management certificate course at Oxbridge Academy, which he has completed. He aims to register next for a National Diploma in a similar field.

“Working on Fire has opened doors for me and helped me achieve my dreams. Words can’t express how grateful I am,” Magagula says.



Lebogang Maseko, Provincial Communication Officer, Mpumalanga



Thulani Magagula has completed his certificate course and now aims for a National Diploma

# Passion turned participant’s life around

Andrich Swarts, a driver for the Limietberg Team, matriculated in 2008 in Tulbagh. He admits that 2009 was the lowest point in his life when he got involved in the wrong things because of drugs.

“My mother used to tell me that I was better than what I was doing and that I should think about my future,” he says, thinking back.

Things took a turn when he finally heeded his mother’s plea and joined WOF in 2010.

“It changed my life for the better. The same year, I completed my advanced veld and forest firefighting, health and safety representative and chainsaw operator training at the Nelspruit Academy,” says 26-year-old Swarts.

In 2015 he completed and passed his driver’s course at the Provincial Office in Nelspruit. He says being a new driver at the Limietberg Base tested his ability theoretically and practically because at that time they were the most active base during the 2015/16 summer fire season.

Swarts has two children and says the programme has enabled him to support them and put them in pre-school. Thanking WOF he says, “I see myself in a more permanent position at a fire brigade doing firefighting, because it really is my passion as I have been doing it for more than eight years.”



Lauren Howard, Provincial Communication Officer, Western Cape



Andrich Swarts, a young father of two, is passionate about firefighting

# WOF helped participant get his studies on track



Motseki Monyamathi

Life was all doom and gloom before Motseki Monyamathi received a work opportunity in the WOF programme.

The firefighter based at Heidelberg was studying towards an Office Management Diploma at Sedibeng College. With just his final modules to go, the bursary scheme that was paying for his studies at the time failed to pay his fees.

This, he says, posed a dilemma for his future. When he heard that the WOF programme was recruiting, he saw it as an opportunity to save his studies.

“Luckily I was recruited and raised the cash to pay. This month I am settling the balance,”

he says, adding that his results were sent to him but not the actual certificate. This meant he could not show proof of qualifications when applying for a job.

“I had promises of internship training here and there so I needed to fast-track the release of the certificate,” the relieved young man from Ratanda says. “I saved some of my monthly stipend to pay off my outstanding fees as I had no one to settle this bill for me.”

Monyamathi has purchased a laptop and printer to aid his job search.



Parapara Makgahlela, Provincial Communication Officer, Gauteng



# Participant is now Safety Rep at Anglo American mine



Matlhomola Tabea Mosima can't stop thanking WOF for opening doors to a brighter future

Working on Fire aims to uplifting the youth of South Africa by restoring their dignity through skills development.

Matlhomola Tabea Mosima is one of the young women who now has a bright future ahead thanks to joining the WOF programme. After completing her matric in 2009, Mosima enrolled for Business Management studies at Tshwane North College.

“I dropped out as I realised that business management was not my thing. It was not an easy decision to make as I didn't have the support of my family,” says Mosima.

She joined WOF as a firefighter at Sondela Base in 2017. “Joining WOF was worth it. It made me stronger and enhanced my self-esteem and self-discipline,” says Mosima.

While at WOF she enrolled for a course in Health and Safety with SAMTRAC at NOSA which she completed successfully thanks to the exposure and experience gained at WOF. Mosima is currently serving her notice with WOF as she has accepted an offer of an internship at Anglo American as a mine safety representative.

“I would like to thank WOF for the opportunity and for being a stepping stone towards my career goal. I hope it doesn't end here for me. I'm looking forward to pursuing my career path,” says Mosima.



Matema Gwangwa, Provincial Communication Officer, Limpopo

# Participant expands her horizon beyond WOF



Nohlelo Ntlatywa is exiting Working on Fire to pursue a business learnership

Hard work, dedication and patience are her combination to success, says Nohlelo Ntlatywa, a former storeperson from the Port St Johns Team in the Eastern Cape.

Ntlatywa passed matric in 2005. “A year later I enrolled to study business management but could not finish my studies due to financial problems,” she says.

Her father passed away and she had to look for a job to help support the family. “Life was not easy, I did piece jobs here and there,” she says.

In 2010 Ntlatywa joined Working on Fire as a storeperson. “I was excited to have a job. I could help my family and improve my life,” she says.

The programme trained her in store-keeping and she was able to do a computer course with the money she earned.

“Working on Fire was a stepping stone to a better future,” says Ntlatywa, who recently left WOF to join a learnership programme at Skills Africa Empowerment.

Ntlatywa says the learnership focuses on business which she is happy about as she has had an interest in the business sector.

“The skills I gained at WOF are helping me in my current position,” she says.



Nthabiseng Mokone, Provincial Communication Officer, Eastern Cape

# North West Crew Leader earns his skipper's licence



Castello Team Type 1 Crew Leader Ofentse Marope is excited about the opportunities his latest achievement will bring

Potchefstroom FPA chairperson, Dr Kobus Roux, who works closely with the WOF teams based in Potchefstroom, has launched a programme that teaches firefighters safety in the water. Castello Team Crew Leader, Ofentse Marope, participated in this programme recently and was awarded his skipper's licence, issued by the South African Maritime Safety Authority (SAMSA).

Marope was taught the basics of handling a watercraft by Dr Roux and learned quickly. He was soon ready to apply for his licence and did extremely well, receiving 96% in the theoretical examination and 100% in the practical examination.

“This means I can skipper a boat on all dams within South Africa. I'm excited about the opportunities this licence can bring my way. I would like to thank the Potchefstroom FPA for bringing such opportunities to us,” says Marope.

The programme was launched after Dr Roux learned that most firefighters couldn't swim and were afraid of the open water. Dr Roux says while the open water is a source of social enjoyment, it can be dangerous if one does not know how to handle oneself in the water.

“Therefore the programme was launched to teach our firefighters water safety, focusing on how to swim,” says Dr Roux.

*Written by Editorial Team*

# Former firefighter joins Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency



Former firefighter Disema Leanya in his field ranger uniform

After dropping out of high school, Disema Leanya found it difficult to get a decent job as most jobs required a matric certificate.

Leanya's life changed for the better when he was recruited by Working on Fire to be a fire fighter at Ongeluksnek Base in 2010.

“I was excited as this meant I could help put food on the table for my family,” he says.

He says that he performed his duties with passion knowing that his hard work would pay off.

“I always made sure that I went the extra mile in every task I was given,” says Leanya.

While working at WOF, he gained the skills and experience that led to him getting a new job.

“After working for six years in the programme, I was then blessed with a new job as a field ranger at the Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency (ECPTA) at Ongeluksnek Nature reserve, starting on 1 November,” he says with a smile.

He thanks WOF for the work experience. “Above all I would like to thank my team mates, my Regional Manager and all the managers for their support and motivation.”



Nthabiseng Mokone, Provincial Communication Officer, Eastern Cape