



WOFIRE NEWS

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Working on Fire



Working on Fire - WOF TV News Channel



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WORKING ON FIRE GROUND AND AERIAL RESOURCES SUPPRESS MULTIPLE FIRES *High praise for swift and efficient deployment*

The Working on Fire Programme has had a busy 2020 winter fire season battling massive runaway veld fires.

More than 170 teams, consisting of more than 4 000 firefighters, were dispatched to assist partners, Fire Protection Associations and landowners to suppress 1 901 fires.

More than 200 000 hectares were burnt, with aerial resources flying more than 600 hours in fire suppression operations.

These fires occurred throughout the winter fire season regions, in the Eastern Cape, North West, Free State, Gauteng, Limpopo, Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal.

Free State fires

Working on Fire Free State had the most fires, attending to 585 fires by the end of September and combatted massive fires throughout October that destroyed farmland, properties and livestock in the Hertzogville and Hoopstad regions.

After spending eight consecutive days battling the fires in the Free State, the Working on Fire teams, consisting of 153 firefighters, were demobilised and returned to their bases. Fifteen members of WOF management were on the ground, overseeing ground teams from the Free State, North West and the Eastern Cape. They were joined by a Kishugu Aviation team that included seven pilots, an aircraft engineer, an ASV driver, one bomber loader, three spotter planes and three AT-802 water bombers.

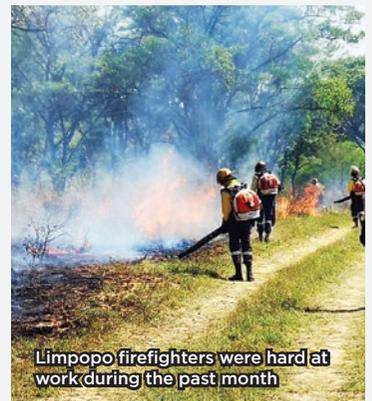
These bomber aircraft dropped 43 loads of water (a total of 149 000 litres) on strategic points on the fireline, enabling colleagues on the ground to move in and snuff out the flames. "A huge thank-you to all our firefighters, pilots and management who fought tirelessly to contain these fires. Various stakeholders in the Free



Devastating fires caused destruction to land, properties and livestock



A Kishugu Air Tractor 802 dropping a load during fire fighting operations



Limpopo firefighters were hard at work during the past month



Working on Fire teams consisting of 153 Firefighters have been demobilized

State have already commended Working on Fire ground teams and Kishugu Aviation pilots for their professionalism over the past eight days. We wish everyone a safe journey home to their respective bases," Working on Fire Managing Director, Trevor Abrahams, said.

Limpopo and North West

North West also saw massive fires rag-

ing for days, beginning with the Majeng fire from 18 October. Another fire at Amalie saw Working on Fire North West dispatch 37 firefighters to assist in fighting the runaway blaze.

"Our heroes in action. Long drive, long hours on the fire line but fighting the flames till the end. I salute you all", said Dr. Kobus Roux from the Potchefstroom Fire Protection Association and a Free State



Sello Thekiso from the Winburg Team saved this tortoise

resident, Lee Webbstock also said, A huge thank you to you who are always ready to serve, salute". (Courtesy of WOF Facebook Page)



Improving the future of land through controlled burns

Working on Fire recently conducted prescribed burns in the Ditholo Wildlife Estate game reserve in Limpopo as part of our Integrated Fire Management solutions. Controlled or prescribed burns, in the form of block burning, are often done as preventative measures against unwanted wildfires, but, during this project, were used as an ecologically sound land management practice

to improve the overall quality of the vegetation.

According to WOF Managing Director, Trevor Abrahams, the block burn allowed WOF to demonstrate how the quality of grazing land could be improved for the wild game in the reserve through integrated fire management.

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The Newlands and Porterville teams doing a firewall during Yellow Card Training

Western Cape firefighters are ready for summer fire season

Working on Fire Western Cape concluded a two-week Yellow Card Training Camp in Wolwekloof and Witfontein in final preparations for the summer fire season that begins on 1 December.

The firefighters are based at 27 bases across the province and will be deployed to reduce the harm caused by unwanted wildfires.

“As we head into the summer fire season, the Yellow Card Training is a good opportunity for our firefighters to be refreshed in their physical and mental abilities to tackle this year’s fire season,” says WOF Western Cape General Manager, Melanie Duthie-Surthie.

“We have received an excellent pass rate from both the Southern and Western regions and together with our various stakeholders and partners, we aim to reduce the risk of fires through-out the province and ensure that our communities remain safe from unwanted fires,” Duthie-Surthie says.

Approximately 600 firefighters attended the training and are deemed ready to combat fires during the upcoming summer fire season.



Limakatso Khalianyane, Western Cape Provincial Communication Officer

Eastern Cape prepares for summer fire season



The Tsitsikamma, Witelsbos, Longmore, Sarah Baartman, Addo, Kromsriver, St Francis and Baviaanskloof West teams attended the camp. They were divided into three groups and were assessed for three days.

The training activities included the 10 km route march, line construction, firewall, PPC inspection, tool inspection and fitness tests, that included the 2,4 km run. These young men and women will be assisting WOF partners, the Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency (ECPTA),

Teams from Working on Fire in the western part of the Eastern Cape underwent vigorous refresher training at their annual Yellow Card Training camp which took place in Witelsbos from 12 to 20 October.

The objective of the training was to refresh their skills and test their physical and mental fitness to ensure their readiness for the upcoming summer fire season starting in December.



Eastern Cape Umbrella FPA, Amathole Forestry Company (AFC) and local fire authorities to suppress fires.



Nthabiseng Mokone, Eastern Cape Provincial Communication Officer



New WOF recruits graduate with pride

Thirty-six young South Africans from the Free State graduated as Working on Fire firefighters at their graduation ceremony on 8 October at the Kishugu Training Academy, Nelspruit. They have completed the 24-day New Recruit Skills Programme and are now qualified wildland firefighters.

WOF Managing Director Trevor Abrahams congratulated the graduates in his keynote address during the ceremony and encouraged them to work hard and reach for their dreams.

“I am very proud to see you here today, but remember, this is not your destination, it is only the beginning of your journey. At Working on Fire, we aim to instil in you the confidence to move forward and in five years’ time, I want to see you in management,” Abrahams said.

The MD also shared how 15 000 young people had gone through the same training in the WOF Programme, which has given hope to many people.

New graduate Bafana Thomo praised the Academy, saying: “Who



WOF Managing Director Trevor Abrahams congratulates the new recruits

am I? I am a leader. Kishugu groomed us. Kishugu managed to motivate us to overcome our fears. We are meant to shine!”

On 9 October, another 83 new recruits from the Free State and North West graduated at the Mispah Kishugu Training Academy in Winburg, Free State.

All these firefighters will be topping up teams in the two provinces to assist in managing wildfires, saving lives, properties and the environment.

Written by: Editorial team

Gauteng teams assist with fire suppression at landfill site

The Working on Fire Gauteng Cradle of Humankind and Krugersdorp teams were dispatched with 3 000 litres of water in a carrier fire truck to help put out the fire at the Struben’s Valley landfill site in Roodepoort.

According to the Assistant Project Manager, Phineas Mphela, the initial cause of the fire was an electric transformer that exploded on 28 September.

“The paper and plastics on the landfill site caught fire and continued to burn before the rain began. However, when it rained, it became an underground

fire causing massive and unpleasant smoke that covered the area,” Mphela says.

“We met City of Johannesburg Pikit-Up officials to assess how WOF could assist and the chosen option was to bring a small number of firefighters and more water to wet the burning soil.”

The site was still smouldering and producing unpleasant smells two weeks later.



Parapara Makgahlela, Gauteng Provincial Communication Officer



WOF Gauteng teams attend to an underground fire in Struben's Valley, Roodepoort



WOF firefighters undergoing structural firefighting training at Rural Metro Rescue in KZN

Participants empowered with Structural Firefighting Training

Thirty Working on Fire firefighters from across South Africa are currently attending a structural firefighting course in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal.

Seven of the trainee structural firefighters are women, among the strong and capable women who make up 30 percent of the WOF firefighting corps.

The course consists of 10 weeks

of intensive practical and theoretical structural firefighting training. Course modules include firefighting, hazmat (hazardous materials) awareness as well as First Aid level 3. The training commenced on 6 October and will conclude on 15 December 2020.

Upon completing the training these men and women will be placed in various

municipalities to undergo on-the-job training until March 2021, after which their progress will be reviewed.

The training will add great value to their veld and forest firefighting knowledge and skills and will enable them to aid their community-based fire stations and assist with structural fires.

Written by: Editorial team

Working on Fire Mpumalanga records 58 fires in one month

Although the 2020 winter fire season is in its latter stages, 17 teams of Working on Fire Mpumalanga firefighters and various Fire Protection Associations (FPAs) suppressed 58 veld and forest fires during September. In addition to the ground crews dispatched to extinguish these fires, aerial firefighting resources provided by WOF, the Umpiluzi FPA and Lowveld Escarpment FPA flew a total of 70 hours during the fire suppression operations.

The fires were all successfully contained and mop-up operations were conducted. The COVID-19 pandemic has made operations difficult but WOF has adjusted and continues its world-renowned Integrated Fire Management Services and partnering with provincial government departments, municipalities and private and public landowners to minimise the impact of veld and forest fires.



Working on Fire Mpumalanga firefighters assist their FPA partner in suppressing a fire



Amanda Mthembu, Mpumalanga Provincial Communication Officer

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Improving the future of land through controlled burns

“Working on Fire has over the past 17 years demonstrated its ability to successfully implement integrated fire management through block burns, prescribed burning and fuel load reduction projects. This has led to an overall better ecological management of land which helps with regrowth and germination, which doubles the indigenous plant populations,” says Abrahams. “We successfully showed local farmers what a burn does in improving the overall quality of their land for future use.”

The WOF Sekororo Team joined other firefighters from various bases and their



managers to conduct burning exercises at the game reserve, which had not had any wildfires or preventative burning exercises since 2006. This had affected the ecological balance for certain plants, including some grass species that need wildfires periodically to germinate their seeds.

When grass gets old and dies, it lays on the surface of the ground which causes the underlying seeds to go dormant and not germinate. This can encourage bush encroachment as shrubs and small trees take over the grasslands that animals graze on. Once the grass has been burned, new growth will begin and flourish in the next season.

The Lephale Hunting Safari Game Reserve burning project also began on 28 September.



Wildfires threaten Limpopo nature reserve



A house burned in Mabalingwe

Working on Fire Limpopo Vingerkraal Team firefighters have been kept busy in the latter part of the 2020 winter fire season by multiple fires in their area of operation.

The Vingerkraal Team assisted in putting out a fire at the Mabalingwe Nature Reserve.

“We don’t know what caused the fire, but we are grateful for the quick

response from our WOF Vingerkraal Team as the fire had already destroyed a structure and was threatening to engulf other properties and the grass vegetation in the nature reserve,” says Ashley Theron, Base Manager for the Vingerkraal Team.



Matema Gwangwa, Limpopo Provincial Communication Officer

KZN HAT teams more aware about snakes

The KwaZulu-Natal uMngeni High Altitude Team (HAT) and the Drought Relief Project (DRP) Wartburg Team recently attended a Snake Awareness Workshop conducted by Nick Evans.

KZN HAT Regional Manager Henry Nene says this training is vital because HAT rope technicians usually work in an uninhabited environment where they are exposed to various venomous snakes.

The team learned how to keep safe if they should encounter a snake while working, including keeping still so that the snake feels it is safe to pass. “It was an eye-opener for me and I learned that snakes are not violent or against humans but are simply misunderstood, only striking when they feel they are attacked and must defend themselves,” says rope technician Nombulelo Sikhonyane.



An instructor carrying a snake

It is vital for technicians to wear protective gear when working and also to use a clearing stick to check for any movement before stepping into bushes.



Nompilo Zondi, KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Communication Officer

New recruits join the WOF family



A group of new recruits graduate from the Mispah Kishugu Training Academy in Winburg

The air at the Mispah Kishugu Training Academy in Winburg, Free State, was filled with excitement and jubilation on 9 October as a group of 83 youths graduated as Working on Fire firefighters.

Twenty-six new recruits from the Free State and 57 from North West completed the 24-day New Recruit Skills Programme and are now qualified wildland firefighters.

WOF Free State General Manager Antoinette Jini gave the keynote address, urging the recruits to return to their bases and communities and really make a difference.

“Adopt the WOF values of Accountability, Teamwork, Excellence, Adaptability and Making a Difference, which serves as a solid foundation for doing things right,” Jini said.

Eustacia Ramokonupi, a Kishugu Chief Instructor, thanked the provincial office for its hospitality and for providing

Nonjiji becomes Ground Operations Manager

Working on Fire Eastern Cape recently appointed Ongezwa Nonjiji, a former firefighter, to lead the Operations department in the Sarah Baartman District as the Ground Operations Manager (GOM).

Nonjiji is one of the many female firefighters who have climbed up the ranks to a management position.

She has been in the programme for 14 years, having been recruited in 2006 at Langeni Base, one of the first bases in the province. Within two years, she was trained as a Type 1 and 2 Crew Leader.

In 2012, Nonjiji was promoted to Regional Manager (RM) to manage

the Langeni, Mhlahlane, Ugie and Nqadu teams.

As a GOM, she will be in charge of 12 WOF teams in the Sarah Baartman District and one Regional Office in Port Elizabeth.

“I am very happy to get this opportunity of being the GOM and I promise to be the best leader. I will also make sure that teams respond on time to any fire call, that they have transport and all resources to perform their fire suppression operations,” Nonjiji says.



Nthabiseng Mokone, Eastern Cape Provincial Communication Officer



Ongezwa Nonjiji, a former firefighter, is the new Ground Operations Manager in the Sarah Baartman District, Eastern Cape

unconditional support, ensuring that the highest level of training was rendered.

Andries Matetho, a new recruit from the Bloemfontein Base, shared with the audience how excited he was to begin his WOF journey and encouraged his fellow recruits to never give up on their dreams.

These firefighters will top up teams across the Free State and North West. We wish them a warm welcome to the WOF family. Well done!



Wayne Mokhethi, Free State Provincial Communication Officer

WOF prepares firefighter for exit opportunities

Esther Motone, from the WOF Gauteng Wedela Base, has been selected to do a course in structural firefighting after meeting all the requirements.

Motone has a background in structural firefighting, having done training in First Aid and the fire, search and rescue course with the West Rand Fire Department. “We normally assist the structural firefighters at the fire station but we were limited to certain activities,” says Motone.

“This is truly preparing me to exit the programme and I am going to do my best and possibly come out a top student at the end of the course,” says the confident Motone, who appreciates the opportunity offered to her as she would have struggled to fund it herself.



Esther Motone appreciates the opportunity to attend the structural firefighting course

Motone says she looks forward to assisting to save lives in the communities on her return.



Parapara Makgahlela, Gauteng Provincial Communication Officer

Firefighter now becomes a receptionist

Former Manzengwenya Base Communications Representative (BCR), Nokuthula Mlambo, was recently promoted to the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Office receptionist position.

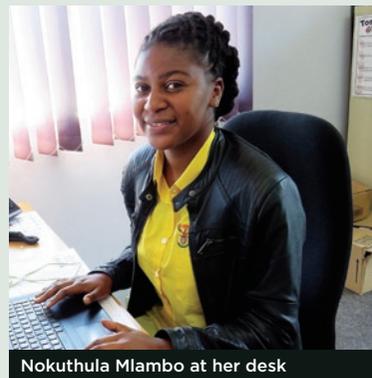
Mlambo was recruited as a firefighter in April 2016. Before joining the programme, she was unemployed and took care of her aunt’s children while earning extra money doing people’s hair during weekends.

She says she had to overcome losing her parents at a very early age and being stabbed nine times during her last year of schooling. However, she not only completed Grade 12, but passed with flying colours.

“I joined the programme to save money to further my studies and also to put something on the table at home,” says Mlambo.

“My most memorable moment was the first day when we arrived at the Kishugu Training Academy, where we were pushed to the limit.”

Mlambo says her journey has been challenging and having to conduct door-to-door, school and community awareness activities were daunting tasks because she is a shy person and talking is not one of her strong



Nokuthula Mlambo at her desk

qualities. “WOF pushed me out my comfort zone and I learned to speak in front of people. I can proudly say I am a breadwinner at home and I am responsible for my family, especially my twin brothers, who are my main priority,” Mlambo says, who feels the most important skills she has learned in the WOF Programme are discipline, teamwork, communication and adaptability.

“My next goals are to further my studies in order to pursue my dreams and to learn from my new position,” says Mlambo.



Nompilo Zondi, KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Communication Officer

Five WOF participants train for structural firefighting

Five firefighters from Working on Fire Eastern Cape have joined a group of firefighters from other provinces to attend structural firefighting training in Pietermaritzburg.

The 10-week training that commenced on 6 October will equip them with skills in fighting structural fires to add to their veld and forest firefighting skills. Klose Nxesi, who was recruited in 2010 at Addo Base, says that he is very happy to be part of the selected group.

“It makes me very happy to see that Working on Fire empowers firefighters and makes sure they grow and acquire new skills in the programme, which opens more doors for their growth,” Nxesi says.



Klose Nxesi is one of five firefighters from the Eastern Cape undergoing structural firefighting training in Greytown, KwaZulu-Natal

He says that during his 10 years within the programme, he has been empowered with many skills in firefighting, leadership and communication that are making him a better person.

Upon completing the training, the five firefighters, Mpumzi Tanatu, Tsidiso Majoro, Andile Bhukwini, Nathi Kutu and Klose Nxesi, will be placed in the Koukamma Local Municipality to obtain on-the-job training.



Nthabiseng Mokone, Eastern Cape Provincial Communication Officer

National staff acknowledge fruitful years

National staff gathered at a small event to acknowledge and celebrate the 17 years of success of the Working on Fire Programme, at the WOF Head Office in Nelspruit, Mpumalanga, on 7 October.

Johan Heine, Chairman of the WOF Board of Directors, shared some of the

highlights in the story of how and why the WOF Programme was born, some of the challenges the team faced and overcame through the years, our successes and how WOF has made a difference in the lives of young South Africans and the wildland firefighting sphere.

“There are many things in Working on Fire that people often take for granted, but that we can really be proud of,” said Heine. “Some of these include the quality of our training, the quality of our vehicles and the quality of our firefighters. Their discipline, fitness and dedication have been recognised internationally.”

Trevor Abrahams, WOF Managing Director, encouraged staff to continue striving for excellence and shared some of management’s vision for the way forward. He also thanked the staff for their continued support.



Managing Director of Working on Fire Trevor Abrahams celebrates with Johan Heine, Chairman of the WOF Board of Directors, during the Head Office ‘17 Years of Partnerships for Success’ event

“I look forward to growing this programme with you and making it even better,” Abrahams said.

KZN marks milestone with former firefighters



WOF KZN celebrates 17 years of partnership

Working on Fire KwaZulu-Natal recently celebrated 17 years of longstanding partnerships with the DEFF, national and local government entities, public and private landowners, and eight Fire Protection Associations at Farm Adventure in Gingindlovu.

KZN General Manager Sifiso Keswa said: “Working on Fire has focused on a campaign to highlight and showcase these past 17 years, with the theme being ‘17 Years of Successful Partnerships’, where we recognise partnerships with base managers, stakeholders and our alumni that have grown throughout the years.”

“We also did not forget the relationships formed with former firefighters who have now moved on to new careers

at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, SAPS and Metro Police, just to name a few,” Keswa said.

Speakers from Zululand FPA, Umlalazi Fire and Rescue and WOF’s external alumni shared how their relationship began with the Programme.

Zenzele Ngubane, a former firefighter and now a field ranger at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, said he was honoured to be invited to such an event to thank WOF for his dream career.

“This programme equipped me with various skills to be able to handle the requirements of my current career and I am grateful,” Ngubane said.



Nompilo Zondi, KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Communication Officer

Limpopo reflects on a successful programme

WOF Limpopo and various stakeholders celebrated the province’s 17 years of Partnerships for Success at Modimolle Correctional Services. The event was used to thank all partners and stakeholders for their support since 2003. The event was graced by representatives from Fire Protection Associations, government, the private sector and the Modimolle Base participants.

During his keynote address, WOF Limpopo General Manager Tshepo Malatji highlighted the common goals between WOF and its partners of saving lives and protecting the environment that had made the journey a success.

Malatji said, “I would like to thank all our firefighters in the province for raising the Working on Fire flag high since the Programme’s inception. We are now being recognised as one of the best expanded public works programmes globally, and it’s all because of your hard work, dedication and commitment.”

Throughout this journey, WOF Limpopo managed to empower and groom 24 participants who began as firefighters



WOF Limpopo celebrated 17 years of successful partnerships with stakeholders in Modimolle

and are now in managerial positions. The province also prepared more than 100 WOF participants for jobs outside WOF. These former participants are now employed at SANParks, SAPS, municipalities, the mining industry, government and private industry.

The event was sealed with the cutting of a cake by all partners as a reflection of unity.



Matema Gwangwa, Limpopo Provincial Communication Officer

North West celebrates with its partners

Working on Fire North West recently hosted their 17 Years of Partnerships for Success celebration with partners that have worked with the Programme in all the 17 years of the EPWP’s existence.

The big celebration took place at the Potchefstroom Banquet Hall, under strict COVID-19 measures. Partners and stakeholders in attendance, the Potchefstroom Fire Protection Association (PFPA), North West Parks Board (NWPB), JB Marks Disaster Management Centre (DMC), and PONO Security and Projects spoke on behalf of their organisations and gave words of encouragement and support. “Working on Fire is one of the best stakeholders we have worked with, conducting many activities like the Winter Awareness Campaigns and radio presentations and we encourage the programme to keep doing excellent work,” said Tsholofelo Moumakwa from JB Marks DMC.



WOF North West celebrates 17 years of successful partnership with its stakeholders and partners

The Working on Fire North West Boskop Team entertained everyone at the celebration with songs, the Jerusalem dance challenge and a drill demonstration.



Maria Letsholo, North West Provincial Communication Officer

Free State honours successful partnerships

Working on Fire Free State recently invited all partners and stakeholders who have assisted its incredible 17-year journey of accomplishments to an event hosted in Bloemfontein. Various stakeholders attended, including the Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality, COGTA, SANBI, DESTEA and FSUFPA.

Thanks to the dedication of everyone, from the participants at the bases right through to top management, WOF has achieved milestones in a short time that few organisations anywhere could match.

“We have learned a lot from the Working on Fire programme and I would like to state that it is an organisation that should be recognised for the good work it has done and is doing. Many of the participants have been absorbed by the municipality because of the discipline and the experience they have and hopefully in



Attendees observe social distancing during the 17-year celebrations

the future, we would hope to absorb more,” said Keletso Petrus Khutlane, the Mangaung Assistant Fire Chief.

“We are thankful for the fruitful partnerships we have with each and every one of our valued stakeholders. To the staff, we appreciate the hard work and sacrifice displayed over the years. Let us continue to serve our communities with dignity,” said Antoinette Jini, the WOF Free State GM.



Wayne Mokhehi, Free State Provincial Communication Officer



Linda Pretorius is a breast cancer survivor

Early detection was key for breast cancer survivor

Linda Pretorius is one of the longest-serving employees of the Working on Fire Programme, having joined in April 2004 as a Payroll Clerk and Payroll Administrator at the Head Office in Nelspruit.

In 2011, Pretorius took the opportunity to assist with establishing the Provincial Office in North West and currently serves as the WOF North West Provincial Payroll Administrator.

Pretorius is a breast cancer survivor who was willing to share her story to highlight October as Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

"I was diagnosed with cancer in late September 2011, after I found a lump in my breast and consulted my General Practitioner, who referred me to a specialist. Within a week, after a biopsy was taken, I was diagnosed and admitted to hospital," Pretorius recalls.

Pretorius says it was very difficult for her to accept her diagnosis and when she heard the word 'cancer' she immediately thought of death and that her life was over.

Pretorius underwent an operation to remove the lump and the wound took very long to heal.

"I followed the doctor's orders to the letter and went for radiation therapy for a speedy recovery," says Pretorius.

Nine years later, Pretorius is cancer-free. She encourages everybody to not ignore signs as early detection helped her immensely in her survival.

"Do not ignore anything that does not look or feel right on your body, no matter how small it can be. Cancer can be treated and defeated through a positive attitude, support from friends, family, colleagues and, most importantly, your faith in your Creator," she says.



Maria Letsholo, North West Provincial Communication Officer

Mpumalanga holds its first girls scout session



Mpumalanga SDP Makoloi Tele discusses pertinent issues with young girls from Mattafin

Working on Fire Mpumalanga held its first Girls Scout session recently at the Mattafin location, where young girls from the area and surroundings came together to discuss issues relevant to them.

Ten girls attended the session, where Mpumalanga Social Development Practitioner (SDP), Makoloi Tele, led discussions about gender-based violence and the body changes of a young girl growing up.

Mpumalanga Assistant General Manager, Bongani Nhlabathi, was in at-

tendance to welcome the girls and lend words of support and motivation.

The Working on Fire Girls and Boys Scout programme is presented by the Social Development department and covers issues such as gender-based violence, the stages of growing up and all socio-economic issues.

According to Tele, the province will host more of these sessions around the province, including some for boys.



Amanda Mthembu, Mpumalanga Provincial Communication Officer

Honouring and acknowledging all the good men!

The greatest measure of a man is not evident in his style or walk.

Not found through broad intellect or revealed in fancy scripted talk.

You will not see it in sparkling talent or special gifts or even great success.

Indeed there is no real substance in displays of abundant wealth or excess.

But, there is a vital force,

A spirit of intelligence in mankind,

And the breath of the Almighty gives men an understanding and an able mind.

The greatest measure of a man is evident in character and integrity..

Wisdom, love, faithfulness, and a true friend.



Portia Ntsala (Free State)

Firefighter supplies local shops with vegetables

Akhona Mdingi, a female firefighter from the Working on Fire Longmore Base in the western part of the Eastern Cape, established a vegetable garden at her home after being inspired by her team's garden at the base.

"With food prices eating at the pocket and many people's jobs being affected by the current national lockdown, this is a good time for everyone to have their own vegetable garden," says Mdingi, who is attending the Type 2 Crew Leader course in Mpumalanga.

The WOF Social Development Department initiated the Food Security Programme, which encourages every

WOF team to plant their own vegetable garden to harvest vegetables and fruit for their own use, for sale or even to donate to their communities.

"It was after this initiative that I realised that I should also have my own garden at home. I prepared the soil and then got some seedlings for it," Mdingi says.

Her garden is doing very well and she is now supplying local shops with vegetables, which is helping her to assist her family with extra income.



Nthabiseng Mokone, Eastern Cape Provincial Communication Officer



Akhona Mdingi shows off her vegetable garden

Proud to be a WOF driver

Vusimuzi Nxumalo was recruited as a firefighter in April 2012 and, after extensive training and assessment, was appointed as a driver in 2017. He currently serves as a fire truck and transport bus driver for Mbazwana Base in the Zululand region.

“What I enjoy most about being a driver is knowing that Working on Fire trusts me with their employees, which is an honour. I also enjoy the traveling I get to do and meeting other

firefighters in other provinces,” Nxumalo says.

He says the most important safety rules are not to exceed the speed limit and to not use drugs and alcohol while on duty.

“Aspiring future WOF drivers must grab every opportunity that comes to them. They must not misuse it and pursue their careers,” he advises.



Nompilo Zondi, KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Communication Officer



Vusimuzi Nxumalo

More women drivers appointed in MPU



Primrose Tsotetsi and Hlobisile Madida recently got their blue cards and are now WOF drivers

October is Transport Month and a good moment to shine a spotlight on the significant role that the Working on Fire Transport Department plays in the organisation.

The Working on Fire programme continues to empower and support women in all positions within the organisation. This was highlighted in Mpumalanga when two former firefighters, both women, were appointed as drivers.

Primrose Tsotetsi and Hlobisile Madida follow Nompumelelo Mahlangu, a driver trained at LEFPA and stationed in Waterval Boven. Tsotetsi, who was trained at the Warburton Base, will be stationed in Volksrust, while Madida will be stationed at her original base in Wakkerstroom, in the Highveld region.

The three women went through rigorous training at the Kishugu Training

Academy and probation to get their driver status and the blue cards.

Tsotetsi, a former herbicide applicator, relishes the opportunity to grow within the organisation, as she is the breadwinner at home.

“I joined the WOF programme in 2014 and I am the first person in my family to achieve this milestone,” Tsotetsi says.

Madida aspires to be the best driver in WOF and encourages women to excel in whatever position they hold in this male-dominated industry.

Mpumalanga congratulates the former firefighters and wishes them well as they begin new chapters within the organisation.



Amanda Mthembu, Mpumalanga Provincial Communication Officer

Driver enjoys role at Molemane Team



Mpule Mosenogi is the driver of the Working on Fire North West Molemane Team

Working on Fire has recruited more female firefighters than similar organisations worldwide, with women comprising 33 percent of its firefighting force and more than 50 percent of the management staff.

WOF continues to support the upliftment of women with the appointment of female drivers and Mpule Mosenogi is one such example.

The 42-year-old proud mother of three joined WOF in 2011 and was

later selected to train as a Type 2 Crew Leader. Mosenogi is now the driver for the WOF North West Molemane Team.

“I am physically and mentally fit because of the training and skills WOF has equipped me with. As a female driver, I encourage all other women firefighters to pursue this career,” Mosenogi says.



Maria Letsholo, North West Provincial Communication Officer

Provincial Disaster Management Advisory Forum held in the Free State

With the various levels of the national lockdown preventing many important gatherings and forums from taking place, the Free State Disaster Management Advisory Forum was finally held under strict COVID-19 regulations.

The forum is chaired by the provincial disaster management centre and attended by all municipalities and disaster-related organisations such as Working on Fire, the Free State Umbrella Fire Protection Association and the South African Weather Service.

The primary purpose of the forum is to provide a mechanism for relevant

role-players to consult one another and to coordinate their activities with regard to disaster risk management.

With the incredible increase in fires in the province compared to previous years, it is vital for WOF to engage in this forum and with each stakeholder to ensure fire disasters are mitigated through fire awareness activities and the impact of fires is minimised through effective integrated fire management activities such as fuel load reduction and firebreaks.



Wayne Mokhethi, Free State Provincial Communication Officer



Stakeholders discuss important matters in regard to disaster management in the Free State

Firefighter becomes a crime fighter

Donald Molokomme, a constable at the South African Police Service, thanks Working on Fire for providing him with a stepping stone.

Molokomme reflects on his WOF journey since joining the organisation in Lephalale as a firefighter in 2012.

"When I joined WOF, I was told that it was a skills development programme, and my focus was mainly on that, to upskill myself," Molokomme says.

After joining WOF, he saw the bigger picture of growing within the programme while working towards his goal of studying criminology.

"I came to WOF unrecognised, but I left WOF as someone with leadership skills and experience. Being appointed as a Type 1 Crew Leader in 2015 made me realise that I have total control of how I want my future to be," says Molokomme.

With the stipend Molokomme earned at WOF, he managed to raise his two children and enrol them at the best schools, take his younger sister to school, pay for his driver's licence, register for



Donald Molokomme enjoys working as a constable at SAPS

his Law course and build a house for his family.

Molokomme joined the SAPS in February 2018 and is now employed as a constable at the Thabazimbi SAPS.



Matema Gwangwa, Limpopo Provincial Communication Officer

Former firefighter's taxi business creates work opportunities

Nelson Rabohome joined Working on Fire as a firefighter in the Western Cape in 2011. He used his monthly stipend to save enough to do his driver's licence.

Two years later, Rabohome was promoted to driver at WOF, ferrying firefighters to and from fires. His job included long distance driving and taking new recruits to Mpumalanga for their firefighting training at Kishugu Training Academy.

He had always had a dream of owning his own transport company and when his stipend increased as a result of a promotion, he saved most of it to finance starting his logistics company.

"I finally managed to buy my first taxi and I hired someone while I continued with my job," Rabohome says.

The former WOF driver says being put in charge of the vehicles he drove taught him lessons that he later implemented in his taxi business.

"When the business began to do well, I decided to invest all my time in it and I left Working on Fire full of gratitude for the lessons I learned and



Nelson Rabohome says he is grateful to Working on Fire for instilling discipline in him

mostly the discipline that was instilled in me at the time," he says

Rabohome now owns several vehicles and has created employment for two other drivers.



Limakatso Khalianyane, Western Cape Provincial Communication Officer

Breaking the shackles of poverty



Happy Makhofane has changed his life for the better

Happy Makhofane, a firefighter at the Working on Fire Gauteng JS Moroka Team, had to dig deep to resurrect his life after being arrested and sentenced to 13 years' imprisonment for housebreaking, mugging and theft when he was just 14 years old.

With a criminal record and no formal education, life was a struggle. Working on Fire was his first-ever formal work opportunity and he is using the stipend to make the necessary changes in his life.

Makhofane has completed a correspondence course in structural firefighting through Cambridge Col-

lege. He has passed firefighter 1-2, Hazmat Awareness, Operations and First Aid level one.

"I spent R14 000 on the entire course and financial discipline was key in ensuring I could fund this course," Makhofane says.

In addition to formal structural firefighting training, Makhofane recently obtained his driver's licence. Makhofane is preparing to register with ABET in the upcoming year so he can complete his matric, and continue to change his life for the better.



Parapara Makgahlela, Gauteng Provincial Communication Officer

Castello Base SHE Rep wants to further his studies



Isaac Fokwebe is the North West Castello Base SHE Rep

Isaac Fokwebe became a breadwinner in his home after both parents became ill and were unable to provide for the family. It was very difficult for them to even put supper on the table.

Fokwebe was recruited as a firefighter at the Working on Fire North West Castello Base in April 2014. He says proudly that he has been equipped with many skills, including health and safety, financial management and computer literacy skills. Fokwebe says he has learned

so many things in the Programme, such as how to manage his monthly income, and is saving money to further his Health and Safety studies.

"I would like to thank WOF for giving me the opportunity to join the Programme as I am now able to provide for my whole family with the stipend I get from WOF," he says.



Maria Letsholo, North West Provincial Communication Officer