

Firefighters continued acts of service in and around communities



Department:
Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



EXPANDED PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME

INTRODUCTION

WORKING ON FIRE ADD VALUE IN COMMUNITIES



Working on Fire contribute to the betterment of our communities.

Working on Fire firefighters aspire to live by the Working on Fire values, especially the value of Making a Difference as it provides them with an opportunity to give back to their communities beyond firefighting. Working on Fire teams across the country make their contribution in communities on a daily basis by providing schools and old age cen-

tre with vegetables from their garden. Sometimes they risk their lives to save others, save others from burning structures, at accident scenes and at times dig a little deeper in their pockets to help the elderly live in dignity or needy pupils in their communities. In this publication, we showcase some of our brave heroes and the kind acts of our firefighters.

WORKING ON FIRE HEROES TO THE RESCUE



The team assisted in the structural firefighting efforts.

Participants in Working on Fire, the Department of Environment Forestry and Fisheries programme that help fight veld and forest fires, were praised this week for having come to the aid of two children who were trapped inside a burning shack in Modimolle (Waterberg District) in Limpopo.

The Working on Fire Modimolle Team were at their base doing their normal fitness drills and parade when they saw smoke coming from the community close to their base. Upon further investigation, they realised that it was a shack fire and they were also informed that there were two children trapped

in the burning shack.

They immediately rushed to the scene where they tried to save the shack from being burned to the ground. Upon realising that they won't win, they worked alongside one of the community members and broke the shack to get the children outside safe.

After rescuing the kids outside the flames, they also rendered first aid services to the man who cut his hand while pulling the corrugated iron of the shack making an escape route for the kids that were trapped in the house.

Both the children and the man were further checked by Emergency Medical Services Personnel who arrives on the side later.



Modimolle Team saved two children who were trapped in a burning shack.

WOF HEROES SAVE LIVES



Vingerkraal firefighters rescued the kids and their mother from being burned by the raging fires.

The Department of Environment Forestry and Fisheries Working on Fire (WOF) Limpopo firefighters continues to work very hard battling multiple fire breakouts in the province outside the fire season.

Vingerkraal firefighters were deployed to one of the wildfires at Shakama; as usual they rushed to the area to protect the environment. The team worked very hard battling the raging flames that were threatening the residential private area.

While suppressing the fire at Shakama the Vingerkraal firefighters heard a call for help on the other side of the area that they were working on, about 6 firefighters were dispatched by their crew leader to

go and investigate what was happening on the other side.

Upon arrival they saw a mother crying for help with her two kids and they were trapped by the flames that were burning towards their house. The WOF firefighters ran through the flames towards the woman and kids and used their skills to get them out of that area to the identified safety zone.

Both the mother and the kids were unharmed from the fires and they were sent to the local medical center for further check ups and were declared healthy and safe. It's all thanks to the WOF firefighters for acting very fast and saving the lives.

HIGH ALTITUDE TEAM RESCUE AN INJURED TOURIST



Working on Fire High Altitude Team participants carried the injured tourist on a stretcher for 2 km to get to an ambulance.

Working on Fire High Altitude Teams (HAT) are back at work after the excitement of rescuing a tourist from a very difficult situation.

The Crew Leader of the Katberg Team, Matya, says that a family of three was walking towards the Swallowtail waterfall in Hogsback taking photographs.

"It seems as if the man wanted to look down the cliff when he tripped and fell, hitting rocks and breaking his leg," says Matya.

"When we arrived he was trapped on some rocks and we rescued him," says Matya.

The man's female companion and a child were unhurt.

He says the Katberg HAT firefighters carried the man on a stretcher for two kilometres to the nearest road so that they could get help.

When they arrived at the road, the Base Manager of the Hogsback Team called the ambulance which took the victim to the nearest hospital.

PROTECTING **THE ENVIRONMENT**

WORKING ON FIRE SUPPORTS THE GOOD GREEN DEEDS PROGRAMME



WOF participants, and various stakeholders got their hands dirty during the clean-up.

Working on Fire was on hand to support the Department of Environmental Affairs when President Cyril Ramaphosa launched the Good Green Deeds Programme in Mdantsane, Eastern Cape.

The Good Green Deeds programme is a groundbreaking environmental awareness programme that seeks to mobilise all sectors in South Africa to become more environmentally conscious.

The programme aims to create a positive drive towards a clean South Africa free of litter and illegal dumping.

As part of the launch, the President planted trees in one of the parks in Mdantsane.

The President said that by performing just one Good Green Deed a day, one can make

a huge difference, whether it is in recycling waste or conducting a clean-up activity in one's community.

Prior to the Good Green Deeds Programme launch, the Minister of Environmental Affairs, Nomvula Mokonyane, together with Working on Fire participants, the mayor of Buffalo City, members of the Eastern Cape Provincial Executive Committee and community members, conducted a beach clean-up campaign.

Following the Good Green Deeds Campaign, three teams from Working on Fire in Eastern Cape (Nqadu, Langeni and Ugie) also took part in a cleaning up campaign that took place in Mthatha at Ngangelizwe location as part of the Good Green Deeds programme which was aimed at creating a positive drive towards a clean South Africa.

KEEPING OUR MOUNTAINS SAFE

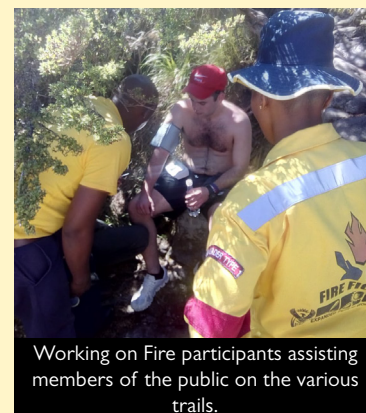
Participants from the Free State alongside participants from the Western Cape have been assisting with monitoring on various hiking trails in the Mother City, these participants were monitoring the various trails for a period of 5 months where they assisted locals and tourists who needed help along the different trails. Among some of their responsibilities were to keep the areas clean of litter to ensure the environment remains pristine for the animals as well as hikers.

Monde Ntombela, Type I Crew Leader

from the Thaba Nchu team has also been a part of the project and says "Everything went well and we were doing meaningful work in the parks, we managed to rescue 3 tourists who experienced difficulties while hiking on the various trails and ensured they were returned to the bottom of the hiking trails safely. We assisted an elderly hiking lady who experienced difficulty completed a trail, another international tourist was showing signs of heatstroke and dehydration and we assisted him with first aid with the training we received from Working on

Fire."

These participants monitored several trails in Cape Town such as Lion's Head, Signal Hill, Table Mountain, Newlands Park, Deer Park, Cape Point and Tokai, the purpose for being there is to patrol and be visible to ensure people who visit these areas enjoyed their time there, weren't victims of crime and got speedy assistance when they require it, additionally they cleared any obstructions on the many paths that could cause injuries to the visitors.



Working on Fire participants assisting members of the public on the various trails.

KZN PARTICIPANTS IN THE DURBAN GOOD GREEN DEEDS CLEAN-UP CAMPAIGN



Firefighters cleaning at the beach.

Working on Fire in KwaZulu-Natal participated in the Good Green Deeds with the Shongweni, Karkloof and Albert Falls Teams and some provincial staff.

"Following the recent devastating floods in eThekweni, the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA), in partnership with various stakeholders, has conducted a two-day clean-up operation," said KZN Grounds Opera-

tions Manager Dave Kleyn.

The Department of Environmental Affairs together with the eThekweni Municipality, Coca Cola, the Durban Green Corridor, academic institutions, WESSA and other stakeholders joined hands to clean up the storm-torn municipality.

Government is embarking on the Good

Green Deeds Programme to mobilise every citizen, and social partners to act now to be a Good Samaritan for Green Deeds.

"I was very proud of the professionalism the firefighters portrayed even out of their normal surroundings they found their own way of making sure the Beachwood Mangrove Nature Reserve is left better than how it was on arrival" concluded Kleyn.

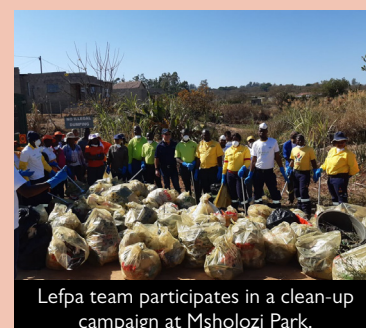
MPU TEAMS ASSIST IN CLEAN-UPS

The Working on Fire teams in the Mpumalanga continues to partner with various stakeholders throughout the province in various clean-up campaigns.

The LEFPA team joined various organizations, led by the Inkomati-Usuthu Catchment Agency (ICUMA), and participated in a clean-up campaign at Msholozhi Park, Nelspruit. The group was promoting and educating the masses on recycling, which in turn reduces pollution and creates job opportunities. The Dullstroom team cleaned the streets of Dullstroom and even took it upon themselves to fix

the roads in their town. The Injaka team cleaned the premises of Dilayi Primary School at the Mphenyatsatsi Village on Mandela Day while the Mayflower team joined the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs, to clean up and paint the B.E.E Maseko Secondary School in Sheepmoor.

The Mlbongwane team and Communications Cluster of WOF joined the City of Mbombela in Gutshwa, in a cleanup campaign, where the team attacked the numerous dumpsites around the rural community, near Kabokweni.



Lefpa team participates in a clean-up campaign at Msholozhi Park.

GOING THE **EXTRA MILE**

MANGUZI TEAM ASSISTS ELDERLY RESIDENT TO BUILD HER HOME



Manguzi team pose with gogo Gumede in front of her newly built house.

KwaZulu-Natal Manguzi Team came together to support an elderly woman living in a mud house who desperately needed a new home. The team decided to build her a one room

brick home with money they had collected among themselves. Manguzi Type 1 Crew Leader Patrick Gumede says, "As the Manguzi Team we committed ourselves to the project

of building a house for a disadvantaged old lady who lives by herself, a widow who's not receiving any grant within the Manguzi community." The team received R800 for Mandela Day activities with which it bought 10 bags of cement, and the firefighters then added R130 each from their own pockets to start building the house.

The Manguzi building project received R825 donated by the Working on Fire Executive Committee, General Managers, Assistant General Managers and Head of Departments from the Working on Fire head office.

"We've identified more homes and people that we would love to assist and we hope to assist them one project at a time, as we are also part of the community and want to make a difference," said Gumede. The com-

pleted house was officially handed over to Gogo Gumede on 1 December 2017. Gogo Gumede, smiling from ear to ear, could not contain her excitement in moving into her new home. "I pray that God blesses everyone who contributed in making my dream a reality. Thank you Working on Fire," said Gogo Gumede.



The Manguzi team contributed money from their own pockets to build gogo Gumede a dignified home.

BALFOUR TEAM KEEPS ON GIVING BACK TO THEIR COMMUNITY



The Balfour team hard at work rebuilding a dwelling of a needy family.

Besides fighting fires on the fireline, the Balfour team in Mpumalanga continues to live by Working on Fire values of restoring dignity as they constantly give back to communities around their region.

The team joined various stakeholders as they rebuilt a dwelling for a family in need

in the Grootvlei in July This was part of a Mandela Day initiative, rolled out by the Department of Social Development. The team also participated in a door-to-door campaign, where the team assisted in installing smoke detectors at the Siyathemba location, as part of a Women's Month Campaign.

WOF PARTICIPANTS LIVE BY THE VALUES



Elliot team members use their vegetable garden to benefit the community.

The Working on Fire Elliot Team continues to show commitment in giving back to the community and making a huge difference in people's lives.

They have a garden project where they plant vegetables that they always donate to nearby communities and schools. Recently, the team donated spinach, pumpkin and potatoes to some of the community members, including 80-year-old Nelly Breakfast.

Breakfast says, "I really appreciated what these young men and woman have done for me as nowadays the cost of food is too high and having people assisting you in with such donations makes a big difference and will save me a lot."

Crew Leader Gulwa Pumzo says that they are always happy to make a difference in the lives of people.

"Making a difference is one of our values and as the Elliot Team we live by and are committed to those values," says Pumzo.

WORKING ON FIRE HEROES TO THE RESCUE

Mamabolo Team were driving towards Haenertsburg to do their normal fire prevention activities which included prescribed burning when they came across an accident where they had to apply first aid to the badly injured driver whilst medical emergency services were still on the way to the scene of the accident.

The WOF driver witnessed the private vehicle overturning in front of him and quickly stopped safely on the side of the road to go and check how bad the driver of the vehicle is. While the Crew Leader was busy calling emergency personnel to the rescue, the team realised that it was not safe to just leave the driver and the passenger in the vehicle that overturned. Upon explaining the situation

to the medial experts on the telephone line, they followed instruction and rendered first aid services to the injured and were able to save another life.

And in the same week in the Western Cape, the Working on Fire High Altitude Team (HAT) went beyond their call of duty when they assisted a South African Police Service (SAPS) officer who crashed into the side of the mountain along the Quteniqua Pass outside George.

The HAT participants, who were the first to arrive on the scene, provided the officer with basic first aid, as well as redirecting oncoming traffic safely until ER24 paramedics arrived on the scene. Working on Fire, now in its

13th year of existence trains young men and women participants to become veld and forest firefighters but also teaches them various skills, one of it being how to apply basic first aid to not only their team members, but also when members of the public need help and when other emergency services are not yet on the scene of an incident.

It could well be fortuitous that these participants from the Working on Fire programme were on the scene of these incidents when help was needed the most. But most importantly through their quick and courageous actions, no lives were lost and they were able to treat those injured in these incidents with basic first aid until the medical emergency services arrived.



The team assisted by giving first aid to injured people.

WOF'S **HELPING HAND**

DEWETSDORP TEAM MEMBERS ENCOURAGE CHARITABLE DONATIONS



Dewetsdorp team donating necessities to the Tshepang HIV and Aids Care Centre.

The Working on Fire Dewetsdorp team along with staff members from the Free State provincial office observed a need for basic items to be donated to the Tshepang HIV and Aids Care Centre. The centre which serves the community by taking care of school learners and the adults impacted by HIV/Aids was the ideal place to partner with. Various necessities such as clothing items and small household appliances were donated to ensure that the centre runs smoothly. The Dewetsdorp team practices

all the values which the Working on Fire programme has instilled in them, they regularly serve their town and communities not only on the fireline but by donating clothing and food items and conducting cleaning campaigns for the most needy and vulnerable in their communities.

The team encourages others to donate to worthy causes by de-cluttering their wardrobes if they are unable to donate new clothing items, no donation is too small to make a difference.

WOF PARTICIPANTS PUTS A SMILE ON THE FACE OF SCHOOL LEARNERS



Cata team members distributed new school shoes to 10 learners.

The Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries' Working on Fire firefighters in Eastern Cape do not only show commitment in saving lives and the environment but continue to make a huge difference in their communities.

In June this year, Working on Fire Cata team in Keiskamahook donated school shoes to ten learners of Cata Primary School.

"This came after we realized that most of the learners attending the school are without shoes and we always see them when they pass near our base," explained the Crew leader Tshasilana Mzamo.

Mzamo said that it broke their hearts to

see young people, the future of this country facing such challenges and that's when they decided to as a team to contribute money and buy shoes for the children.

"As the youth of Working on Fire, we wanted to bring joy and hope to the young people that's why we did what we did. Poverty and unemployment in the province has left many rural parents unable to afford shoes for their children and as winter approaches some are forced to drop out while others have no choice but to walk to school barefoot," added Mzamo.

He said that the team was so happy to see the impact of what they did when they see tears of joy from some of the learners during the handover of the shoes.

KZN APPRECIATES SENIORS FROM ZIBAMBELENI OLD AGE HOME



eThekweni Team spending time with the elders at an Old Age Home they had adopted.

In remaining committed to restoring dignity, the KwaZulu-Natal eThekweni Project Team visited the Zibambeleni Old Age Home, which they had adopted years ago. The team wanted to show their appreciation to the senior citizens living in the establishment.

KZN eThekweni Assistant Project Manager Howard Mathebula said, "as youth, we often forget about our elders living in old age homes can get lonely and would also appreciate company from the outside world." The team sang, performed a drill for the elderly and also contributed money from their own pockets, they bought toiletries for the home and gave

the seniors goodies. Howard added, "We adopted this home years ago we usually come to conduct fuel load reduction by slashing and removing alien invasive plants as we also did today." The elderly were very appreciative of being visited by the young men and women of Working on Fire and their continued support over the years.

It was heartwarming to see our elders so happy and excited about our visit, they were getting worried about the overgrown bush that also attracts snakes, we will continue to assist them where we can as a team concluded Howard.

RESTORING THE DIGNITY OF THE DISABLED

Department of Environment Forestry and Fisheries programme to help fight wildfires in Limpopo continues to make a difference by restoring the dignity of the people in communities that they operate within.

WOF recognises the people living with disabilities and has even gone as far as employing and training person living with the disability for each team as the store controllers.

Being disabled doesn't mean that one's life

should end there without exploring like any other people. In support of people living with disabilities WOF donated 40 chairs for Rethusheng Special School that is situated just outside Aganang area where one of the WOF team operates within. Rethusheng is one of the Schools that WOF participants from Aganang have adopted to make a difference in.

From time to time WOF participants visits the school to assist in cleaning and cooking for the learners and also to spend time with them.



WOF donating 40 chairs for Rethusheng during the Disability Awareness event.

GIVING BACK TO COMMUNITIES

VREDE TEAM DO THEIR PART TO UPLIFT THE COMMUNITY

Engaging in community service provides Working on Fire participants with the opportunity to become active members of their community and it has a lasting, positive impact on society at large. Community service or volunteerism enables them to acquire life skills and knowledge, as well as provide a service to those who need it most. The Vrede team identified a single

elderly woman that resides in their community who was in need of some assistance as she can no longer provide for herself and do basic tasks around her home. The Vrede team collected money amongst themselves and decided to provide a helping hand in the form of purchasing groceries and a pair of shoes for Mrs Twala and in addition, they cleaned her home and cut

her grass that was overgrown. Jane Mluli, Type 2 Crew Leader said " We identified her as someone in need of help, we saw her in our community and as a team we decided to help her out by buying a food hamper for her and when we arrived to deliver the food hamper we saw that she was barefoot and decided to buy a pair of shoes as well."



Vrede team handing over donated items to an elderly community member.

CLARENS TEAM GARDEN ENSURES COMMUNITY ARE WELL FED



Clarens team members supplying community members with fresh vegetables.

The Working on Fire Clarens team identified a way that they can assist the impoverished community members of the small town of Clarens in which many of them reside in with fresh vegetables, grown in a garden on their base. This initiative was started by the Working on Fire Clarens

team to combat hunger in the communities surrounding them, in the garden the team grow different vegetables seasonally such as cabbage, spinach, green beans, green peppers, carrots and tomatoes. "At first we shared the vegetables amongst ourselves but we realised that it is our duty to assist the communities surrounding us and that was when we started to donate the vegetables. Our Base Manager supplies us with seeds and from there on we produce our own fertilizer and mix cow dung with it in order to make our soil produce year in and year out" said Sipho, Clarens Crew Leader.

Although the team face numerous challenges in growing these vegetables such as theft, stray cows grazing in their garden and the lack of rain recently experienced across the country the team has preserved and continues to supply the community and to the non-profit organisations that they have adopted.

KISHUGU AND WOF DONATE TO NELSPRUIT SPCA



Staff from Kishugu and Working on Fire delivers goodies to the Nelspruit SPCA

Staff from Kishugu and Working on Fire, based at the Nelspruit Airfield, joined forces to donate time and resources to a very worthy project.

Kishugu and WOF staff decided to pledge their community service time and energy to the Nelspruit SPCA, which houses various animals, so they delivered some

much needed food and blankets to the centre. After handing over the donated food and visiting some of the animals currently up for adoption, the staff rolled up their sleeves and gave the facility's store-room and reception area a fresh coat of paint. Firefighters and staff assisted with bush clearing around the premises and prevent any runaway fires.

MOGALAKWENA TEAM SHARE THEIR PIE WITH THE LESS FORTUNATE

Children living with disability at Mahwelereng Centre of Hope received a helping hand from WOF's Mogalakwena firefighters who donated the cleaning material and firewood to them.

Mogalakwena firefighters used the portion of the money that they received as part of their reward for achieving position 3 nationally and 1st position provincially with fire awareness to buy the cleaning material for this centre. Mahwelereng Centre of Hope is one of the charity organisations that were adopted by Mogalakwena team.

"When doing a need analysis within our community, we realised that this centre really needs our help. The reward came as a blessing and at the right time. It was like God was answering our prayers" said Lebogang Malete Crew Leader firefighter at Mogalakwena



Mogalakwena Team in Limpopo donated cleaning material at Mahwelereng Centre of Hope in Mokopane

Team during the handing over ceremony.

The team were also assisted by their base manager who donated some firewood from

the Mogalakwena National Zoological Gardens and also assisted the team with the transportation of the firewood to the centre. The centre is using firewood to prepare the

meals for the beneficiaries and the donation of firewood made a huge impact.

"We are very honoured to be blessed by this donation which will make a huge difference in our centre. These young men and women have done a remarkable thing and with this kind of spirit and dedication our country has a brighter future" said Mumcy Ledwaba the centre manager.

After the handing over, the Wof participants spend some time with the children showing them love and care. It was a joyous day at the centre and the air was filled with lots of love which was shared amongst each other.

"These children might be physically challenged, but they are still our brothers and sisters and they need our love and support" concluded Lebogang Malete.

PROTECTING **THE ENVIRONMENT**

WOF PRAISED FOR ITS CAPABILITIES WHEN DEALING WITH DISASTER INCIDENTS



The Working on Fire firefighters often have to put their beaters aside to assist in disasters that at times hit our communities. The Western Cape firefighters had to swap their beaters for spades when they were called to assist the Eden District Municipality and the Southern Cape Fire Protection Association in a major oil clean-up operation which threatened to be a major environmental disaster off the coast of Knysna back in 2014.

The town of Knysna almost experienced a major oil spill disaster, after a huge ship which carried high loads of oil was stranded off the Buffelsbay beach.

More than 60 WOF firefighters were deployed to this area where they successfully participated in an oil clean-up operation off the Knysna coast line. The Riversdale, Crag and Goudveld teams were first trained on various techniques on how to remove oil from the beach and sea water.

This operation clearly demonstrated the unique capability of the WOF firefighters to be trained and deployed to various disaster situations. The Department of Environmental Affairs have expressed their gratitude and appreciation for this wonderful efforts of our firefighters.

WORKING ON FIRE ASSISTS IN THE AFTERMATH OF A TORNADO IN THE FREE STATE

In October 2011 the small mountainous town of Ficksburg would make national news after a devastating tornado swept through the Meqheleng township just outside of Ficksburg in the eastern Free State, leaving death and destruction behind.

assisted with setting up temporary shelters, fixing shacks, searching for survivors in the collapsed structures, clearing debris, assisting community members to get to community centres and by handing out food parcels to the affected individuals.

It took just a few minutes for the tornado to flatten thousands of homes and leaving even more people destitute, Working on Fire speedily dispatched firefighters from 4 teams namely the Working on Fire Frankfort, Senekal, Bethlehem and Ficksburg teams to go and assist the community and municipality in the wake of the tornado. The teams along with numerous organisations

"We camped in Ficksburg for 3 days and assisted the community members in Meqheleng with whatever we could, there was so much destruction and people lost their lives as well as many of their personal items but we went beyond the call of duty to give a helping hand" says Mafusi Mabula who at the time was a Firefighter in the Frankfort team.



The Working on Fire Senekal team that assisting with disaster management efforts in Meqheleng.

NKOMAZI TEAM AWARDED FOR MPUMALANGA FLOODS RESCUE EFFORTS



Nkomazi Crew Leader, Jonas Zandamela together with the team that assisted during the floods rescue efforts. Pic by The Bulletin.

The Mpumalanga Nkomazi team joined various stakeholders, including the Disaster Management team from Nkomazi Local Municipality and the Department of Corporate Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA), in rebuilding efforts in the region, after the devastating January 2012 floods.

The floods were a result of heavy rains that affected river flow and dam levels, leading to the closure of low lying bridges and localised flooding. Affected areas

included the Nkomazi, Bushbuckridge, Thabachweu, Mbombela and Umjindi Municipalities. The Nkomazi team assisted in distributing relief aid from the South African Red Cross Society, in the form of food parcels, blankets and tents to affected households.

The team, led by crew leader at that time, Jonas Zandamela, also received a certificate of excellence at the Centrum Guardian Awards, for their efforts, during the floods.

FIREFIGHTER HELPS A WOMAN GIVE BIRTH



Chad Barnado from the Crag Base with the baby he helped deliver.

a firefighter at the Crag base at the time to spring into action when he was called to assist a lady who was giving birth in his community.

Chad was on his way back from work, in his Personal Protective Clothing with his First Aid equipment as he was trained in first aid.

"A lady told me that there was a lady giving birth inside a house. Lucky I still had on my PPC and First Aid equipment so I went to see how I can help. She was laying on the bed so I gave first aid to baby, making sure the airway was clear and she was breathing," said Chad.

Amanda Kamm said she was grateful Chad could help as the ambulance took too long to arrive. "He (Chad) came quickly and assisted me and the baby while we wait for the ambulance. I was grateful for Chad's help when the ambulance came, they took the baby from Chad and wrapped it. I will always be grateful for Chad's help that day."

Working on Fire teams are often based in previously disadvantaged areas with often minimal emergency services. This is one of the reasons that prompted one of our firefighters, Chad Barnado who was

GOING THE **EXTRA MILE**

CREW LEADER SAVES A LIFE



Katlego Molapo administered first aid to Puseletso.

"I was talking on the cellphone. I only recall seeing fire coming out of the cellphone after lightning struck. Next, I was unconscious. The following morning I was on a hospital bed. A fellow intern told me it was Katlego Molapo, a firefighter, who saved my life,"

These are the words of Puseletso Masha, a student at Tshwane University of Technology, who is also an intern at Roodeplaat Nature Reserve where a Working on Fire team is based.

Masha recalls that although it was raining,

there had been no thunderstorm on that day so she wasn't expecting lightning. A fellow intern rushed to call Molapo who was in another room when the incident occurred.

"I found her lying unconscious but she had a pulse. I opened her mouth, her teeth were tight and smoke came out of her mouth. I moved her tongue gently so that she was able to breathe," said Molapo.

Molapo made a call to the base manager. "I took the lady in my car and drove to the base manager's quarters," says Molapo.

He and the base manager drove Masha to a private hospital in Monatana. After she was admitted, the head of the hospital wanted to see Molapo.

He said the first aid given to Masha saved her life. "You are a hero because you had the guts to give first aid and not many people can do what you did," the hospital head said.

The base manager has also lauded Molapo for keeping a cool head and helping to resuscitate the victim.



environmental affairs

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