

City runs programmes to assist people living on the street

MARKUS Elkana Brajtman's letter, "Help the homeless" (Cape Times, May 10), refers.

The City of Cape Town has a host of interventions designed to assist people who live on the street. Our Street People Reintegration Unit was established to interact with street dwellers and facilitate access to social services, including shelters, identity documents, social grants,

temporary work opportunities through the Expanded Public Works Programme; and relocation to their places of origin and/or relocation with family.

These offers of assistance are voluntary and the City cannot force anyone off the streets.

We also run a winter readiness programme annually that sees the City's social development and early childhood development department making aid

available to qualifying shelters to help them deal with the expected influx of street people during the colder months.

This year, 18 shelters will provide 276 bed spaces and will benefit from aid to the value of R950 000. This includes blankets, mattresses, toiletries and food.

The City is also in the process of finalising a pilot project for a safe space that can accommodate 230 people as a transitional measure.

This will include access to a secure space to sleep and access to social services and basic services such as ablutions, water and storage lockers.

Finally, we conduct ongoing awareness initiatives through our Give Responsibly campaign, advising residents against indiscriminate hand-outs and directing them to registered shelters for donations.

Ultimately, we want to reduce the number of people living on the street.

Our experience has been that many opt to decline any form of assistance, but the City will persevere in its efforts to help as many people as possible get back on to their feet, and ultimately reintegrate them into society.

Ernest Sass

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