

NTANDO MAKHUBU,
SAKHILE NDLAZI
AND JAMES MAHLOKWANE

FOOD was packed for the underprivileged, crèches renovated, computers donated and inmates empowered as Pretoria joined the rest of the world in celebrating Nelson Mandela's 100th birthday yesterday.

The City of Tshwane also handed over a house to an elderly woman who had been living in squalor for years.

Social Development Minister Susan Shabangu joined dignitaries, among them ambassadors, and about 2 000 people to pack food for the poor and needy.

The event, hosted by Sun International at its Time Square facility, Menlyn Maine, saw 260 000 nutritious meals packed to feed children in early childhood centres. The packs consisted of rice, soybeans and other food items, which will feed the children for five days a week until the end of the year.

The initiative, Rise Against Hunger, was part of Sun International's campaign to pack 10 million meals across the country. The food will be sent to impoverished communities. Shabangu said: "Today we are ensuring Sun International feeds millions of children who do not know where their next meal will come from... and we all know no one can learn on an empty stomach."

Minister of Public Works Thulas Nxesi donated computers to Mam-elodi Secondary School – but first the proper way to sing the anthem, Nxesi then revealed his surprise to the school – he donated 10 computers to the computer lab, which had been without computers for years. While others had their hats on or were not standing to attention. Nxesi said Mandela would be disappointed if he woke up to see how the anthem was being disrespected. "I am disappointed in the manner in which some of you sang the anthem."

"There was no sense of pride and patriotism. It is not only the learners at this school, but in most



Acting Deputy Chief of Mission at the US embassy in Pretoria, Elizabeth McKay, and Minister for Social Development Susan Shabangu join teams packing food parcels to distribute to early childhood development centres. PICTURE: JACQUES NAUDE/AFRICAN NEWS AGENCY (ANA)



Young inmates from Emthongeni Juvenile Correctional Services Centre worked with Deputy Minister of Justice and Correctional Services Thabang Makweta to renovate a crèche at a Kameeldrif informal settlement. PICTURE: THOBILE MATHONSI/AFRICAN NEWS AGENCY (ANA)

After giving a crash-course on pride in your nation," he said. Nxesi, a former educator, said he was sorely distressed at how people in general did not respect the anthem. "One way to show that you are proud of your country and the people who fought for freedom, more especially uTata, was to have pride in your nation," he said.

He also encouraged the pupils and teachers to protect the equipment. In the same breath he encouraged community members to assist in guarding the equipment.

Female inmates at Kgosi Mampuru II Correctional Centre were given a lecture on education by Unisa principal and vice-chancellor

Professor Manda Makhanya. He reminded them that Mandela was among many prisoners of the apartheid struggle era to have achieved educational qualifications while behind bars. He told them to use the institution as learning was another form of rehabilitation. Another group of young prisoners were taken into Kameeldrif informal settlement where they cleaned up a crèche. They cleaned

the inside and outside, repainted classrooms and fences, worked on the garden and fixed taps.

The group, from Emthongeni Juvenile Correctional Centre, also spoke of the regret they had for the life of crime that had landed them behind bars.

City Property staff also rolled up their sleeves and packed nutritious food which they handed out to 9 000 centres in and around the Pretoria CBD, as well as in Joburg.

The staff members packed 100 440 meals in shifts of 67 minutes earlier this month in partnership with Rise Against Hunger. And yesterday they distributed these to the homeless and other unprivileged people.

Executive mayor Solly Msimanga, LMAs, the Speaker of Council Katlego Mathhebe, Chief Whip of Council Christo van der Heever, councillors and city employees went to various healthcare institutions catering for the needs of disadvantaged communities in an effort to make the day extraordinary.

Msimanga also visited FR Ribetiro Clinic, Letlhabo Old Age Home and Care Centre and Aaron Motsotledi Park to bring joy to those communities while LMAs criss-crossed the city offering their services. Donations were also made in partnership with various sponsors. "I was also privileged to today hand over a house to one of our most deserving beneficiaries," Msimanga said.

"Koko Anna Mimanana Matjila has been living in a dilapidated house patched with corrugated iron for over 40 years (she is 90 years old and lives with her granddaughter). For the first time Koko Matjila will appreciate rain; in the past she hated rainy seasons as her belongings used to drown in water as it rained."

The mayor said that on June 1 he and Human Settlements MMC Manda Nkomo learnt of the unfortunate living conditions of the elderly woman and promised to look for sponsors to build her a house.

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