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WARD 48 MEN'S PROGRAMME

# Men take stand on GBV



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**A** group of men are doing their bit and adding their voices to the fight against gender-based violence (GBV).

Organised by male participants of the Ward 48 Men's Programme, the event was targeted at Hanover Park locals, with guest speakers including Rape Crisis. Men and women gathered at the Blomvlei Civic Hall in Hanover Park on Thursday 30 March to explore, among others, consent and legality around sex for minors.

Glenn Hans, one of the participants and organiser of the event, says the session was invaluable to understanding gender violence.

"It is important to understand that gender-based violence can be stopped. If we have more good men in the community that have positive attitudes and mindsets," says Hans.

"What was really interesting was hearing about the age of consent being 16 from Rape Crisis. This

means any 16-year-old can have any sexual partner of any age."

This was a shocking fact, he says.

Hans continues that the scourge of GBV can be beaten.

"I am a man who is doing positive things in the community. Positivity can be contagious to other men, who can also have such a mindset in the community and do the right thing. To provide for and protect our families," he says.

Bringing priesthood and spirituality back to the home is a key factor in combating all negativity, he believes.

"This event was mainly aimed at the youth, but everyone in the community to help educate us, but also to show residents the important work we as the men's programme are doing and how we are doing it.

"This programme was created to make an impact on schools but also, while we are educating people on school, we are also getting educated through information and with new skills to make a better impact in the community," says Hans.

The men's programme was funded by departmental funding,

with R60 000 additional budget set aside in ward allocation for youth programmes.

Ward 48 councillor Zahid Badroodien says the aim of the initiative is focused on getting men together in the ward.

"The programme started in December with nine and now we have a complement of 32. The men were identified through the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) database. The teams worked in partnership with a number of schools in the ward and offered mentoring to the students in addition to logging service requests in the ward. These initiatives are so important in our community to strengthen the community fabric and to develop skills that strengthen our collective value system," says Badroodien.

Badroodien continues that the Men and Masculinity initiative set out to explore a number of social aspects linked to violence against women and children, including gender relations as shaped by culture, tradition and religion; substance abuse; HIV/Aids; parenting; and cultivating positive role models.

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