

World Aids Day Memorial Service

An emotional memorial service was hosted by the community services Department on 01 December 2011 in the council chamber of Maluti-a-Phofung Municipality. The humbling ceremony had many of the employees in tears as they remembered and take into account the ones who are infected and affected by this terrible pandemic called AIDS. Held every year on 1st December, World AIDS Day is a date for people to think about and act upon the global HIV epidemic. HIV continues to have a devastating impact on millions of people around the world. Whilst this infection can be prevented, HIV transmission continues to occur.

There to lead the programme was the inciting Nthabiseng Gumbi, who kept the spirit of the gathered crowd at an anointing high. Cllr Majake opened and welcomed all employees to the ceremony, giving his message of inspiration and encouragement. Director of Community Service Me Selepe explained the purpose of the day, saying "HIV and Aids is not to be given praise, but to be confronted and not feared". Song of praise echoed the building as employees sang as they remember those who have passed because of the decease. The community services Director also indicated the support it offers and encouraged other employees to treat those with the virus with great sensitivity. Pastor Komako, Cllr Pastor Croquette and Pastor Mafojane were the guest speaker of the day, spreading a positive and motivation that dealt with confronting the virus. The theme was "Zero Tolerance, Zero discrimination and zero to HIV related deaths. Candles were lit to signify the importance of this day and what it stood for. Employees were encouraged to know their statues and to seek advice and support for those infected.

Outburst of tears could be heard from the passage ways as the municipal Manager Mr Kau announced and requested a moment of silence to remember the life of fellow colleague manager of housing Mr Fourche whom lost his life in a fatal car accident earlier in the same week. He stated that "Although HIV can be treated, many people infected with HIV do not have access to life-saving drugs, other are killed by the fear of living with the virus, not understanding that it can be treated." He went on to echo the words of guest speakers, further motivating and encouraging employees to live healthy lives regardless of HIV status.

Aids Council

Maluti-a-Phofung municipality launched their Local Aids Council on the 02 December 2011 at the Charles Mopeli Stadium in the Thusong Multi-Purpose Centre. The aim of the council was to educate and provide support to those infected and affected by the HIV/Aids virus in the community through planning and coordinating plan strategies which would improve the HIV/AIDS vendetta. Information, Education and Communication on how to treat and live with the virus was a way forward and encouraged for the newly elected council to implement in the 35 wards in the municipality, with the support of the District Community Services Department, which was represented by its Director Takatso Lebenya. Director Community Service Palesa Selepe indicated the support her department in partnership with various stakeholders has to offer, which included the provision of mobile clinic, which would not only be focusing on HIV/AIDS victims but other diseases such as High Blood, Sugar diabetes and cancer related sicknesses.

Cllr Mahlomola Majake directed the programme and kept everyone entertained with jokes to break tension of people being depressed by the epidemic. Cllr Mohapi Seobi of Ward 17 welcomed the masses and prestigious guests while Cllr Matlakala Khambule introduced the guests of the day. The message of support was delivered by Pule Mokoena of the Mphahllolle Men's health who also represented the Provincial Aids Council. He applauded and praised the Maluti-a-Phofung Municipality by saying "The Municipality needs to be for the courage to not praise HIV/AIDS as if it was the hero, but indicated that the hero was the people making a difference. Re e tshwela ka mathe (we spit at the disease) ." He went on to encourage men to be role model to its community. Indicating that "male kids are more impressionable by the actions of adult males and that the grooming of these kids then starts with the men." "Men need to be mentors in their community," he said as he addressed the masses. He went on to encouraged communities to firmly stand against women and child abuse seeing that the event took place during the 16 days of Activism against women and child abuse. But the most important message was not to accept HIV/AIDS as a guest in the community.

The history of AIDS is a short one, as recently as the 1970s, when no one was aware of this deadly illness. Since then the global AIDS epidemic has become one of the greatest threats to human health and development. At the same time, much has been learnt about the science of AIDS, as well as how to prevent and treat the

disease. Sadly the message can never be told enough as one learns that less developed and rural areas are the ones that are still mostly infected and affected by this virus.

AIDS is caused by HIV, a virus that can be passed from person to person through sexual fluids, blood and breast milk. Worldwide the majority of HIV infections are transmitted through sex between men and women, and half of all adults living with HIV are women. But certain groups of people have been particularly affected and these include injecting drug users, sex workers and men who have sex with men. In many people's minds, HIV and AIDS are closely linked with these groups, which can lead to even greater stigma and prejudice against people already treated as outsiders.

Though some people are more at risk than others of becoming infected with HIV, South Africa's epidemic is of large concern that it affects people from all walks of life. The creation of the National AIDS Coordinating Committee of South Africa (NACOSA) in 1992 brought together a wide range of actors including political parties, trade unions, academics, business organizations, and civic groups to foster a response to the burgeoning epidemic. South Africa's National AIDS Plan was adopted within months of the country's first democratic election in 1994, and there was optimism that an epidemic on the scale experienced by other African countries at the time could be avoided.

"AIDS does not choose colour, greed, gender, sexuality, race or age, it can infect and affect everyone" said Cllr Ntsane Mopeli who was there on behalf of the executive Mayor of Maluti-a-Phofung Municipality Mofumahadi Mathokoana Mopeli. He was the usual jolly self yet very stern when talking about attacking and taking preventative measures against the battle of this pandemic. He expressed his sadness and repulsion to the disease that left so many children orphaned. He pleaded for the community to stand united against AIDS. He emphasized the theme of Zero tolerance, Zero discrimination and Zero to HIV/AIDS related deaths. "After 30 years of existence of HIV/AIDS in South Africa, we need to be motivated by the decreasing numbers of deaths caused by this evil disease" he exclaimed, "however the battle is still far from over". He discouraged the myth and ignorance of those who assume that people living with this disease have been cursed or bewitched.

Of course he addressed the crowd with charm and in jest ensuring that the crowd stay intrigued and paying full attention. He advised the hall filled with Traditional Healers and Men of the Cloth (Priests) among the various stakeholders that were present, not to deceive and give false hope to desperate HIV/AIDS victims because that will lead to misinformed and terminally ill community. He applauded the certified and constructive Healers and Teachers of both Faith and Tradition, for their guidance to the community. As he closed his speech, he turned to those living with the dreadful disease by stating; "People need to believe in themselves and to live positively. The power of a healthy mind and positive attitude, can let you live for more years than you can imagine. Healthy life style." On behalf of the executive mayor, he thanked everyone who continues to work hard for the community.

After his address, the Director of Maluti-a-Phofung's Community Services Mrs Selepe announcement of the MALUTI-A-PHOFUNG LOCAL AIDS COUNCIL, which would be the one to provide communal support, which is as follows:

SECTORS	REPRESENTATIVES- CONTACT PERSONS	CELL: / TEL: / FAX:
1. MMC Community Service	Mohlomola Majake	058 718 3844
2. Portfolio committee allocated to each task team: · Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) Task Team · Information, Education and Communication (IEC) · Treatment Support and Care Task Team	Cllr Ivy Motaung Cllr TT Letaoana Cllr Tefo Mosikili Cllr Noel Khoapa Cllr Sebolelo Letaoana Cllr Maria Sehlako Cllr Matlakala Khambule	
3. Director Community Services	Palesa Selepe	058 718 3700
4. Community Manager	Audrey Sekhobo	058 718 3700
5. Provincial Council on Aids / ETU	Prof. Absalom Moloi	082 651 4750

6. Municipal Staff providing Administrative services to the task teams	Nomaswazi Gumbi Simphiwe Mkhize	058 718 3700
7. People with HIV/AIDS	Phuthi David Molaoa	076 352 1914
8. Business Sectors · Eastern Free State Business Forum	Junior Mohlabi	058 713 1726
9. Community Based Organisations (CBO's) · Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) Task Team · Maluti-a-Phofung OVC Task Team · Information, Education and Communication (IEC) · Treatment Support and Care Task Team	Palesa Mokoena Pule Totetsi Thabo Moloi	072 388 5848 071 139 2991 076 530 4875
10. Children's Organisations		
11. Sporting Community		
12. Women's Sector · NGO's · CBO's · MAP	Glaudia Mokotso	058 713 3700
13. Non Governmental Organisations (NGO's) · Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) Task Team · Save The Children · Information, Education and Communication (IEC) · Treatment Support and Care Task Team	Phepeng Xaba Abel Ndaba Mamosebe Matshemela	058 718 2960 073 168 3786 083 936 5881 058 303 0002
14. Faith Based Organisations (FBO's) · Religious Organisations · Moral Regenerations	Thulo Mile Motlengwa Botanti	072 289 2005 074 347 4962
15. Traditional Leaders · House of Traditional Leaders	P.P Moeti	073 268 9291
16. Traditional Health Practitioners	Ndai Radebe	072 340 9785
17. Labour Sectors · NEHAWU · SAMWU · IMATU	Mamakwae Makhoala Biki Makhubo	058 713 0515 058 713 4375 058 718 3700
18. Transport Industry		
19. Youth Sector	Matlatsi Madiba	073 131 2207
20. Men Sector · Mphahllolle Mens Health	Motlalentoa Mohlakoane	072 670 6365
21. People with Disability · Disability Forum	Malefetsane Mokoena	078 315 0359
22. Government Departments · Department of Health · Department of Social Development · Department of Agriculture · Department of Public Works · Department of Justice · Department of Home Affairs · Department of Sports, Arts and Culture · Department of Education · Department of Economic and Environmental Affairs · Department of Correctional Services · Department of Public Safety · Department of Labour · SASSA · SAPS and Military	FS Matla Aletta Malimabe Busisiwe Moloi Ntsoaki Molatoli Matlakala Matjele Mantoe Mosia Fees Moloi Anna Mashinini Nomahlubi Mohlahlo Mr Mpheko Lucky Diphoko Issacc Mothibe Captain Melita Mabuya Dira Namane Me Ramathe	058 713 0515 058 718 6300 058 714 1447 058 718 3600 058 718 0071 058 718 1400 058 718 3700 058 718 3700 058 713 1094 058 718 4700 058 713 0225 083 255 0460 083 880 8901 058 624 2300 058 718 0810 058 713 0373 058 713 2946 083 423 7446
· Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) Task Team	Josy Sithole	058 718 2960

- Save the Children · Information, Education and Communication (IEC) 23. Treatment Support and Care Task Team	Mahlatsi Madibas	073 131 2207
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The Member of Mayoral Committee (MMC) of Community Services Cllr Majake who is the part of the council, saluted the fellow council member for the work to be done and the effort and promise to help the community. Cllr Noel Kgoapa gave the closing remarks for the auspicious event. The ceremony concluded with the entertainment items from Jerry Maya and Mpho Lebetsa who kept the guests on their feet throughout the event.