

# Old Age home in Steve Biko-ville gets support from local businesses

With winter at its height, it is hard to imagine what those that do not have as much as the rest of us, are going through during this time.

This is the thought that made Kgomo-tso Lebeso, Senior Administration Officer of Dinokeng Blue IQ Project and Sharon Kekana, a Transformation Manager at Vergenoeg Mine, to devise a plan to help the Tender Love and Care (TLC) old age home.

When they were doing one of their site visits at Steve Biko-ville, they noticed a lot of people outside a particular house. They made their way to the house to find out what was happening. What they discovered was far from what they had expected.

They were at an old age home. A bubbly Nicollene Ditshego, one of the volunteers, gave them a brief background about the home. From what they saw, Kekana and Lebeso realised the need to devise a plan to help this home.

Vergenoeg Mine offered to supply the home with food parcels, electric urns and blankets to make sure that during this winter the elderly are warm and well fed. The Dinokeng team facilitated the handover event and managed to involve

Dinokeng tourism business stakeholders.

Kwalata Game Lodge made sure that the elderly had a delicious lunch, with well set and decorated tables and chairs on the day of the event.

TLC, which is home to about 30 adults, was founded by Johanna Mokubiyane in 2003. This project came about after Mokubiyane witnessed the plight of HIV/Aids within the Steve Biko-ville community. Her project initially started small. She turned her house at Rens Town into a home for the sick and adopted orphans who were affected by HIV/Aids.

After registering her project with the Department of Social Development, she was advised to move to other premises. Fortunately, a piece of land was donated to her. Mokubiyane went to clinics, churches, retail shops, government departments and other establishments trying to find assistance as she did not have capital.

To build the home she used her own money and also received assistance from some churches and other organizations with building material, chairs, tables, beds and other things.

On how she came across people in need,

Mokubiyane says: "As a born-again Christian, I would be doing rounds from house to house, praying for the sick and I realized that the sick and the old were in need of care. They were neglected by their own people."

Even today, she still works hand-in-hand with social workers to identify the elderly and the sick that are in need. Some of the elderly are brought in by their ex-employees when they cannot perform their responsibilities at work anymore.

They contribute a monthly fee of R550 so that they can get nutritious food and get the care that they deserve. Mokubiyane has eight assistants to help her care for the elderly.

Sharon Kekana believes there is a huge culture of volunteerism within our society - people who give their free time to assist the fragile elders, of whom some don't even have families to take care of them.

She said: "As part of Vergenoeg Mining Company's corporate social responsibility policy, we endeavor to (1) assist in addressing the socio welfare challenges that face our communities, and (2) to promote a sustainable healthy



*The elderly helping with the of f-loading of the goodies from Vergenoeg Mine.*

lifestyle to communities' vulnerable children, youth and the old people."

She added with conviction that "this is not because it is the right thing to do, but because these volunteers have passion for life, a love for people and a sense for the need of the well-being of society. With this 'can do' attitude we have the ability to make a phenomenal difference!"

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*Some of the role players who made the gifts to the Tender Love and Care Old Age Home in Steve Biko-ville possible. From left are: Charl Pretorius (Kwalata), Rachel Seoketsa (Dinokeng Councillor Ward 1), Dumisani Ntshangase (Dinokeng Blue IQ Project), Sharon Kekana (Vergenoeg Mine) and Kgomo-tso Lebeso (Dinokeng Blue IQ Project).*



*The elderly enjoying their lunch after receiving blankets and other gifts from Vergenoeg Mine.*