

City marks global green day

NONDU NGCONGO, DERRICK DLAMINI and NOMBUSO MASUKU

THE Municipality held several events to mark World Environment Day, on 5 June.

The Parks, Leisure and Cemeteries Department hosted a greening project at Durban North Road aimed at encouraging people to plant more trees and keep the environment clean.

"Trees provide oxygen that we all need to live, so let's plant trees today for our children's future," said Deputy Mayor Logie Naidoo.

He said a spinoff of the project would be to show the beauty of Durban ahead of the 2010 World Cup.

Sibusiso Mkhwanazi, Manager of Natural Resources, said the greening project should not just be for 2010, but an ongoing programme.

At Duffs Road, to the north of eThekweni, officials made presentations on topics such as collecting and recycling waste and waste management. Mlungisi Mhlongo, a City Housing official, said: "Judging by the support from the community and political leadership, including senior officials from other council departments, we have managed to send a strong message to this community."

Social Worker in the Housing Department, Thandeka Ngcobo, said: "This community's awareness of environmental issues sends a message to other communities across eThekweni to be part of the solution."

"We welcome their enthusiasm and commitment".

Durban Solid Waste Education Officer, Dumisani Shange, said waste management was a serious challenge in many communities. "We distributed refuse gloves and plastic bags to minimise waste in this area," Shange said.

The City's Health Area Manager for KwaMashu, Dudu

Ndaba, stressed the need to engage communities in clean-up campaigns, "as a matter of urgency to avoid diseases and unnecessary suffering, especially among children".

She said the initiative demonstrated the government's commitment to keeping residential areas clean and healthy.

"We are promoting the need to save and protect our environment for us and future generations," Ndaba said.

In the Outer West, the Municipality's Health and Waste Water departments visited the George Cato Primary School at Cato Ridge to educate pupils about the dangers of water pollution.

Nomusa Buthelezi, of Waste Water, listed littering, industries, agricultural and domestic users as contributing to water pollution.

Unsafe

"Polluted water is not safe even for animals to drink. It can harm plants and animals," Buthelezi said.

Assmang Environmental Co-ordinator Thabang Tsu-bane said the company was fully committed to protecting water quality.

Ward 2 Primary Health Care Manager Muzi Majola warned that pollution could cause minor and major ailments.

He said Cato Ridge was zoned an industrial area and was developing quickly, which required the community to be vigilant about pollution.

Grade 6 pupil Ndumiso Shange said he had learned a lot. "I will never pollute water again. If I see dirty things like plastic and bottles near the water I will take them for recycling," he said.

Head teacher Mxanga Magwaza urged pupils to use what they had learned every day, not just once a year.

ngcongond@durban.gov.za
dlaminisd@durban.gov.za
masukun@durban.gov.za

HAVING A BALL



DEREK Naidoo, Deputy City Manager: Procurement and Infrastructure, tries out the new basketball and netball court at Lindelani Primary School. The court was made possible by the Municipality in partnership with Much Asphalt, SA Asphalt and Sengangakho Business Management

Picture: GUGU MDLALOSE

Big numbers for maths event

GUGU MDLALOSE and KEN MCHUNU

DURBAN is gearing up to host a world schools mathematics competition next month.

The Mathematics Intercity Competition, a partnership between the Mathematics Association of South Africa and the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, will attract hundreds of Grade 9 pupils from around the world, including Africa and South Africa, to Durban.

They will take part in an acclaimed programme endorsed by the Office of the Presidency.

Deputy City Manager for Procurement and Infrastructure, Derek Naidoo, said the event was part of a wider programme aimed at tackling national skills

shortages by sparking an interest in mathematics and science among youngsters.

"South Africa needs scientists, doctors and engineers. It is for this reason that the City has started to build awareness around maths programmes so that pupils can develop an interest in the subject," Naidoo said.

Ronel Mitchel, of the City's Special Projects Office, which is organising the competition, said winners would receive bursaries and other exciting prizes.

Naidoo said more than 500 delegates would visit eThekweni, including pupils, professors and academics from around the world.

The Municipality would foot the bill, including meals and accommodation for participating teams.

Local businesses have been invited to participate and contribute to the success of this programme.

Mitchel said: "In past years, South African teams have been hosted by China, Hong Kong, the Philippines and Taiwan."

"The economic downturn has made sponsorship difficult. This is why we are urging all KwaZulu-Natal businesses, big and small, to show the international academic community the hospitality and enthusiasm for which Durban is renowned."

Meanwhile, maths whizz kid Arlton Gilbert, of Star College received a camera from Deputy Mayor Logie



MATHS WHIZZ: Arlton Gilbert

Naidoo last week, as a token of appreciation for representing the City well over the years.

Chatsworth-born Gilbert has won a string of medals at international schools competitions, including the Pan African Mathematics Olympiad in Benin and other world schools' olympiads.

Naidoo said supporting promising pupils like Gilbert was an investment in the country's future.

Mitchel said Gilbert would represent the country at the prestigious International Mathematics Olympiad in Bremen, Germany, later this year.

mdlaloseg@durban.gov.za
mchunuk@durban.gov.za

Dassenhoek community unites in prayer

DERRICK DLAMINI

THE high rate of TB, Aids, crime and unemployment prompted residents of Dassenhoek to come together for a prayer day recently.

They were joined by City officials, traditional and religious leaders, and business people at Bhekokuhle Sports Field for the event, the first of its kind in the area.

Mayor Obed Mlaba, in his address, commended Dassenhoek's people for a "sterling initiative, which reminds us all that prayers are a significant part of our

lives, despite all the challenges we may encounter".

He said church and families were a crucial part of society.

"We, as government leaders and the church have a huge role to play in the spiritual upliftment of our people. However, let us be reminded that each development begins with an individual."

"Let us all explore the talents that God gave us, for the benefit of our beautiful city and the country," Mlaba said.

The Office of the Premier was represented by Selby

Khumalo, the General Manager of Religious Affairs. He described the event as, "a sign of commitment that we will roll up our sleeves and intensify our fight against these ills, but at the same time, bear in mind that prayer is an integral component of this process".

Dassenhoek Ward 14 Councillor Patrick Mfeka said the initiative was a culmination of several community-based campaigns held earlier this year to raise awareness about social ills, including domestic violence, teenage pregnancy and HIV/ Aids.

"As public servants, and as

leaders in our city, it remains our duty to ensure that we tackle societal challenges together, with great vigour.

"That is a crucial aspect that defines a united and prosperous community. It's also in line with the City's vision of creating a sustainable community free of hunger, poverty and disease," Mfeka said.

He said statistics from a nearby clinic had shown that HIV/Aids infections in the area were on the increase.

Among the guests was former *Gospel Gold* host Zanele Mbokazi, who grew up in Thornwood.

She urged the business

sector and other prominent local individuals and professionals to assist in empowering young people in the area.

"We are creating a platform where we can proudly plough back to this society. We hope that through this prayer day, we have reached out and inspired this community, especially the youth, to be responsible citizens and to play a significant role in shaping their future."

"It's the beginning of more campaigns to come," Mbokazi said.

Attendees also gave thanks for a successful and peaceful

national elections, and remembered victims of the nearby Thornwood train disaster in 1993.

Mfeka donated a sheep on behalf of the community to the local Roman Catholic church, Saint Francis, to welcome Father Smilo Mngadi to the parish and in honour of the role played by the church in unifying this community during the liberation struggle.

Ephraim Ndaba, a resident of Panikeng, in Dassenhoek, said the event had brought hope to the youth of the area.

dlaminisd@durban.gov.za
See picture on Page 7