



INTERNET ARTICLE

St Camillus Primary School learners taught about the importance of washing hands

16 October 2018

As part of its month long Global Handwashing Campaign, the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) – in partnership with the Department of Health, Department of Education and Unilever – visited St Camillus Primary School in Hammanskraal on 15 October 2018.

The event was meant to educate the learners about the importance of washing hands with soap to curb the spread of communicable diseases, such as diarrhoea and other related diseases.

Children are vulnerable to a lot of sicknesses due to the conditions of where they stay or play. The hand washing lessons and demonstrations are critical towards improving the well-being of the children and are reducing high mortality rates.

Addressing the learners during the event, Department of Health's Acting Director for Health Promotion, Ms Lorato Mahura, said in South Africa, maternal, pre-natal, and under-5 mortality remain high, while diarrhoeal diseases are a huge public health problem.

“Diarrhoea accounts for 3.1% of total deaths and is rated the 8th largest cause of death in children under the age of 5”, said Mahura.

She emphasised that these diseases and deaths are preventable, highlighting good hand hygiene practices as a key intervention to preventing these diseases and deaths.

Mr S Maphayi, St Camillus Primary's school Principal, thanked the departments and its stakeholders for choosing their school for this health education.

“The hand washing education that you are bringing to our school will go a long way in sensitising the learners and the parents present here today about the importance of washing hands,” said the Principal.

Mrs Fikile Mokonoto from DWS advised the learners about the importance of washing their hands with soap at all critical times before handling food or after using the toilet.

She also told the learners that diseases such as diarrhoea can be prevented if everyone practices the following hand washing six steps:

- Wet hands with clean water and use soap;
- Rub both hands together, rub back of the hands;
- Rub i-between the fingers and clean the thumbs;
- Clean under the fingernails;
- Clean your wrists; and
- Rinse well with running water and dry with a clean cloth or by shaking in the air.



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"Washing hands frequently and following these steps can prevent diseases and save many lives, added Mokonoto.

Lucky Makgarengi