



INTERNET ARTICLE

Thopodi Primary School learners sent into frenzy by DWS's sanitation campaign

20 May 2021

The learners of Thopodi Primary School in Etwatwa in the City of Ekurhuleni, were sent into a pure and unadulterated delight when the Department of Water and Sanitation conducted a sanitation and hygiene awareness campaign on Tuesday, 18 May 2021.

A week-long activity that aims to cast toilets in a new light as an important facility that should be given a place of pride in people's lives, the campaign also sought to promote proper hygiene practices and water saving tips.

Ms Bridget Maleka, the official of the Department, told the learners that the campaign was meant to inform and educate them about sanitation issues which related to keeping toilets clean, washing hands regularly and conserving water.

Ms Maleka urged the learners to keep toilets in an immaculate condition, reiterating that only three items – toilet paper, urine and faeces - were to be flushed in the toilet. She added that any other item was not to be put and flushed into the toilets.

She advised learners to wash their hands regularly during critical times, mentioning the times as before cooking, eating and after using the toilets. The learners were also taught and practically shown the six steps of proper handwashing.

Addressing the learners on water saving, the Department's Ms Shoki Malepe, informed the learners that South Africa faced a serious lack of water and that every effort should be made to save as much as possible.

As an example showing the extent of water shortages in the country, Ms Malepe explained that Gauteng received water from Lesotho to augment its existing sources of water. She further asked them to discontinue the practice of polluting water as it cost huge amounts of money to purify it.

"There are various ways to save water that you must practice daily. These include not flushing the toilet when there is no need to do so, making sure your taps are not leaking and are closed tight enough to prevent dripping," Ms Malepe warned.

Specifically speaking to the girls, Ms Malepe echoed the message of proper hygiene. She told them about menstruation, appealing that they should not be shocked because this was part and parcel of growing up. She said they had to keep themselves clean and not skip school because they were embarrassed.

A Grade 6 learner at the school, Karren Panashe, said she was motivated at the Department's visit to her school. She said the messages brought to them by the Department gave them a sense of pride, especially as girls.

Another Grade 6 learner, Sanele Mthembu, admitted that he did not know the extent of water challenges in the country. He promised to do whatever it takes to ensure that every day in his he worked to conserve water.





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Deputy Principal at the school, Mr Ambrose Makena, expressed gratitude on behalf of the school for the Department's visit and for its informative and educational messages.

He said as a school they believed in relationships and assistance from other sources such as the Department, saying this is how his school is run.

"So when people come to us as you have done and providing assistance without being asked makes us very happy. We therefore appeal to the Department to continue to assist other people and schools," Mr Makena said, adding that the goal of moulding learners into better adults could only be achieved through partnerships.

The Department donated sanitary towels which were donated by UNICEF and WaterAid SA as well as hand sanitisers.

Hosia Sithole



Department of Water and Sanitation South Africa



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