



INTERNET ARTICLE

DWS Mpumalanga engages the community of Belfast on the importance of clean toilets and proper handwashing

24 November 2023

The Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) Mpumalanga Provincial Office engaged the community of Belfast in the Bushbuckridge Local Municipality on an educational awareness drive about the importance of toilets and health and hygiene with the emphasis on the steps of proper handwashing in celebration of World Toilet Day.

World Toilet Day (WTD) is observed annually on 19 November to highlight the importance of toilets and proper sanitation, and also to raise the plight of those who do not have access to proper sanitation. WTD inspires action to tackle the global sanitation crisis and help achieve the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6 which calls sanitation for all by 2030. The SDG 6 has a target to eliminate open defecation and ensure everyone has access to sustainable sanitation services by 2030, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations. World Toilet Day also raises awareness of the importance of a toilet and proper sanitation for human dignity, health and a safe and healthy environment.

This year, the World Toilet Day is celebrated under the theme **“Accelerating Change”** and uses the ancient tale of a hummingbird who does what she can to fire a great fire by carrying droplets of water in her beak. Her actions, even though small, are helping solve a big problem. The story conveys a message that each of us can take action, however small, to help solve the big sanitation problem. It is therefore crucial that we play an active role in ensuring that everyone has access to a clean and safe, toilet and proper sanitation services and protect the environment.

Belfast was identified for the educational awareness because it is one of the beneficiaries of a project that constructed toilets for needy and deserving households in the Bushbuckridge Local Municipality. In her presentation, Ms Vongani Mabasa from the Sanitation unit emphasised the importance of always keeping toilets clean and safe. “A toilet is a very important place and a proper toilet like the ones the government built for the community is important to protect and preserve human dignity. It is therefore important that we also take care and keep our toilets clean so they can last longer and provide the service. Please take care of the toilets and do not throw foreign objects into the toilets as they negatively affect the functionality of the toilets. Also prevent the dumping of disposable nappies in the toilets. We all want to use clean toilets, therefore a clean toilet starts with you. It is therefore important to keep your toilets clean just like a hummingbird which keeps its nest clean. Remember, a



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



healthy toilet keeps diseases at bay and leads to a healthy family and healthy community”, she said.

A toilet is one of the smallest rooms, but it is also the most important and mighty place for humans. A toilet is normally taken for granted but has the important responsibility of giving and preserving human dignity. As the Department of Water and Sanitation says that “water is life and sanitation is dignity”, proper, clean and safe toilets are the key sanitation facilities ensuring human dignity.

Ms Sandra Ndlovu then reminded the community of the importance of properly washing their hands at critical times, especially after using the toilet to prevent the spread of viruses and diseases. She then demonstrated the steps of proper handwashing.

The community members appreciated the educational awareness which reminded them of the importance of taking care of their toilets and handwashing to prevent diseases. They also encouraged the team to also include creches and day-care centres in their programme to ensure that they reach and create awareness amongst all sectors of the community.

Themba Khoza

SOUTH AFRICA IS A WATER SCARCE COUNTRY



Department of Water and Sanitation South Africa



DWS RSA