

Celebration of 2011 Youth Month

Background

Youth Month commemorates the 1976 Soweto Uprisings. On 16 June 1976, more than 15 000 students gathered at Orlando West Secondary School with the intention of participating in a peaceful march to the nearby Orlando Stadium. The demonstration had been planned in protest against the use of Afrikaans as the medium of instruction at schools. However, the police and armed forces responded to the protest violently and the first fatality of the day was Hector Pieterse, a 12-year-old pupil who was shot by the police. It is believed that 175 others were also killed that day.

The year 2011 marked the 35th anniversary of the Soweto uprisings.

2011 Youth Month Theme

The focus of the 2011 Youth Month commemoration was on youth empowerment and participation in the country's socio-economic activities, job creation, health, fighting crime, rural development and education.

The 2011 Youth Month was launched at the Union Buildings in Pretoria on 31 May 2011 with the NYDA theme of "Youth Action for Economic Freedom in Our Lifetime". This theme formed part of the South African government's declaration of 2011 as the year of job creation. With its national theme for the country's youth, the NYDA wants to empower young people and encourage them to participate in South Africa's socio-economic activities.

The launch of Youth month coincided with International Children's Day and events were implemented in collaboration with the Office on the Rights of the Child (ORC) located in the Department of the Premier. The launch was characterized by the Proud2Serve Campaign by youth who rendered community service to children's crèches and educated children on the importance of knowing their rights as well as the importance of the Youth Month. Copies of the International Children's Charter and South African Children's Charter were distributed at these crèches.

Provincial Launch

The 2011 launch of Youth Month took place in various towns of the province.

Fezile Dabi district

Parys

The main event took place at the Reahodisa Creche in Parys. This event was launched by the Honourable Premier E. S. Magashule. The Chairperson of the NYDA in the Free State, Mr. Khotso Marupela, and the Mayor of the Ngwathe Local Municipality, the Executive Mayor of the Fezile Dabi District Municipality, the Mayor of the Metsimaholo Local Municipality and Ms. Mpaki Pule of the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund attended the event. The Nelson Mandela Children's Fund donated a plasma TV and toys to the crèche. The Department of the Premier donated toys, games, blankets, DVD's and mattresses. Ms. Joey Redeye from

Lentsoe Community Radio Station gave a talk on child abuse and educated children about their rights. Ms Betty from the SABC children programme, "Thabang Thabong" entertained children with Mickey Mouse stories.

Viljoenskroon

Children's educational toys, books, blankets and mattresses were among the goods donated to the crèche.

Xhariep District

Zastron

The programme was launched in Zastron at the Lebohang Day Care Centre for Children with Disabilities. The Honorable Mayor launched the programme together with Ward Councillor Mr. Lefa Lekhula. Electric heaters, toys, chairs, small carpets and seeds for a vegetable garden were donated. Paint and cement were also bought and the NYS Proud2Serve campaign volunteers committed to painting the crèche and building a disability ramp for the wheelchairs.

Lejweleputswa District

Bultfontein

25 NYS Proud2Serve Campaign volunteers were recruited who took care and entertained the children for the day. Mattresses, blankets, reading books, colouring books, toys, rugs and paint were donated.

Boshoff

Volunteers who were recruited cleaned the yard of the crèche and blankets, mattresses, balls, toys, books and paintbrushes were donated.

Bothaville

The NYS Proud2Serve Campaign Volunteers cleaned the yard and the Department of the Premier donated 20 mattresses, 28 chairs, oil heaters, 1 Gas Cylinder, 28 blankets and various toys.

Hoopstad

The crèche hosts 45 children. 40 young volunteers were recruited by the Tokologo Municipality as NYS Proud2Serve Campaign volunteers and they cleaned the yard. The Department of the Premier donated blankets, building nails, heaters, brushes, chairs, cot mattresses, educational toys (Coloring books, puzzles, blocks, mega block, alphabet block, balls), cement, building sand and vegetable seeds.

Motheo District

Bloemfontein

The Maria Creche is situated in phase 9 in Bloemfontein and caters for about 30 children. The NYS Proud2Serve volunteers were recruited. The Department of the Premier donated fleece blankets, mattresses, rugs, colouring books, educational toys and chairs.

Thaba Nchu

At the Ebenhezer Educare the children were educated on the importance of Youth Month, Children's Day and Children's Rights. The Department of the Premier donated fleece blankets, mattresses, rugs, gas heaters, gas cylinders, colouring books, chairs and toys.

Thabo Mofutsanyana District

Ficksburg

The Programme was launched in Ficksburg at the Itekeng Disabled Children Centre. This programme was in partnership with Department of Social Development, Setsoto Local Municipality, Child Welfare South Africa, the National Prosecuting Authority and other Departments as it was incorporated into the launching of the Child Protection Week. The Programme was launched by the Honourable MEC for Social Development, Sisi Ntombela. The Department of the Premier donated mattresses, heaters, blankets, and toys.

The Department of Social Development donated a box of toys, a 74cm flat screen TV, balls, snack boxes and play equipment. The Setsoto Local Municipality donated children's play equipment and Child Welfare SA donated track tops for children.

Provincial Youth Consultative Summit

The Department of the Premier in partnership with the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) facilitated the Summit on 9 June 2011. The purpose of the summit was to consult with organised youth formations on the National Integrated Youth Development Strategy. The objective was to solicit the inputs from the youth civil society formations and formulate the overall input of the Free State to the National Summit. The summit was attended by 143 youth representing various organisations from all walks of life.

District Memorial Lectures

Memorial lectures were also held in three districts in the Free State.

- The Thabo Mofutsanyane memorial lecture took place in Bethlehem and focused on commemorating and honouring the life of Mfanelo Vanqa.
- The Memorial Lecture in Motheo was held in Botshabelo and dealt with the "History of June 16" under the theme "Youth Action for Economic Freedom in our lifetime".
- The Thabong Community Centre in Welkom hosted the Lejweleputswa Memorial Lecture that focused on the life of the late Tankiso Mofokeng, the former Youth Development Officer of the Matjhabeng Local Municipality.

Provincial Memorial Lecture and launch of loveLife's Na Kanjani campaign

The Provincial Memorial Lecture is an annual programme that forms part of the June Month Programme. Every year a distinguished former youth leader is selected to lecture the youth on the history of June 16 and how it relates to the challenges faced by the youth at the

moment. Mr. Amie Molelekwa, the former chairperson of the South African Youth Council in the Free State addressed the 2011 Provincial Memorial Lecture.

The 2011 programme was hosted by the Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality and as a result the Executive Mayor; Honourable Thabo Manyoni addressed the youth. The Department of the Premier, the NYDA and loveLife partnered in this event which also saw the launch of loveLife's "Na Kanjani"-campaign.

The "Na kanjani" Campaign is a programme of loveLife and it is aimed at further entrenching its strategy for reducing risky behaviour among young people. It urges young people to persevere in making those small moves to create a better future and builds on loveLife's youth development approach to fighting HIV.

Proud to Serve Campaign

The National Youth Service (NYS) programme is a government programme championed by the President and Premiers in provinces to encourage youth to contribute positively to societal development, whilst simultaneously acquiring valuable skills that contribute to their own holistic development. The programme offers structured learning for youth on programmes that contribute their time and energy in community development. The Proud to Serve Campaign is a sub-programme of the National Youth Service programme and seeks to affirm the notion of youth giving back to society and instilling national pride and commitment to the values of Ubuntu and Letsema as effective communal development practices and models.

The programme took place in Smithfield in the Xhariep District. 100 volunteers were recruited to rehabilitate a Children's Recreational Park. New playground facilities were erected. The play facilities include park chairs, swings, slides, jumbo jungle gyms and see-saws. Grass was planted and a devils fork fence was erected.

The South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI), through the Free State Botanical Gardens, supported this project with the provision of trees, shrubs, creepers, flowers and other plants for the park,

Winter Youth Camp

The 2011 Winter Youth Camp took place from 26 June to 02 July 2011 at the Demalachite Holiday Resort in Parys. The camp was attended by 47 students representing various schools across the Province between grades 10 to 12 who were selected by the Department of Education. A Green Olympiad was prepared by the Environmental Section of the Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs in conjunction with the Youth Affairs Management Office. This was handed over to the Department of Education to facilitate that the qualifying learners of the selected schools per district write the Olympiad. The Department of Education facilitated the Olympiad and selected the best candidates to attend the Winter Youth Camp.

The aim of the camp was to address the issues of shared common history and responsible citizenship amongst the youth of the Province. The overall objectives of the camp were to instil positive values, positive identity, commitment to learning, empowerment, constructive use of time and breaking of racial barriers amongst the youth.

Other Activities

Other activities that formed part of Youth Month included;

- A Youth Day Fun Run took place on 16 June at the Tsoseletso High School
- 1 000 Youth of the Free State attended the Youth Day Debate. The debate topic was Youth Economic Empowerment and participation through Nationalisation of mines and other key industries.
- A Youth Unemployment Outreach programme was facilitated in Vrede (Phumelela Local Municipality), Viljoenskroon (Moghaka Local Municipality), Phuthaditjhaba (Maluti-a-Phofung Local Municipality), Verkeerdevlei, Wepener, Heilbron and Odendalsrus.
- A Substance Abuse Awareness campaign was facilitated in Denysville, Bethulie and Ventersburg.
- A Culture of Reading programme was presented in Bothaville, Hoopstad, Kestell, Gariep Dam, Bethlehem, Ladybrand, Zastron, Frankfort, Thaba Nchu and Sasolburg.
- A HIV Counselling and Testing (HCT)-campaign was facilitated in the towns of Lindley, Fouriesburg, Cornelia and Bethulie as well as Koffiefontein and Wesselsbron.
- A fine arts exhibition was held at the Mangaung Regional Hall. The Exhibition featured the following art genres painting, crafts; pottery; and sculpting and photography.
- The Free State Education MEC, Tate Makgoe addressed 200 grade nine learners from rural areas during the English, Mathematics, Natural Sciences, Technology and Accounting (EMSTA) programme that took place on 30 June 2011. The purpose was to encourage learners to choose EMSTA subjects and to demystify these subjects enabling learners to study science in higher institutions. Identified learners came from the Motheo and Lejweleputswa districts and were selected from 13 schools and are the second cohorts that took part in this programme.
- The Department of Cooperative Governance, Traditional Affairs and Human Settlements implemented the Free State Youth at Work programme. The multipurpose programme aims to meet government's objectives for youth development through various integrated programmes that target training and skills development towards employment. 60 youths have been identified in Winburg for this purpose. They will be trained in construction and given an opportunity to work on some of the construction projects targeted at building houses for the women who participated in the 1956 Women's March against pass laws. Other stakeholders in the programme is the National Youth Development Agency

(NYDA), the Department of Trade And Industry (DTI) and the Free State Department of Social Development.

- The Department of Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation hosted the first ever Provincial Disability Games from 3 to 5 June 2011 in Sasolburg with 679 participants representing various sporting codes.
- The Nala Local Municipality and the South African Police Service organized a successful youth *imbizo* on 28 June 2011. The aim of the Youth Imbizo which was preceded by crime prevention operation and door to door campaign was mainly to enhance the fight against crime, reduce the abuse of substances such as alcohol and drugs and also to promote positive values among the youth of the Bothaville which is infested by high-profile gangsterism.
- The Department of Social Development led preparations for the closing event of Youth Month that was held in Botshabelo. The event was aimed at providing information and raising public awareness on programmes aimed at benefitting, mobilizing and engaging youth as well as opportunities geared towards youth development that are available in government departments. Stakeholders such as the Department of Social Development, the Department of Health, South African National Defence Force, National Youth Development Agency, Ndisa Finance, Central University of Technology, University of Free State, Department of Home Affairs, and the Department of Rural Development also participated in the event.