

THE WEEKLY

WARM WINTER FOR MELODING CHILDREN

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Warming up winter ... The Executive Mayor of the Matjhabeng Local Municipality, Sebzile Ngangelizwe, helps the Muslim Community of Virginia with their annual blanket donation

Sunday, 27 May felt like Christmas to 165 children from Meloding in Virginia when the Muslim Community in the area donated 210 blankets to needy schoolchildren. The Matjhabeng Local Municipality also threw its support behind the project.

“This is a very important project that the Matjhabeng Local Municipality has admired and would love to become a part of,” said the Executive Mayor of the Matjhabeng Local Municipality, Sebzile Ngangelizwe.

This is the fourth year the Muslim Community has been bringing warmth to the needy in the Meloding community with their Operation Winter Warmth project. This year they invited the Executive Mayor to be a part of the distribution of the blankets to the community.

“We as government have been very impressed at the manner the Muslims and other foreigners have integrated themselves within their respective communities in South Africa. “As foreigners your first priority has been to learn as much of the country in order to fit in sufficiently, which you have successfully done. Now I believe the time has come for us to sit down together and learn some of your ways in business,” Ngangelizwe said.

He said the unemployment rate in South Africa increases every year, partly because South Africans have not been taught how to create income for themselves in order to survive.

“Approximately 90 percent of our community is job seekers, not job creators. We need to come together, government and the Muslim Communities, in order to teach the different communities in South Africa to see opportunities for job creation.”

The Muslim Community in Virginia, under the Al-Imdaad Foundation, approached 11 primary schools in Meloding to help them identify 15 underprivileged pupils who will be receiving the blankets. This year 210 blankets will be distributed, from the previous year’s 200 blankets. A further 45 blankets were distributed to a needy organisation of the Executive Mayor’s choosing. The schools are Boitekong, Tikwe, Mamello, Marematlou, Meloding, Dieketseng, Phahamisanang, Ikaheng, Reatlehile, Boase, and Harmony Primary School.

“One of the most important pillars of Islam is charity or Zakat. All things belong to God, and wealth is therefore held by human beings in trust. “We set aside a portion of our possessions for those in need, and like the pruning of plants, this cutting back balances and encourages new growth,” Ziyaad Bahadur, the chairperson of the Muslim Community said. The Muslim Community in the area consists of 25 families who donated money to buy the blankets with.

“We are happy that the project has touched so many lives in such a short time. We also appreciate the interest in our community by the Matjhabeng Local Municipality and we are looking forward to working with them in the future,” Bahadur added.

The principals from the 11 schools that were chosen to participate in this year’s Operation Winter Warmth project were very pleased. “This is a blessing for children who are really in need. As a school there is just so much that we can do, but we deal with the poorest of the poor on a daily basis,” said Nongaliphi Leepo, the principal of Boitekong Primary School.

She said they have identified some 120 vulnerable children in their school who need help during the winter, but this project has already made a huge difference. “We are very impressed by the Muslim Community’s initiative to take care of the community they have adopted as their second home. “Like the Matjhabeng Local Municipality we would like to work together with them in order to make this project bigger and better next year,” Leepo added.

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