



Press Release
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Hundreds of Southern Sun employees volunteer at Mandela Day community projects

As the nation honoured the legacy of Nelson Mandela on July 18th, hundreds of Southern Sun employees went out into their local communities to volunteer at the many projects that are regularly supported by the group's more than 90 hotels and resorts in South Africa, Africa, Seychelles and the Middle East. Heeding the call to *clean, plant, feed and sustain*, Southern Sun Volunteers took action in the spirit of the Mandela Day theme for 2023: Climate, Food and Solidarity – #ItIsInYourHands.

In a significant display of support for their local communities, a total of 565 Southern Sun employees volunteered at more than 50 different causes in South Africa, spending a cumulative total of 630 hours in volunteer efforts that ranged from packing meals, cleaning streets and beaches, planting food gardens and trees, painting and repairing creches, schools and animal shelters, hosting soup kitchens, and providing meals, linen and other essentials to shelters, clinics and homes for children, the displaced, and the elderly.

“Our hotel teams are active in their communities throughout the year, but particularly during Mandela month, when we join the rest of the nation in a collective effort to bring about positive change. While our support extends to causes working in the areas of health, welfare and education, being in the hospitality industry, we are particularly aware of the need to alleviate hunger and help communities become self-sustaining. When we conducted our Mandela month round-up for the group, this was the overarching theme among our volunteer efforts this year, and we hope to have made a positive contribution to those who really need it,” said Southern Sun’s Candy Tothill, who heads up corporate affairs and marketing for the group.

By way of example, Southern Sun’s Sandton Convention Centre once again supplied the venue for Rise Against Hunger’s Johannesburg food packing event on Friday, 14 July 2023. In addition, among hundreds of other volunteers, 44 Southern Sun Volunteers prepped, weighed and sealed 47 boxes comprising 1,700 nourishing meals as part of 168,000 meals packed for distribution to under-resourced school children in the province. Meanwhile, in KZN, 18 volunteers from Cabana Beach Resort and uMhlanga Sands Resort joined the movement and packed 25 boxes consisting of 900 meals to help the organisation meet its national target of providing 2 million meals by the end of July.

Being the leading hospitality group in Southern Africa, a large portion of Southern Sun’s workforce comprises food and beverage professionals and chefs, and together with chefs throughout the industry, Southern Sun chefs supported the NPC, Chefs With Compassion, which was established by the South African Chefs Association (‘SACA’) President James Khosa, who is also the Executive Chef at

Southern Sun's five star Sandton Sun hotel. Tohill explains: "Hotels provide 'rescued food' to the Chefs With Compassion Sharehouse and this is delivered to hubs where volunteer chefs cook compassionately for their communities. We were pleased to have participated in this year's Chefs with Compassion #67000litres Mandela Day campaign, which successfully provided over 400,000 under-resourced people around the country with a nourishing cup or bowl of soup on Mandela Day."

In keeping with the focus on hunger alleviation, 40 volunteers from Southern Sun The Cullinan, Southern Sun Waterfront, Southern Sun Newlands, SunSquare Gardens and SunSquare & StayEasy City Bowl joined 6,700 other volunteers at Ladles of Love to prepare food and needed items for children in Early Childhood Development Centres in impoverished communities. In Hermanus, Arabella Hotel, Golf & Spa hosted a soup station at the Kleinmond community centre, providing a warm meal to 100 displaced people; and near Cape Town, StayEasy Century City contributed 150 meal packs to the Melkbos Care Centre, providing much-needed relief to the hungry.

In the Eastern Cape, Garden Court King's Beach held an appreciation high tea at the hotel for 60 caregivers from local old age homes and childcare centres and provided catering for their residents. Southern Sun The Marine provided meals and party packs to 40 children at the One Life Child Centre in Walmer and also donated stationery packs. Meanwhile, the nearby Garden Court East London extended their support to the Jika Uluntu Community Centre, where they not only provided hot dogs and essential care items but also donated linen to 75 children from under-resourced backgrounds.

In KZN on Durban's Golden Mile, The Edward hosted children from Durban's South Beach Shelter at a party in their park, serving hot dogs, chips, popcorn, sweets, and cooldrinks while gifting each child a special present to brighten their day. Further inland, volunteers from Drakensberg Sun Resort made a positive impact on the Mfolozi Creche and Wazamokuhle School for the disabled, helping with repairs to the building, restoring the vegetable garden, and donating groceries. They also provided linen for the hostel and donated and planted seedlings in a bid to assist with food security.

At the Vaal, the Riverside Sun team extended their support to Vukuzenzele Old Age Home by hosting lunch for 100 elderly residents and providing them with a nourishing meal in the company of others; while in Pretoria, Garden Court Hatfield supported Hatfield Christian Church by sorting donations at their warehouse ensuring effective distribution, and donated linen to those in need. The hotel also teamed up with a local supplier, CS Continental Market CC, and served 100 hotdog meals to displaced people in Arcadia.

Further assisting displaced people, in Gauteng, 54 on Bath and Southern Sun Rosebank supported the Immaculata Shelter for the homeless, preparing 50 backpacks filled with towels, hygiene products and daily essentials for the shelter's beneficiaries who are also provided with skills training and help with documentation to help them get back on their feet with dignity; while Southern Sun Katherine Street donated groceries, 109 linen items and 20 litres of paint to Alexander Children's Home, reinforcing their commitment to creating a positive impact on the lives of children in need. Garden Court Milpark arranged a day visit to the Children of Fire home, a charity organisation for child burn victims, where the team provided meals for 25 children and donated linen to the centre.

In Mpumalanga, Southern Sun and StayEasy Mbombela supported their local SOS Village by sponsoring playground games and play sand, providing the children with an opportunity for fun and play. The staff at Pine Lake Resort and Sabi River Sun Resort collaborated by contributing to Sozama Day Care in Hazyview, providing essential maintenance, painting, cleaning and repair work to the centre. The children of the Matafeni community were the recipients of linen items and they were served nourishing bowls of soup prepared by Southern Sun Volunteers from Sun1 Nelspruit.

Southern Sun Cape Sun assisted Zonnebloem Old Age Home with maintenance and a heartwarming lunch for the residents; while Garden Court Victoria Junction showed their commitment to a cleaner environment by conducting a litter cleanup at Prestwich, Somerset, Ebenezer, and Main Street. Garden Court Mthatha made a significant impact on Thembalihle Children’s Home by undertaking various projects, including painting, ceiling repairs, and providing essential supplies; and in Plettenberg Bay, Beacon Island Resort partnered with the Bitou Rugby club to clean and replant the vegetable garden at the Protea Community Centre, also providing fleece blankets for the elderly.

While many more organisations benefitted from the time donated by Southern Sun people during Mandela month, these efforts will continue throughout the year, as the Southern Sun employee volunteer programme enables people employed by the group to actively give their time and expertise to those living in less fortunate circumstances.

“Through our volunteers programme, the people of Southern Sun demonstrate caring spirits – in big and small ways – by identifying needs and getting involved in initiatives that uplift the lives of others, and this is demonstrated no more powerfully, than during Mandela month each year,” concluded Tothill.



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Southern Sun is the leading hospitality group in Southern Africa with hotels in South Africa, Africa, the Seychelles and the Middle East. Southern Sun’s portfolio of brands includes award-winning luxury hotels such as 54 on Bath, Arabella Hotel, Golf & Spa, the Beverly Hills, Mount Grace Hotel & Spa and the Sandton Sun & Towers, as well as trusted economy offerings such as StayEasy and Sun1, well-known full-service brands such as Southern Sun Hotels, SunSquare and Garden Court, and a collection of resorts in idyllic settings. For more information, visit southern.sun.com, follow us on Twitter (@SouthernSunGrp), Instagram (@SouthernSunHotels), Facebook (Facebook/SouthernSunHotels) and LinkedIn (@Southern-Sun).



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