



Press Release – Tsogo Sun – 11/07/2016

Celebrating Arbour Week in Diepsloot

Approximately 200 Grade 4 learners at Muzomuhle Primary School in Diepsloot in Johannesburg were involved in a tunnel vegetable garden building project at their school on 6 September to celebrate Arbour Week. The vegetable tunnel will go a long way towards supplementing the feeding scheme run by the school and the Diepsloot SafeHub, which is situated on the school property and provides a safe environment and facilitated activities for more than 2 000 learners from Grades R to seven.

The veggie tunnel project is a Miss Earth South Africa initiative, in collaboration with Nedbank, which donated the vegetable garden, and is supported by Tsogo Sun, which is the official venue and accommodation partner to Miss Earth SA, as well as a partner in the Safe Hub together with AMANDLA EduFootball and the Oliver Kahn Foundation.

Miss Earth South Africa empowers 40 young women ambassadors each year through environmental education and community-driven programmes to reduce the destructive impact on our natural heritage. Says Ella Bella Leite, Director of Miss Earth SA, “This year Miss Earth’s theme has been concentrated on the reduction of waste. Through the #WasteStopsWithMe campaign we’ve educated, helped to change behaviour, and created awareness about the crisis we are facing in waste management. We’re in need of a complete change of behaviour, with everyone doing more to reduce waste in the form of household and corporate waste, food waste, and energy and water waste. We all need to play our part.”

The learners, together with Miss Earth ambassadors, the Tsogo Sun Volunteers and project facilitators, set up the vegetable garden within the tunnel, filling up black bags with soil, planting seedlings, and placing them in the 7X3m tunnel. Vegetable tunnels protect vegetables from pests and harsh climatic conditions, while also saving up to 80% of water that would have otherwise been used in normal open-air gardening. The day’s activities also included an educational session by the Miss Earth SA organisation with the grade 3, 4 and 5 learners at the school being educated on the role they can play in minimising pollution and waste.

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Candy Tohill, Tsogo Sun’s GM of Corporate Affairs, says the group is proud to be a part of this initiative. “This project is but one of the many we undertake in partnership with the Miss Earth SA Leadership Programme as part of our efforts to create awareness about the environmental issues facing our modern-day society. Instead of planting trees in Diepsloot this Arbour Week, we opted to install vegetable tunnels to help alleviate hunger and malnutrition in this vulnerable community, while also educating the learners on reducing waste and protecting the environment. Tsogo Sun has a strong environmental sustainability focus within our business strategy and we’re committed to growing awareness about practical environmental interventions so that each individual can take responsibility for their roles in reducing negative impact. Through the effective Miss Earth SA leadership programme, which we wholeheartedly support through a long term partnership, our efforts are extended and multiplied so that we can reach more communities.”

Tsogo Sun has been actively working with the Diepsloot community for the last four years, running programmes for young people that include life skills and job readiness training delivered through the group’s arts, sports and chess programmes, as well as environmental projects that address energy, water and waste education. “Diepsloot is situated close to Montecasino and Tsogo Sun head office, and many of our employees are local residents. We are intent on playing an active role in communities such as this one, which is in close proximity to our operations and where the quality of the infrastructure impacts on the lives our people. Through our various citizenship programmes that address the needs of the community, entrepreneurs and the environment, we hope to continue to make a measurable difference in people’s lives,” says Tohill.

Mr JR Ramarumo, Principal of Muzomuhle Primary, says, “The new vegetable tunnel promises to deliver both tangible and intangible benefits, providing the youth of Diepsloot with living proof of how investing time, energy and resources today, while at the same time minimising your impact on the environment you are dependent on for sustenance, will bear fruit – or in this case vegetables – in the future.”

Tsogo Sun’s portfolio includes over 90 hotels and 14 casino and entertainment destinations throughout South Africa, Africa, the Seychelles and Abu Dhabi. Let's keep in touch, follow Tsogo Sun on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) @TsogoSun or like us on [Facebook](#).

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