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kouga wind farm



TEAM TALK: Kouga Wind Farm CEO Lukhanyo Ndube (second from right) and schoolchildren teamed up to clean up the Umzamowethu area as part of the Department of Energy's Learners' Focus Week in July. Photo: Supplied

Team Talk

In June, Kouga Wind Farm (KWF) hosted 150 maths and science pupils in Grades 11 and 12 as part of the Department of Energy Learners' Focus Week programme.

KWF chief executive Lukhanyo Ndube addressed the senior pupils about the exciting world of wind farming and the many career opportunities available in the renewable energy sector.

These ranged across the research and development phase; the design, manufacturing and construction phase; the operation and maintenance phase; through to the decommissioning phase at the end of each project's lifespan.

"The renewable energy sector also needs entrepreneurs in order to improve technology and innovation in the industry," he said.

Ndube and the learners then joined hands with local Sandwater Primary

pupils for an environmental cleanup of the streets and open spaces around their Umzamowethu community.

Entitled "Team Up to Clean Up", the initiative aimed to demonstrate the importance of caring for the environment and their responsibility to remove litter, while instilling a sense of pride in their community among the youth.

The children, dressed in bright red sponsored T-shirts, collected numerous bags of rubbish and saw the real difference their efforts made.

It was not all hard work however, with educational workshops and fun games

and activities designed to encourage them to take responsibility for keeping their areas clean. The clean-up groups created beautiful artworks from recycled rubbish they had collected and were rewarded with prizes for their efforts. A delicious meal rounded off their eco-experience.

"Finding the right projects to fund is vital in order to enable Kouga Wind Farm to work towards creating a sustainable legacy in this region," said Ndube.

"By teaching our youth to understand the benefits of clean energy and caring for our environment, we are protecting the future of our country."

He said a key focus for Kouga Wind Farm was uplifting the communities in which it was involved. To date the wind farm has invested in health, childcare, food security, education, sport, transport and infrastructure development in various communities within a 50km radius of its operations.

Licensed to drive

In a bid to improve skills development in the Sea Vista and Umzamowethu communities, Kouga Wind Farm has introduced a driver's licence training programme.

Some 39 community members are undergoing the training this year, including three bird and bat monitors at the wind farm, who were recently awarded their code 10 licences. The code 10, or C1, licences will allow them to drive heavy vehicles such as buses, goods vehicles and minibus taxis.

One of the most sought-after skills by employers in the region is the ability to operate a vehicle safely and legally. By equipping community members with the essential skills, backed up by a valid driver's licence, the wind farm is helping to improve their employability.

The training includes preparing participants to pass the gruelling learner's licence exam and providing practical driving instruction ahead of the driver's licence test.



Kouga Wind Farm has hit the right note with promising young musicians by donating more than 40 instruments to the Boys' Brigade Kouga Battalion marching band.

The Boys' Brigade is a youth organisation that has been operating in South Africa since 1889. The Kouga Battalion was established four years ago and has over 350 members.

Its aim is to keep boys between the ages of six and 18 years off the streets and away from the dangers of drugs and gangsterism by offering alternative

programmes that teach life skills and positive values.

Kouga Wind Farm supported this initiative by helping interested members to develop their musical talents.

The wind farm purchased 15 trumpets, 15 trombones, two tubas, six snare drums and two sets of marching cymbals to add to the brigade's existing instruments.

KWF chief financial officer Wendy Parsons said the wind farm

was very happy to help the boys use their energies in a constructive manner.

"Those who do well could end up pursuing music as a career one day," said Parsons.

The Kouga Battalion, which is based in Humansdorp, has committed to expanding its reach to three more communities in the area.



Boys' Brigade hits right note

Hospice gets new wheels



More terminally ill patients will get the care they so desperately need following the sponsorship of two off-road vehicles for St Francis Hospice Kouga.

Hospice nursing staff have provided a vital community service for the past 18 years, visiting patients in their homes, training caregivers and counselling families traumatised by their loved one's suffering.

Hospice does not charge patients who cannot afford it and relies mainly on donations from the private sector as it gets limited state assistance.

To do their jobs effectively, the nurses need reliable vehicles that can handle bad roads in remote areas. Kouga Wind Farm saw their need and sponsored two Ford EcoSport vehicles.

With many of the patients too sick to leave their beds, the wind farm also helped hospice to purchase a year's supply of adult diapers.

A new computer was delivered to the administration office plus two air-conditioning units for the storage room to ensure that patient medicines are kept at the correct temperature during hot Humansdorp summers.

WAITING FACILITY: Kouga Wind Farm has installed two converted shipping containers, which will serve as a waiting room and consulting facility when the mobile clinic visits Umzamowethu. The facility also features an ablution unit and ramp access for disabled patients. It was officially handed over to the Department of Health in April.



Going solar



More than a year has passed since Kouga Wind Farm provided Sandwater Primary School in Umzamowethu with a solar-powered computer lab.

The lab, housed in a shipping container on the school grounds and with solar panels mounted on the roof, boasts 21 computers.

Shanda van Rooyen, a teacher involved with the project, says it has changed pupils' lives.

"Every pupil from Grade 4 to 7 visits the computer lab once a week for an hour. The younger children from Grades 1 to 3 go on an ad-hoc basis, to familiarise themselves with the computers and also to do some maths practice using one of the programmes," she said.

All the pupils now know the basics of operating a computer, which will stand them in good stead in their schooling careers. Older pupils are taught more advanced programmes, such as Powerpoint, while younger pupils are taught to use everyday computer programmes like Microsoft Word.

"They also get time to play games that develop their perceptual skills, as these are often lacking with our children," said Van Rooyen.

An interesting additional benefit of the computer lab is that it recently led to the donation of an Afrikaans spelling programme for the pupils, said Van Rooyen, adding: "I believe this will benefit them tremendously."

The Humansdorp crèche, which is 15km from Kouga Wind Farm, was razed in a fire three years ago and has been operating from a neighbouring garage and temporary structure ever since. There are not enough classrooms and the children sometimes play in the street.

Once rebuilt, Nkqubela will provide classrooms and a secure playground for 120 children between the ages of three and six. The vision is for it to become a leading centre for Early Childhood Development in the Kouga region.

Over the next few months, the original site will be cleared, the abandoned structure renovated and security fencing replaced, creating a number of temporary jobs in the process.

According to KWF chief financial officer Wendy Parsons, the crèche could make a positive difference in the lives of more than 2 400 children over the next 20 years.

“What we do for them today will determine what kind of adults they become tomorrow – educated people who can help to uplift their community,” said Parsons.

A good start for kids

Pre-schoolers in KwaNomzamo will get a better start to their education with the rebuild of Nkqubela Crèche.



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KWF keeps moms and babies healthy

The Healthy Mom & Baby Clinic in Jeffreys Bay is one of several local clinics that are benefiting from Kouga Wind Farm’s long-term plan to support healthcare services in the region.

The clinic, which is located in St Francis Street, is funded and operated

by a private medical trust and provides free pre- and postnatal care to pregnant women. This medical facility offers a range of services for expectant mothers including delivering their babies and educating new moms on infant care and nutrition.

For young women in crisis, teenage pregnancy support groups are being established, which will offer weekly meetings, with home visits and practical support.

The clinic itself is also getting a bright new look, as the wind farm contributes to repair and maintenance work plus fresh signage, website, logo and stationery.

Find The Healthy Mom and Baby Clinic on Facebook or visit www.hmbc.co.za

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Kouga Wind Farm has provided critical medical equipment such as a foetal heart monitor, electric blood pressure unit, portable ultrasound unit and stethoscope to help staff monitor their patients’ health.

In addition, the wind farm is sponsoring monthly classes on topics such as preparing for pregnancy, birth and parenthood, as well as breastfeeding, nutrition and childhood development. Quarterly school visits to provide sex education and share information on preventing pregnancy are also planned.

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