

MEC Pillay pays a special visit to Amandawe Junior Primary School

Report by Vusi Shabalala and pictures by Sane Mbhense

On Tuesday the 1st of March 2016 MEC for Human Settlements and Public Works, Mr Ravigasen Ranganathan Pillay MPL paid his special visit to Amandawe Junior Primary School with a sole purpose to handing out school uniform to approximately 144 needy beneficiary pupils.

Amandawe Junior Primary School is a public school established in 1940 with a vision to providing quality education for the young by developing them mentally, spiritually, physically and socially to enable them to actualise their potential and also help them to promote a healthy environment in their society. The school is situated within the Dududu road which is located in Freeland Park of Scottburgh alongside the Amanzimtoti and Port Edward, on the south coast route of KwaZulu-Natal. It is a registered school that currently accommodates an approximately 1150 number of learners. Learners are taught through study grades that range from Grade R to Grade 4. It should be noted that due to various reasons and factors, the admission number gradually increase on annual basis.



Mrs Yvonne Nyuswa the Amandawe Junior Primary School principal as she delivered her presentation to the gathering

In supporting government's women empowerment programme, Amandawe Junior Primary boasts the appointment and leadership of Mrs Yvonne Nyuswa, who is the principal with a total staff complement of 34 (32 female educators, one administrative officer and a security official). The school offers the intermediate phase subjects to all pupils registered for the academic year 2016. Subjects include isiZulu; English; Maths and Life Skills.

Mrs Nyuswa could not hide her exuberant hilarity as she welcomed the ministerial team to Amandawe. Amongst other guests present was the Councillor – Honourable Siyabonga Khwela who is the Mayor for Umndoni Local Municipality, Councillor Oscar Zama, Mr Reddy, the District Manager for KZN Department of Education, Mr JN Hlophe the principal for Shonkweni Combined Primary School and Mr Khumalo the school principal for KwaHluzingqondo High School and amongst representatives from respective School Governing Bodies, were Mrs Gugu Mhlongo and Mr Bhengu.



MEC Pillay as he delivered his keynote address

Delivering his keynote address to the school management and children, Mr Pillay emphasised on the benefits that education holds for the children. It is true that education remains at the centre of man in existence, therefore, his approach of increasing the culture of *'giving'* will cognitively improve school performance, raise the subject abilities, sharpens thinking and attention skills of children, reduce special education placement and lower school drop-out rates. Socially and morally it will improve and strengthen interaction within peers, decrease problem behaviour, encourage more exploratory behaviour and help adjustment to the demands of formal schooling. Lastly, the long term positive results of giving to children is to the achievement of better academic outcomes for the children and the province.

It has been noted with interest that MEC Pillay has a golden heart at hand. He has for the past period as Member of the Executive Council in the current provincial administration shown his love, care and goodwill towards the betterment of children's lives through various initiatives. To mention but a few schools that he has visited in the past are Mariathal Combined in iXopo, Mzwangedwa High in KwaMaphumulo, eNhlanhleni

Combined, Ntwasahlobo High and Singisi Comprehensive. The outreach program has afforded Mr Pillay the opportunity to be involved in community service projects on a regular basis through various intervals, with projects that seek to reach out to the needy and make a difference to changing peoples' lives. Apart from being a prominent political office bearer, caring for the needy children has been one of Mr Pillay's '*divine-like*' purpose that truly resembles his inborn character.



A Guard of Honour: Pupils from Amandawe Junior Primary welcoming MEC Pillay (*front*) and Umndoni Local Municipality Mayor Cllr Siyabonga Khwela (*behind*) with Mrs Nyuswa (*far left*) observing.

The notion and reality is that doing good things such as '*giving*' always makes people happy. Due to common experiences, researchers also postulate that the acts of goodness have an even greater '*happiness effect*', on either the '*giver*' and or the '*recipient*'. It is evident today that the power of reaching out is continuously optimising and freshens Ravi's expertise and increase his visibility as his efforts continue to changing the lives of school children. The more he does this the further he is reminded that his services are valued and needed. His initiatives have revealed an integral part of his professional identity. Although an outreach programme can assist filling of unmet needs in the community and give an individual such as Ravi a fresh perspective on his practice, some may be sceptical about adding extra work to their already busy lives. However, it is quite important to understand the range of benefits such initiatives can offer.

One has to commend MEC Pillay in all these outstanding efforts he has ventured into. We always talk about '*thinking outside the box*' but sometimes our '*offices*' are our boxes and we need to look outside of them and become a part of the communities where we live and serve. At some instances community outreach involvement is like a seed that is planted

and nurtured by other happenings. Together those events can dramatically change some peoples' lives.