

# Public Works Umzinyathi District Office raising the bar for Nelson Mandela International Day...Vusi

*Shabalala reports*

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The 18<sup>th</sup> of July marks a day to remember for management and personnel of Umzinyathi District Office. As the whole world celebrates the birthday of a global icon, the former first democratically elected President of South Africa, Mr Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Public Works' Umzinyathi District Office under the leadership and management of Mrs NI Mbatha raised the bar in extending hope to the people of Umziyathi.



**The Umzinyathi District Manager: Ms Ntokozo Mbatha had some time for a brief with the "Communication Team" on the event**



**This is how the KZN Public Works' Umzinyathi District Office looks**

It is like a dream come true for the family of Mr Mandla Ndlovu who hails from Ibusi, a closer area to Wasbank. This is an area set in the heart of the KwaZulu-Natal Battlefields route. An area that derives from the historical peak of Indumeni Mountain

that submerges within and around the significant towns of Glencoe and Dundee. This area is also equidistant from both Durban and Johannesburg respectively.

Umzinyathi District spearheaded the Provincial "*Sukuma Sakhe*" campaign and the strides that were displayed by the district are profound in that the management and personnel took it upon themselves in bringing about hope to the people of Umzinyathi by setting and raising a bar of building a fully furnished house that would seek to cuddle the Ndlovu family together, notwithstanding to coincide this momentous occasion by celebrating Mr Mandela's birthday in an unforgettable style.



**Above: Mr Mandla Ndlovu, the man behind the story, whom the Umzinyathi District office management and personnel thought it befitting to provide for. He hails from Ibusi in Wasbank around Dundee**

Let us unfold the untold story of this magnitude. It was as far back as three years 2010 when the department's District Office in collaboration with the Midlands Regional Office Manager Mr Radebe had the zeal and zest full of vim and verve to look around the district in identifying one but amongst the worst poorer citizen within the area who after all the odds the family of Ndlovu was identified as the recipients of this everlasting gift.

When asked about the gifts he received today, he simply had a brief sigh and in a soft spoken voice echoed that “I am so much overjoyed in what the management and staff from Public Works have done for me and my children, I am thankful indeed.” He expressed. Mr Ndlovu will have precious time to spend his life with his two children, Mbuyiseni a boy and Nonhlanhla, a girl. Both children are 27 and 25 years of age respectively with Mbuyiseni being the eldest. It is also a sad note that the two children were not present at the ceremony when their father was presented with such a lifetime gift.



**This is how Mr Ndlovu's house looked like before.**



**A completely built house as it looks today**

It did not end here as the day's proceedings unfolded, two “Good Samaritans” namely Ms Petro Olivier and Mr Ernst de Bruyn of the Hands of Hope, a social responsibility and charity organisation located within the Glencoe and Dundee together with Public Works' staff and other community members from various donor sectors donated commodities in a form groceries and vegetables. What a positive social structure this municipality embraces.

Due to the nature of the circumstances of this event, the proceedings did not go as planned. There had been a slight delay in fulfilling the programme as scheduled due to fact those most political big-wigs who were assigned to grace all the Nelson Mandela International Day celebrations around Dundee, Glencoe and Wasbank had to ensure that all areas are well graced as mandated and thus the delay in fulfilling the programme schedule.



**Time to give: Mr Ndlovu with Public Works' staff, representatives from Hands of Hope as well as officials from other government departments and community organisations.**

It became very clear that as the day progresses, people from around the surrounding areas flogged to Mr Ndlovu's home, with a view at wishing him all of the best of luck for his gift. It should be mentioned that the day in question was celebrated worldwide and Wasbank was part of the order.



**A caucus meeting in progress: Seen here is Mayor Mahaye (left), Councillor Dlamini (centre) and Mr Hadebe, Regional Manager: Midlands Region (right)**

The Mayoral entourage of Endumeni Municipality, led by the Mayor himself, Honorable Mr Thulani Mahaye arrived together with Local Councillor Dlamini at approximately 15:30 where some of the guests were about to lose hope but the eagerness and status of the occasion dashed all doubts from those who were sceptical of staying at little longer. Upon his arrival, the event kicked on and as part of protocol, formal proceedings were followed according to programme.



**Ms Thandi Sibalukhulu, Local Chairperson for War Room Ward One held the ropes as Programme Director**

The day's programme was handled by Ms Thandi Sibalukhulu, who serves as Local Chairperson for War Room Wad One. The order of the event took shape with the first speech on the purpose of the event by Ms Nyadeni, a local political echelon of Wasbank and Dundee areas, who elaborated in detail on the purpose of the day.

Ms Nyandeni also had an opportunity to introduce all key guests such as Ms Nxele, Head of Ministry in the Office of the Premier and Ms Mazibuko from Department of Social Development in Dundee. The second speaker to be introduced was the local Councillor Mr Dlamini extended words of welcome for all guests to the Wasbank and nearby areas. Ms NI Mbatha, District Manager for Umzinyathi District Office gave a very warm and heartfelt message of appreciation to the local political leadership who extensively shown their political willingness to respond to the peoples'

outcries. She was very inspirational in that the planning of the project such as the one celebrated was based on a mutual team effort between herself, the Regional Manager for Midlands Region, Mr Wiseman Gcina Hadebe and the entire personnel at Umzinyathi District office. It should be mentioned that this initiative and gesture was identified as far back as 2011. "I must mention that there are still more projects similar to this that we will deliver on soon" she confidently remarked. She repeatedly thanked her staff members for their patriotism in dealing with issues that touch the lives of others and that sense of giving to the needy. The fact that her tasks came as *"nothing-to-worry-about"* was because she maintained positive working relations with her leader, Mr Gcina Hadebe, Midlands Regional Manager.



**Ms Mbatha, Umzinyzthi District Manager gave a very eloquent but touching speech as she praised all employees and other departments for making the event a success. All that is good always ends well.**

The Endumeni Municipality mayor, Honorable Mr Thulani Mahaye made a concise and long awaited keynote address that equally responded to the local community members' concerns. "The last time we visited this area, we as government made a commitment to you that as we have experienced some problems on some major basic things that you need like water, you can today be rest assured as you can see that the water project is currently underway' stressed Mr Mahaye. He further remarked, "We will continue our level best to do what is good for the of Wasbank." His



speech was equally indicative and a true reflection of being a committed Government that seeks to serve the needy and poor. “As you can all see that there is still no electricity in the area” he acceded, “that will be a thing of the past because the matter is at this stage receiving attention” he emphasised. The ululation from members of the Wasbank community and guests who were there showed excitement and appreciation. As a matter of fact, the mayor urged community members to keep that hope and faith in the Government of the day’s commitment of ensuring that peoples’ lives are improved for the better.

After all speeches were concluded, the real time, of home hand-over came to the fore. It was a moment of happiness and joy that no one could explain and tears that no one else could dry up. One could imagine what was grinding through Mandla Ndlovu’s mind because he felt short of words of happiness and as a seemingly looking introvert, he honestly seemed and felt very humble. The most touching aspect was the absence of his two children.



**Mayor of Endumeni Municipality, Mr Thulani Mahaye delivering his keynote address while Mr Hadebe looking on with deep and positive thoughts.**

The house was completely built from scratch by staff members of Umzinyathi District and for that matter labour manpower was provided for by Public Works’ District Office staff members taking into account other resources such as

transport and water, etc.; they also bought him other additional household items for use for the betterment of his life. A female neighbour made the moment more prestigious and lively as produced a new blanket over Mr Ndlovu and eventually covered him with the blanket as a sign of support and cuddling. This was a moment never to be seen again by anyone who was there.

The dignitaries continued to proffer words of support and well wishing to Mr Ndlovu and that in itself is “Ubuntu”. This moment was a signal to the end of the day’s programme and to that matter, Mr Gcina Hadebe, the Regional Manager for the Midlands Region was given the audacity to share with the delegates, guests, neighbours and community members his part of thanks. This was indeed a time that one could realise the importance of selflessness, caring, reinvigoration, self-evident, leading by example, responsibility and commitment. It would be appropriate to associate Mr Hadebe as a man of that stature. It is through his leadership style that such projects are realised within communities they serve notwithstanding the tremendous support he receives from management and staff.



**The Regional Manager for Midlands Region, Mr Wiseman Gcina Hadebe during a vote of thanks delivery speech. A man for all seasons indeed.**

In closing remarks, the KZN Public Works Umzinyathi District Office raised the bar in style during the celebration of the Nelson Mandela International Day. It has been observed that icons such as Nelson Mandela, the late Ghandi, the late Mother Theresa and the late Princess Diana amongst others saw life the other way round than any person could elucidate. It is in the make-up of an individual to love with the willingness for compassion, loving and giving.

We will dream positive and continue to realise our positive dreams. There is best yet to come.