

Launch of a crech in Cosmo City as part of the City's Early Development Programme

10 August 2011

Speech by the Executive Mayor of Johannesburg, Councillor Mpho Parks Tau, on the occasion of the launch of a crech in Cosmo City as part of the City's Early Development Programme – Johannesburg

Fellow Councillors and MMCs

My fellow residents

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Ladies and Gentlemen

Today is a very special day for the community of Cosmo City, and in particular the children; as we celebrate the launching of a brand new Early Childhood Development (ECD) facility.

The City of Joburg has prioritised Early Childhood Development as a 5-star programme that is aimed at addressing gender and generational inequality through the Championing of Rights and Opportunities for,

1. the development of children and
2. issues pertaining to the Health and Safety of women.

This comes as part of the City's Human Development Strategy aimed at addressing issues of poverty, inequality and social exclusion.

It is further in keeping with global and national trends for prioritising Early Childhood Development, evident in the agenda of the Millennium Development Goals as well as the National and provincial agendas on children.

The establishment of the Cosmo City Crèche is testimony to the City's commitment to invest in children. It is the City's firm belief that when these investments are made in the present, they will begin building suitable conditions for all children to prosper now and in the future. The solid foundation we are committed to creating will ensure that the number of dropouts in schools is eliminated and that children have prosperous school careers that ensure that they prosper in all aspects of their adult lives.

The City has, in the past four years established Early Child Development centres in Bramfischerville, Vlaktefontein Diepsloot and Pennyville; and it is envisaged that all these Early Child Development facilities, including this one in Cosmo City will be the gate keepers for making a case for Centres of Excellence where such holistic development of children will take place. This will by implication, have created 'safe spaces' for the children living in conditions of hardship.

Ladies and Gentlemen this Crèche will also include children of persons who are displaced and living in the streets and (street children of crèche going age).

This Crèche is envisaged that it will assist children to realise their full potential in the long-term and that it will provide a safety net for the children during the formative stages of their lives.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the following partners who have been very instrumental to the existence of the facility.

- Basil Read Developments which is responsible for the housing development in Cosmo City and has gone out of its way to engage in this outreach project.
- "Play With a Purpose" which implements the Play with a Purpose curriculum to train teachers to apply innovative educational programmes in impoverished pre-schools, to ensure that children are made school- ready. They will further be partnering with the City of Joburg in providing Early Child Development developmental programs as well as teacher training programmes, and strengthen a sense of community through local and regional/ global outreach programmes
- Education Africa- a for-no- profit organisation that counters poverty through education in Africa. Their Social Architecture Programme has to date established educational centres and 12 schools across the continent
- Schoolhouse South Africa, an inter disciplinary student- led-design-build initiative and research endeavour orchestrated by Cornell University Sustainable Design (CUSD), who have come up with this green and energy conserving structure that utilises locally sourced products such as sand bags made out of sand from the local area, therefore supporting the local economy. Local service providers have been used who produce the earth bags and the eco beam system that are used in the construction of the facility.

The product that we see in front of us attests to the fact that partnerships with business and civil society are critical elements in delivering quality services to our communities. We are therefore calling upon all other organisations, ECD Fora and ECD experts from government departments to come forward and join us in this task. We also call upon more business entities to form partnerships with the City to swell the ranks of those dedicated to quality Early Childhood Development service delivery to join us in this course.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the launch of this centre comes at a time when the City has embarked on the Growth and Development Strategy process, where we are calling on all communities, business and experts in different fields to have a conversation with us on issues which will accelerate economic growth and human development.

Fellow Citizens, we call on you to participate in the GDS process during the next 9 months, your participation in these engagements will help us to shape the vision of Johannesburg. There are nine different themes for each week which are:

- Liveable Cities
- Resource Sustainability
- Health and Poverty
- Governance
- Transport
- Community Safety
- Environment
- Economic Growth
- Smart City

Ladies and Gentlemen, there will be town hall meetings every week in community halls where communities will be given an opportunity to engage with the contents of the GDS. We call on you to interrogate the documents and discussions during the 9 weeks period and make them your own.

Programme Director, this facility is part of the GDS vision and our wish is that this new facility will support community development and build social inclusion as well as to become a building ground for future leaders.

This is in line with the City's effort to bring services to the people and continuous improvement and a better live for the community.

I would like to urge the community of Cosmo City to take ownership of this facility and ensure that it is not vandalised.

Thank you