

River Park Library Launch

22 October 2009

Speech by the Executive Mayor of Johannesburg, Councillor Amos Masondo, on the occasion of the official opening of the River Park Library, East of Alexandra, Alexandra – Johannesburg

Programme Director

Madam Speaker: Clr Nkele Ntingane

Chief Whip of Council: Clr Nonceba Molwele

Members of the Mayoral Committee

Fellow Councillors

City Manager: Mr Mavela Dlamini

Managers and Officials of Council

The Community of Greater Alexandra Township

The Media

Programme Director, let me begin by expressing my appreciation for this opportunity to say a few words at this important occasion –the opening of the River Park Library.

According to the Institutional Management and Governance Planning (Western Cape Education Department) adult illiteracy level is estimated to be 3.3 million in South Africa.

Reading is important; it is a means of language acquisition, of communication and of sharing information and ideas.

This library - the River Park Library echoes the eighth clause of the Freedom Charter that states "The doors of learning and culture shall be opened", all the cultural treasures of mankind shall be open to all, by free exchange of books, ideas and contact with other lands".

We have built this library at the cost of R R4, 495,460 as part of the Human Development Strategy of 2006, which focuses on the following:

To build prospects for social inclusion amongst all Johannesburg communities;

To address inequalities through the championing of rights and opportunities, with special focus on women and children;and

To improve access by poor and vulnerable households to library and information services.

Programme Director, the River Park library already has four hundred and sixty nine (469) registered members and the youngest member is four years old. This library takes part in all the City's library programmes such as Ready to Read, the Story Skirmish and the Battle of the Books.

The library also offers Family Literacy and career guidance. The Unit has visited nine (9) primary schools, six (6) high schools and twelve (12) Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres and to urge them to make use of the library.

This library boasts a collection of 18, 959 books. In a month at least the library is visited by 2000 people and, 1000 books are issued to borrowers who take them. In addition the children enjoy story times and take the opportunity of homework assistance by the library staff.

The Library and Information Services Unit envisages increasing usage of the library in future by attracting more schools to join the programmes, having a membership drive targeted at the 3000 Alexandra Renewal Project houses that have been constructed next door to the library and by offering services to the orphanage that is being constructed across the road.

This library is part of our vision to make life in the City better and seek to make the City's regeneration strategy a reality.

Programme Director, I would like to urge the community of Alexandra (River Park) and the surrounding areas to use this facility to their maximum benefit and to also protect and look after it and the contents in this library.

Allow me to conclude by emphasising that government continues to strive for and remain committed to a vision of a better life for all.

Thank you