



NEWSLETTER



We take hands as we rise to the challenge: Meals on Wheels Community Services pathfinders in a difficult economic climate

As we reflect on the past twelve months, it's clear that Meals on Wheels Community Services (MOWCS) faces a unique set of challenges, but also possesses remarkable strengths. Our new strategy, "We Rise from Here," is a direct response to these realities, designed to ensure we continue our vital work in an ever-changing landscape.

Challenges We Face

We cannot ignore the headwinds we face:

- *Increasing Costs:* The rising cost of food and fuel has put immense pressure on our resources, making it increasingly difficult to provide the same level of service.
- *Growing Need:* The number of people relying on our

meal lines has increased by 16%, a stark reminder of the economic difficulties many South Africans are experiencing.

- *Donor Fatigue:* We've seen a decline in our donor base, likely due to a combination of economic factors and a crowded charitable landscape.

Our Strengths: The Foundation for Growth

Despite these challenges, MOWCS is incredibly well-positioned to not only survive but thrive:

- *Dedicated Teams:* Our staff and volunteers are the heart and soul of our organization. Their unwavering commitment to our mission is truly inspirational and we applaud them for that.

In this newsletter:

Social Impact Programs

Upcoming Mandela Day

Stories of Impact

Staff Spotlight

About our branches

Update from our Leadership Team

- **In-Kind Donations:** The generosity of individuals and businesses who donate food and goods in kind has been invaluable in supplementing our grocery budget and this allows us to reach far more people with the love they deserve.

- **The Power of Our Brand:** MOWCS is a trusted name in South Africa, synonymous with compassion and community support. This reputation opens doors and creates opportunities for collaboration.

"We Rise from Here": Our Strategy in Action



Our new strategy is built on three pillars:

- **Resource Diversification:** We're actively seeking new funding sources, including corporate partnerships, grant applications, and creative fundraising initiatives. The Western cape has seen the best results of the latter through growth in income exceeding 166%.
- **Operational Efficiency:** We're streamlining our processes to maximize the impact of every Rand we spend, from optimizing delivery routes to negotiating better prices with suppliers through centralised procurement.

- **Community Engagement:** We're deepening our relationships with local communities, schools, and businesses to build a network of support that goes beyond financial contributions.

A Call to Action

"**We Rise from Here**" is more than just a slogan; it's a call to action. I invite all of you – our staff, volunteers, donors, and partners – to join us on this journey. Together, we can overcome the challenges we face and continue to be a beacon of hope for those who need us most.

Let's rise together!

From the desk of the National Director, Tony Neerings



Transforming Lives through Charity in Motion



The significance of implementing innovative ideas to attain successful social impact programs.



The South African economy is currently faced with NPOs going through competition for resources by hundreds of thousands of organisations seeking to achieve high social impact programs. This comes at a time when the economy forces the same organisations to under-invest in financial systems, human resources and fundraising. Most funders take care of programmatic costs and not the indirect costs associated with delivering an intervention or program due to limited funds granted.

The unemployment rate for Q4 in 2023 stands at 32.1%, and the expanded definition is 41.1% for the same period. The economic negative challenges are a cause of concern, creating a massive crisis for community developmental organisations.

South Africa, over the past 30 years of democracy, has grown from a 545 billion economy in 1994 to a 7 trillion economy measured in currency prices. We may think this is a big economy as it grew by 12.7 times; however, once the adjustments for inflation, increase in population and exchange rates, the growth has no impact.

Development is not as fast as in other developed countries, resulting in insufficient jobs.

The economy is not creating enough jobs, and the labour force, which is growing by an average of 2.6% per year or averaging 500 to 600 thousand skilled South Africans ready for employment, makes the challenges even more problematic.

In a country where there are alarming rates of no social mobility, generational poverty is fast becoming a reality for most of the youth and middle-aged citizens. Those born poor will remain poor or even poorer.

There must be a shift in addressing the solutions to socio-economic challenges, and community organisations must look at developmental-oriented interventions while addressing welfare challenges. This is a plus in contributing to the economy as interventions can create employment and entrepreneurs, thereby improving the local economy.

MOWCS SA remains an organisation that provides meals for its beneficiaries, who are then able to find sustenance to enable them to seek employment.

In April 2024, a total of 7.1 million meals were served in all nine (9) provinces of South Africa to the

beneficiaries. In addition, community beneficiaries can be trained by the organisation at the MOWCS branches and provided a meal during the training. The current program that complements a meal are caregiving, skills development, agricultural activities and farming.

A multifaceted approach can have a long-lasting impact in communities, as a nutritious meal promotes good health while providing opportunities to seek economic solutions to the plight of poverty-stricken society members.

From the desk of:



In April 2024



Meals on Wheels: 60 Years of Nourishing South Africa and Combating Poverty

This July 16th, Meals on Wheels marks a significant milestone – 60 years of dedicated service to the people of South Africa. Since its inception in 1964, the organization has been at the forefront of addressing poverty and its devastating consequences, particularly among the elderly, vulnerable children, and those affected by disasters.

A Legacy of Impactful Programs
Meals on Wheels has grown far beyond its initial mission of delivering meals to the elderly.

Today, it boasts a comprehensive range of programs designed to meet the diverse needs of South Africans facing hardship:

- **Meals on Wheels:** The core service remains vital, ensuring nutritious meals reach both the elderly and those in struggling communities.
- **Service Centres for the Aged:** These havens offer much-needed social interaction, physical therapy, and emotional support for older adults.
- **Frail Care Hospital:** This facility provides dignified care for the most vulnerable elderly, easing the burden on families.
- **Caregiver Programme:** This initiative adds to the plate of food with additional social interventions for those we care for.
- **Early Childhood Development (ECD) Centres:** By supporting creches with financial aid and meals, Meals on Wheels invests in the future of South Africa's children.

- **Disaster Relief Programmes:** The organization's extensive reach allows it to rapidly respond to natural disasters, providing essential aid to those in need.
- **Training and Development:** This empowering program equips individuals with skills to prepare their own meals, reducing reliance on food lines and fostering independence.

The Link Between Poverty and Meals on Wheels

South Africa's high poverty rates directly impact food security, health, and overall well-being. Meals on Wheels programs tackle these interconnected issues head-on:

- **Nutrition:** Regular meals alleviate hunger and improve the health of vulnerable populations.
- **Social Support:** Programs like the Service Centres combat isolation and loneliness, which are particularly prevalent among the elderly.
- **Early Childhood Development:** ECD centers provide a nurturing environment for children who may otherwise lack access to quality early education.
- **Disaster Resilience:** The ability to respond to disasters ensures that communities have access to critical resources during times of crisis.
- **Empowerment:** Training and Development programs address the root causes of food insecurity by providing skills and knowledge.

Looking Ahead

As Meals on Wheels celebrates 60 years, it reaffirms its commitment to combating poverty and fostering resilience in South Africa.

The organization's continued success depends on the support of volunteers, donors, and the communities it serves.

To get involved, donate, or learn more about Meals on Wheels programs, please visit our website or contact your local branch.

Together, we can build a stronger, healthier South Africa.

From the desk of:

Gershon Naidoo





Grey College Youth Cup Football Tournament: A Triumph of Talent and Community

The 2nd edition of the Grey College Youth Cup Football Tournament, proudly supported by Meals on Wheels Community Services for the second consecutive year, was a resounding success. The tournament showcased the exceptional skill, sportsmanship, and passion of young footballers from various schools, fostering an atmosphere of unity and healthy competition.

Grey College emerged as a dominant force, capturing the U-17 trophy, securing second place in the U-15 division, and claiming third place in the U-14 category. Congratulations to Grey College on their outstanding performance!

Meals on Wheels Community Services extends heartfelt gratitude to all participating schools for their dedication and enthusiasm. The tournament would not be possible without your commitment to youth development and sportsmanship.

This year's tournament was particularly poignant, as the Grey School family dedicated their efforts to the memory of Lunathi Mayisela, a young life tragically lost. Lunathi's legacy served as a reminder of the importance of cherishing every moment and supporting one another through both triumphs and challenges.

Meals on Wheels Community Services is honoured to partner with Grey College in this inspiring event. We believe in the power of sport to empower young people, build strong communities, and create opportunities for growth and success.

We look forward to continuing our partnership in the years to come, nurturing the talents and aspirations of future generations.



In proud partnership with



Directors Council 20-23 May 2024: A Resounding Success!

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Our organization's dedicated Directors from six regional offices recently convened in the serene setting of Muldersdrift for an impactful Directors Council meeting. The primary focus of this gathering was to ensure the seamless and excellent execution of our Mission and Vision.



The Directors were joined by esteemed guests, Mrs. B Mbunge and Mr. B Schacht, who are instrumental in guiding our organization through a comprehensive Materiality Assessment. Their expertise will undoubtedly strengthen our strategic decision-making process.

Lephawu Empowerment Solutions played a pivotal role in enhancing our Directors' understanding of the intricacies of Labour Law through an insightful workshop. This knowledge equips our leadership with the tools to navigate the complexities of the labor landscape effectively.



Empowering both our branch and area directors, Mrs. M Jackson from Words that Count introduced innovative approaches to resource mobilization. The immediate impact of Mrs. Jackson's presentation is evident as she generously dedicated two days to our Eastern Cape branches, working hand-in-hand with them to mobilize resources for their specific needs.

The culmination of the presentations was marked by Ms. Motumi from KEAMO Capital, who shared valuable insights into effective marketing strategies. Her expertise will undoubtedly elevate our organization's visibility and outreach.

We extend our deepest gratitude to our regional directors for their unwavering commitment and support in enabling our 181 branches to deliver meals that embody our core values of justice, excellence, and spirituality. Their dedication is the cornerstone of our organization's success.



The Directors Council meeting in Muldersdrift was a resounding success, fostering collaboration, knowledge sharing, and strategic planning. We are confident that the outcomes of this gathering will further propel our organization towards achieving its goals and making a meaningful difference in the lives of those we serve.



Meals on Wheels Highlights

World Hunger Day 2024



Meals on Wheels South Africa Takes a Stand

World Hunger Day, observed annually on May 28th, serves as a poignant reminder of the pressing issue of global hunger and malnutrition. This year, Meals on Wheels South Africa joined the global movement to combat hunger with unwavering commitment and compassion.

Aligned with our vision of a hunger-free South Africa, World Hunger Day holds a special significance for our organization. We believe that every individual deserves access to nutritious food, regardless of their circumstances.

A Nationwide Effort

In a remarkable display of solidarity, 96 of our branches across the country participated in World Hunger Day 2024. Our dedicated volunteers and staff tirelessly cooked and delivered an astounding 96,923 meals to communities in need. This collective effort not only provided nourishment but also fostered a sense of hope and togetherness.

Addressing Malnutrition in Mothers and Children

This year's World Hunger Day emphasized the critical importance of nutrition for new and expecting mothers. By focusing on maternal nutrition, we can break the cycle of hunger and ensure that children have a healthy start in life. Meals on Wheels South Africa recognizes the profound

impact that proper nutrition has on the well-being of mothers and children, and we are committed to addressing this issue through our programs and initiatives.

A Global Movement

World Hunger Day is not just a single day of action; it's a global movement dedicated to creating a world where everyone thrives. Meals on Wheels South Africa is proud to be part of this movement, and we remain steadfast in our mission to end hunger in our nation.

A Special Note of Appreciation

We extend our deepest gratitude to the many large corporations that joined hands with us on World Hunger Day. Their generous contributions and unwavering support enabled us to reach even more individuals and families struggling with hunger. Together, we are making a real difference in the lives of those who need it most.

Together, we can make a difference. Whether it's through volunteering your time, donating to our cause, or simply spreading awareness about the issue of hunger, every action counts.

Join us as we continue our journey towards a hunger-free South Africa and a world where all individuals can access the nourishment they need to live healthy and fulfilling lives.

#WORLDHUNGERTDAY



Meals on Wheels Highlights

Staff Spotlight:

Pelele "Moroabi"
Jackson Matina



Moroabi Matina
(Pictured Above)

This month, we're shining our spotlight on a beloved member of our Bloemfontein Meals on Wheels family, Pelele Jackson Matina, affectionately known as Moroabi. Moroabi first joined us back in February 2010 as a driver, and he's been an integral part of our team ever since.

A devoted husband to Lerato and a proud father of four sons and a daughter (also named Lerato!), Moroabi's passion for people and soccer is infectious. He's a die-hard Mamelodi Sundowns fan and has a knack for brightening everyone's day while diligently carrying out his duties.

When asked what keeps him motivated at Meals on Wheels, Moroabi's heartfelt response speaks volumes about his dedication: "I came to Meals on Wheels as a boy, now I am a man. Meals on Wheels helped me become the man I am, so I am happy."

Moroabi's journey with us is a testament to the positive impact our organization has on both the community and our staff. We're incredibly grateful for his 14 years of service and look forward to many more years of his infectious smile and unwavering commitment. Here's to you, Moroabi!

inspire

Branch Spotlight:

Wentworth Meals on Wheels – Nurturing Community Since the '70s

In the heart of Wentworth, since the early 1970s, a beacon of hope has shone brightly – Wentworth Meals on Wheels. From humble beginnings in a granny cottage on Essex Street, generously offered by Brother & Sister Saber, this organization has grown into a cornerstone of support for both the young and old in our community.

Nourishing Young Minds and Bodies

Our dedicated volunteers work tirelessly to ensure that no child in Wentworth goes hungry. Every weekday, we provide nutritious school lunches to 6 primary schools and Umbilo Secondary, reaching thousands of learners.

Our motto is simple yet powerful: "One meal, One learner."

Caring for Our Community

Wentworth Meals on Wheels doesn't stop at school lunches.

Every Wednesday, we extend a warm welcome and a hearty meal to hundreds of people visiting Wentworth Hospital. We also serve the Happy Hearts Club, a beloved senior citizens' group, and deliver hot meals to elderly residents across Wentworth every Friday. Our annual Senior Citizens Lunch and Children's Party are cherished community events.

A Story of Hope and Connection: Erica's Journey

Erica's story is a testament to the unexpected ways in which Wentworth Meals on Wheels touches lives. Once a regular visitor on her way to the hospital, Erica was drawn to our mission and became a dedicated volunteer. When a local newspaper featured our organization, a photo of Erica captured the heart of the story. This photo led to a heartwarming reunion with her family, who had lost touch after moving away. Now, Erica is not only a loyal volunteer but also a cherished member of our Meals on Wheels family.

Challenges and Aspirations

While the need in our community is immense, our resources are limited. Securing donations and sponsorships remains our greatest challenge. Despite this, we have ambitious goals: to expand our meal delivery service to reach 5,000 meals a week by 2025 and to enhance our social support initiatives to combat loneliness and isolation.

A Legacy of Love and Service

Wentworth Meals on Wheels is more than just an organization; it's a testament to the power of community spirit and compassion. We are proud of our legacy of service and remain committed to nourishing both bodies and souls in Wentworth for years to come.



Meals on Wheels Responds to Disaster: Nourishing Communities Amidst Tornadoes and Floods

In the wake of devastating weather events that ravaged KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape last week, Meals on Wheels South Africa swiftly mobilized to provide essential assistance to those affected. While communities struggled to cope with the aftermath of tornadoes and floods, our teams were on the ground, offering a warm meal and a sense of hope.

KwaZulu-Natal Relief Efforts

In KwaZulu-Natal, three of our dedicated branches – Waterloo MOWCS, Harambe MOWCS, and Bhambayi MOWCS – united to provide hot meals to over 500 individuals per day, displaced and impacted by the tornado. The tireless efforts of our Durban Caregiver Team, Mark Jerome and Camy Lee Jerome, ensured a steady supply of ingredients to prepare these much-needed meals.

We extend our deepest gratitude to Spar, who generously donated 100 food parcels, and to Port Natal Market Agents, RSA Market Agents, Word and Light Ministries, Hope World Wide, and the Action Development Agency for their invaluable assistance with logistics. Their contributions have been instrumental in our ability to reach those in need.



Eastern Cape Support

In the Eastern Cape, our branches in East London, Uitenhage, and Imvula joined forces to provide nourishment to approximately 1,000 individuals per day grappling with the aftermath of severe flooding. We commend their extraordinary dedication and selfless service in this time of crisis.

Additionally, blankets were distributed in Duncan to help survivors stay warm during this challenging period.

A Community United

We also want to express our sincere appreciation to the countless individuals who have contributed financially to our disaster relief efforts. Your generosity enables us to continue providing essential support to communities in need.

This experience reaffirms our belief that great things happen when people come together. Meals on Wheels South Africa remains committed to serving our communities, especially during times of adversity. We will continue to work tirelessly to ensure that no one goes hungry or feels alone in the face of disaster.



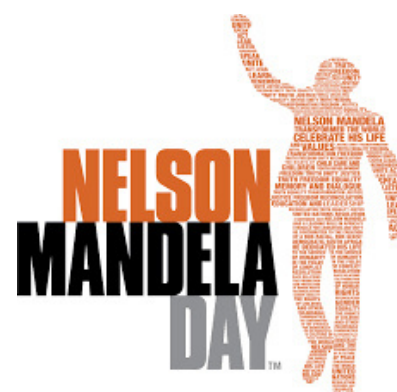
Mandela Day

We are pleased to announce that we are once again partnering with Checkers Sixty60 for this year's Mandela Day.

Donate to 1 of 5 Meals on Wheels locations during the campaign period and Sixty60 will match the value of all donations, PLUS the customer gets their R35 delivery fee back.

Campaign will run from 15 - 18 July 2024 for certain participating stores.

"Let's play a small part in helping South Africa eradicate hunger and restore dignity to many."



Skills Development in the Free State Reaches New Heights!

In the month of April, the 30th of April 2024 to be exact, the training and development department in partnership with Department of Correctional Services held an award ceremony for 71 beneficiaries of Botshabelo, who completed 2 biodiversity qualifications (Food Preservation and Personal Care Manufacturing).

This is one of our greatest milestones as a department and organisation where we get to empower our beneficiaries to be self-sustainable.

It is the departments' objective to ensure that the skills transferred are used to transfer lives out poverty being income generators for their families and communities.

A success story from this group is that there are some beneficiaries that have registered a company and have already started producing their own products under their own name.

We are committed as a department continue empowering our communities and ensure that we build sustainable communities through Skills Development.

From the desk of:

Yanela Takawira



INTERNAL NOTICE TO ALL STAFF • 03 MAY 2024

DCS National Commissioner, Makgothi Thobakgale congratulate Leemisa Mashibini as he receives his competency certificate on Biodiversity and Food Preservation. Next to them is the Chief Whip of the Majority Party in the NCOP, Geiso Mohai; acting Regional Commissioner for Free State and Northern Cape Region, Jacky Reid; and Director at the South African Union Conference Education, Catherine Njekwa.

DCS equips parolees and community members on Biodiversity and Food Preservation
By Tiyani Sambo

Botshabelo Skills Centre, nestled in the eastern part of the Free State province was a scene of celebration on 30 April 2024, as a group of 18 parolees and 53 community members were awarded competency certificates after completing skills programmes on Biodiversity and Food Preservation.

The ceremony marks a significant milestone in the thriving partnership between the Department of Correctional Services (DCS) and community-based organization, Meals on Wheels Community South Africa (MOWCS SA), which is underpinned by a common objective to empower parolees and community members with valuable skills to enable them to become economically self-sufficient and to create sustainable employment opportunities for others.

The Biodiversity skills programme equipped the students with knowledge on the importance of plants and animals (flora and fauna) and their roles in the ecosystem so as to maintain earth balance. The students also learned about preserving food in order to reduce food waste and extend the shelf-life of consumables. The programmes ran for a period of 5 months from 30 October 2023 to 28 March 2024.

DCS National Commissioner, Makgothi Thobakgale hailed the initiative, stating that it will empower local people to take advantage of South Africa's rich biodiversity to build sustainable livelihoods.

"The most interesting and important aspect of biodiversity is job creation in our communities, which is one of the aspects that the National Biodiversity Strategy is focused on.

We therefore hope that the last few months have equipped our parolees and community members to understand the scope and breadth of both biodiversity and food preservation, so that they can fully harness the economic benefits of both these streams," he said.

The National Commissioner also made a plea to potential investors to be audacious and cast their gaze beyond the formal sector, and give more support to the Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMME) sector which is the bedrock for mass job creation. He also made a clarification call for DCS to seek out partners who are keen to empower people who have been in conflict with the law as well as victims of crime, adding that this will aid efforts to break the vicious cycle of crime.

"DCS recognizes the fact that corrections cannot be achieved by us alone; we need everybody, because Corrections is a Societal Responsibility. In so doing, we want to ensure that the societal responsibility for corrections becomes entrenched in the fabric of the South African society. We call upon community members, business and all societal formations, who can contribute towards a safer South Africa, to come forward and help us fight the scourge of crime from inside and outside our correctional centres," he appealed.

National Commissioner, Makgothi Thobakgale at the exhibition stall to learn more about some of the products produced by the students.

National Commissioner, Makgothi Thobakgale says that DCS continues to strive to ensure that more offenders are prepared and empowered through skills development programmes, in order to give them the necessary foundation to be able to fend for themselves upon release.

MOWCS SA Chief Financial Officer, Effort Bhebe echoed the sentiments of the National Commissioner and expressed hope for a continued partnership with DCS and other stakeholders, in order to reach more people and lift them out of poverty.

Mr Seiso Mohai, who hails from the area and is the current Chief Whip of the Majority Party in the National Council of Provinces (NCOP), added that this empowerment initiative will contribute in boosting the local economy.

One of the beneficiaries, Zanele Vezzi (19), said the programme exposed her to valuable knowledge about nature, which she intends to pass on to fellow young people of Botshabelo in the hope that they will use it to eke out a living.

Another beneficiary, Leemisa Mashibini (35) said he is privileged that DCS and MOWCS SA gave him an opportunity to be part of this great initiative. "I am elated because with the knowledge I gained through this skills programme, I was able to register a company which currently employs six people," he said.

The certificate recipients also exhibited their professionally-packaged products which are already on sale at various supermarket outlets in the Free State province.



correctional services
Department:
Correctional Services
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA





Stories of impact: The Meals on Wheels Extreme Cycle 4 Hunger Tour: A journey of courage, camaraderie and compassion

"A NICE, leasurely drive in your air-conditioned vehicle from Alberton in Gauteng to Cape Town in the Western Cape, via Kimberley in the Northern Cape could take around 15 hours to complete.

That is quite the trip, but with some good music on your car's sound system and regular rest stops, and perhaps an overnight stay along the way, those 15 hours, travelling around 90-120km/h can be quite pleasant.

Now imagine travelling that distance going at around 15-30km/h on a human-powered bicycle!

This has been exactly what has been happening

every year since 2016 with a group of committed cyclists making this trek every year; but not only for the sake of exercise. No, they are driven by a more humanitarian mission.

Back in 2016, Meals on Wheels Northern Cape embarked on this groundbreaking initiative - to provide essential sustenance and support to those less fortunate.

It was then that the Meals on Wheels Extreme Cycle 4 Hunger Tour was born, quickly becoming an annual event firmly entrenched in their organisational calendar. "

Extract from an article written for the DFA by Mr Danie van der Lith





Thank you for reading!

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