



correctional services

Department:
Correctional Services
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MEDIA STATEMENT

19 October 2023

DCS IMPROVES LIVES OF PAROLEES THROUGH STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

“Through the District Development Model, we aim to define and craft our role outside the Correctional Services walls”. These were the words echoed by the National Commissioner of the Department of Correctional Services (DCS) during the commemoration of World Food Day in D’Almeida, Mossel Bay on 19 October 2023 under the theme: “The role of backyard gardens and skills development to ensure food security and economic growth”.

The initiative is a partnership between the DCS, Meals on Wheels and Mossel Bay Local Municipality which seeks to launch a total of 200 backyard garden and develop the skills of the parolees, elderly and disabled people in gardening, confectionery and pizza making skills. This will assist the beneficiaries with the basic provision of food security, while also contributing towards the economic growth.

The Correctional Services National Commissioner, Mr Makgothi Thobakgale indicated that it is important to partner with community-based organizations and work with communities as part of the programme to implement the District Development Model and also to eradicate societal challenges. Most importantly, the DCS seeks to extend the supporting hand outside the correctional services while tapping in the mind and soul of those who have offended, to lead a positive life. Thobakgale mentioned that dealing with crime is not the solution. The solution lies in fostering skills development and employment to eradicate the social challenges.

Thobakgale elaborated that offenders released on parole face challenges of how to make a living and sustain themselves outside the walls of correctional services. The initiative will ensure that they have means of living, they can provide for themselves, their families and sell to make profit. Partnering with our stakeholders provides the parolees a chance to access land, skills and other opportunities. The initiative will be carried over to other areas of the country.

Parolees largely thanked Meals on Wheels, the DCS and other partners for providing an opportunity for them to turn their lives together with their families, around. Ex-offender, Mr Brandon Lottering pleaded with everyone to open their hearts, doors and businesses to them. “We have changed, we have the quality and we can make a difference, we have just been unlucky”, he said.

Parolees showcased their newly acquired skills by baking cakes and making pizza while other beneficiaries showcased fruits and veggies from their own backyard gardens. The produce was therefore sold to attendees as a way of encouraging beneficiaries entrepreneurial skills.

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