Back to school to sow seeds of hope

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Adopt-a-School Foundation and partners went back to school for a day to establish a vegetable garden and enhance the nutritional value of school lunches.

Adopt-a-School and partners at Tshilidzi Primary

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In an effort to enhance the nutritional value of school lunches, Adopt-a-School Foundation mobilised its partners and teamed up with environmental NGO, Green Beings, to build a vegetable garden at Tshilidzi Primary School in Soweto.

This event was in celebration of the 2015 Back to School for a Day for Mandela Day initiative, which has taken place in disadvantaged schools country wide over the past week.

The Adopt-a-School team was joined by CEO of Mondi, David Hathorn, MD of DRA, Graham Smith, CEO of Shanduka Black Umbrellas, Seapei Mafoyane, and other partners in planting a vegetable tunnel to support the school's feeding scheme. Foundation phase learners participated in the activity by planting indigenous trees in the school grounds. Green Beings trained three community members to care for the garden and ensure sustainability.

Basic nutrition is a critical part of a child's ability to learn and develop at school and an important element of the Adopt-a-School Foundation's Whole School Development model which aims to create a positive learning environment in disadvantaged schools.

The Back to School for a Day initiative was launched by Adopt-a-School Foundation at Tshilidzi Primary in 2012 as a call to South Africans to make a meaningful difference in disadvantaged schools.

Tshilidzi Primary School holds a special place in the history of the Foundation as it was the first school taken under its adoption programme. It is also the former school of the Foundation's chairman, Cyril Ramaphosa.

"Going Back to School for a Day is a meaningful way to offer our youth recognition and encouragement, and to propel active citizenship," Ramaphosa commented.

Since 2012 over 120 companies and thousands of individuals have joined the initiative and gone back to school for a day. Close on 200 schools and tens of thousands of school children have benefitted through career guidance programmes, debating workshops, literacy activities, motivational talks and a variety of school makeover projects.

The Nelson Mandela Foundation supports Back to School for a Day and endorses the initiative as a meaningful volunteer activity on Mandela Day. NMF's CEO, Sello Hatang, says, "Education has always been a cause close to Tata's heart and what better way to honour both his memory and his legacy."

Green Beings is a non-profit and public benefit organisation that develops models for schools to demonstrate sustainable living and act as vehicles to integrate knowledge and skills into communities.

"We pride ourselves in identifying projects that are sustainable and reflect the values of our organisation. Our team has the sector knowledge and expertise to deliver high-impact solutions to make a lasting and meaningful difference to schools in Johannesburg," said Marloes Dijkema, co-founder of Green Beings.

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Adopt-a-School

Adopt-a-School Foundation is a non-profit organisation that supports the creation and enhancement of a conducive learning and teaching environment in disadvantaged schools.

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