

Thousands turn out for launch of BCM's festive season

Switching on of the Lights event a huge success despite brief shower

MADELEINE CHAPUT

Music, dancing, a rainbow of fireworks, magical Christmas lights and just a little bit of rain ushered in the festive season in East London on Saturday night.

The BCM Switching on of the Lights event attracted thousands of revellers.

"We're very excited. Almost every year we come here. We were here last year even though

it rained and it was still so much fun," said Sesethu Nkutu, who hails from West Bank.

"The music is always the best part — without the music it wouldn't be so much fun."

Despite calls for artists to boycott the event last week, the stage lit up with dancers, DJs, musicians and singers on Saturday night.

The programme kicked off with DJ Spin and various performers, including the OGs dance crew, Isandlasomphefumlo and Zintle Mbuyazawe getting the party started.

A jumping castle as well as food vendors filled the grass

area near the Orient Pools, where children and adults alike welcomed a fun-filled December holiday season.

"It has been so great. It's so much fun for the kids and they really enjoy themselves. We come every year and for us this means that our festive season has officially begun. From now on there is just joy and festivities," said Krystal Card of Egoli.

After several of the performances, mayor Xola Pakati addressed the crowd and wished BCM residents a happy December before showing his festive spirit and briefly dancing

on stage with fellow officials.

The mayor urged residents to enjoy some much-needed downtime in the city after a long, hard year.

"Today we are here to enjoy ourselves, we are ushering in the festive season and we want BCM to enjoy the God-given gifts we are endowed with," Pakati told the crowd.

A short rain shower dampened the crowd, but not the mood, as people continued to dance and sing along with the performers.

BCM's Christmas lights were officially switched on at 8pm as fireworks lit up the sky, and it

was this "performance" that stole the show.

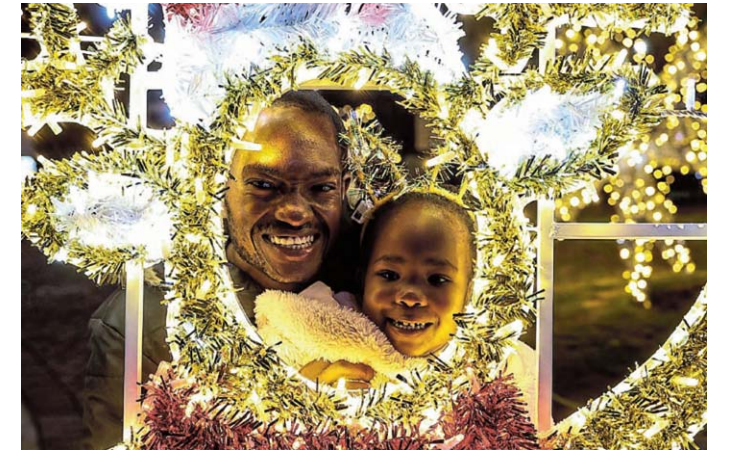
Crowds took to the street to enjoy the Christmas magic as snowflakes, Santas, reindeer, Christmas trees and more lit up the beachfront.

Feziwe Mdinwa, who hails from Dawn, said she was grateful the rain did not last long this year because she and her children were able to take photographs with the beautiful Christmas displays.

"This year is way better than last year. We still enjoyed it last year, but we only had some showers tonight and we can actually take pictures.

"These lights are so beautiful and God graced us today with little rain. Last year, we had to go home early," said Mdinwa while wandering around the garden of magical lights along the Esplanade.

"This is my first time coming to see the light display and it is so overwhelming. It really feels like the festive season is here and I think it just warms people's hearts," said Julius Man dio pera, who moved to East London in February and watched the lights display with his three-year-old daughter Ropafadzo.



FAMILY FUN: Julius Man dio pera and his daughter Ropafadzo, 3, pose with a Christmas display during the Switching on of the Lights ceremony in East London at the weekend. Picture: ALAN EASON

See also page 4.



GIVING BACK: ANC provincial secretary Lulama Ngcukayitobi and his wife Noxolo Ngcukayitobi (on the right) are joined in celebrating his 50th birthday by Cogta MEC Zolile Williams, public works MEC Ntombouyo Nkompane and Rev Sindiswa Msengi. Picture: LULAMILE FENI

Ngcukayitobi launches foundation in honour of late father to help address social ills

LULAMILE FENI

ANC provincial secretary Lulama Ngcukayitobi and his family raised more than R1.5m during his 50th birthday celebrations at the weekend.

The funds raised will serve as capital to launch the Gcinabantu Hutchison Ngcukayitobi Foundation, named in memory of their late mineworker father.

The foundation launch tied in with the seasoned politician's milestone birthday celebration and took place at Dan's Country Lodge, near Mthatha, on Friday night.

The foundation aims to address social ills, with a specific focus on gender-based violence

and femicide, women empowerment and the advancement of education.

"We have used the platform of celebrating my 50th birthday to launch the foundation. This campaign needs everyone in every sector of life to work together and fight this scourge," Ngcukayitobi said.

He said the foundation had already built three preschools and the third one would be handed over in Cala on December 25, marking the birthday of his younger brother, the celebrated advocate Tembeka Ngcukayitobi, SC.

"Our home village of Luphaphasi is an administrative area in Cala is composed of three individual villages," he

said. "This is a way to fight against the abuse of children and ensure that very young children are afforded education and there are decent structures for this purpose."

Ngcukayitobi is the eldest of three siblings — Tembeka, 45, and sister Brenda, 42.

"This has been a very successful day as we marked the launch of the foundation," Tembeka said.

"The event was also held to inspire.

"My brother is a very inspirational person, inspiring us in our little corners to do what we can to combat the scourge of gender-based violence.

"To be active in society it does

not mean that it should only be against gender-based violence but any item that causes the society to derail.

"My brother is of course known for using his energy in politics, but his inspiration goes beyond politics.

"It is more on economic and social upliftment," he said.

Brenda said: "Our brother is a person with a good heart, assisting other people who need help the most, and is very concerned about the abuse of women and children.

"That is why we have rallied behind him and support his endeavour to establish this foundation."

Gcinabantu was 38 when he died in 1984 and Brenda was

four, Tembeka, six, and Lulama 12. Their mother Nomsa, 72, had to raise them on her own.

The invitation to the event encouraged guests to contribute towards the fundraising activities by buying a table for 10 people for R50,000, buying a seat for R5,000 or by donating any amount.

Some guests contributed up to R200,000 while a piece of art was auctioned off for R48,000.

Red Frogs NPO safeguards Plett Rage party-goers

ROSA-KAROO LOEWE

With the Plett Rage party in full swing, thousands of ex-matrics have flocked to Plettenberg Bay for a nine-day, multi-stage, decked-out job.

But as the night gets darker and the drinks get stronger, many youngsters end up in dangerous waters, inebriated, confused and alone.

That's where the Red Frogs come in, a Christian-based NPO that aims to be a positive presence and safe space within the party culture.

"We don't just want to catch some vomit and help the guys but we want to walk a road with them," Red Frogs branch co-ordinator and pastor Brett France, 31, from Johannesburg said.

The NPO started in Australia in 1994 and branched into SA in 2007, France said.

Groups of volunteers walk around Rage venues, wearing black and red shirts and caps rocking the red frog logo and handing out sweets shaped like frogs, or free pancakes and water to line stomachs.

"Our goal in these spaces is to try to be the fence at the top of the cliff instead of the ambulance at the bottom," France said.

"If young people are in trouble or stuck, when they don't know what to do and who to call — we will step in, like that older brother or sister."

The Red Frogs have set up at both the Plett and Ballito Rage events, which are happening at the same time, but France said the pandemic had knocked Plett volunteer numbers.

"We have 45 volunteers at

Ballito but sadly we didn't get enough volunteers to set up a full operation here in Plett, but there are still six of us who will be out assisting," he said.

Though there won't be a pancake station at Plett Rage this year, Ballito Ragers can make use of the full service.

France said the team had experienced serious emergencies such as sexual assault, drink spiking and alcohol poisoning, but the biggest increase was declining mental health and young people having suicidal thoughts.

"The organisers do a great job in trying to keep the children safe, but some of the worst is drink spiking or a young person trying some form of drug they've never tried before and having an adverse reaction."

This year, the Red Frogs part-

nered up with Safesnap, a safety app launched in July.

Safesnap founder and CEO Adrian Broom, 45, from Johannesburg, said the safety and emergency app wasn't simply a "panic app" but a network with multiple security offerings.

Broom said the app used facial recognition and biometrics to identify those in need.

"We want to empower people with the tools to help others," he said.

"On Safesnap, if someone is registered, all I would need to do is take a picture of them, and the system picks up who they are and gives a couple of options — you can phone an emergency contact or activate emergency services."

Broom said the app had partnered with the Red Frogs as a support structure for teens.

The Dispatch followed the Frogs and saw how they calmly interacted with youngsters in a welcoming way.

Jade Pretorius, 18, from Cape Town, said: "I've gone to lots of festivals before and it's so important to have them here — there are so many times I've lost my friends and need some help.

"The world needs more people like this."

Kayla Fick, 18, from East London said: "We come here for fun. My mom told me about them, she said, 'you should look out for the Red Frogs, they will protect you.'"

Red Frogs volunteer Ashley Sam, 22, from Plettenberg Bay, said this was his second year as a volunteer.

"Being a part of the Red Frogs is a calling, you are like a big brother."

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The 09th Commemoration of Nelson Mandela's values of *Peace and Social Justice* in the year of Reverend John Knox Bokwe

to be held as follows:

Day 1 (04 December 2022)
Event: Peace Walk and Candle Lighting
Venue: Ultra City / Cathedral
Time: 14h00 to 16h00

PHASE 2
Event: Imvuselelo
Venue: Nelson Mandela Museum, \ Bhunga Building, Corner Nelson Mandela Drive and Owen Street, Mthatha
Time: 16h00

Day 2 (05 December 2022)
Event: Formal Programme
Venue: Nelson Mandela Museum, \ Bhunga Building, Corner Nelson Mandela Drive and Owen Street, Mthatha
Time: 10H00am

PHASE 2
Event: Nelson Mandela Arts Festival
Venue: Nelson Mandela Museum, Corner Nelson Mandela Drive and Owen Street, Mthatha
Time: 14h00

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<p>Deal 5</p> <p>Chairs Black Plastic Chairs - R50.00 Each White Plastic Chairs - R75.00 Each</p>	<p>Deal 6</p> <p>Toilets Portable Toilets (Non Flushable) - R7,999.00 Portable Toilets (Flushable) - R9,999.00</p>	<p>Deal 7</p> <p>Mobile Freezer Mobile Chillers - R45,000.00 Mobile Freezers - R49,900.00 Mobile Kitchens - R85,000.00</p>	<p>Deal 8</p> <p>Clear Chairs Tiffany / Phoenix Chairs - R899.00 Each White Tiffany / Phoenix Chairs - R299.00 Each Chanel White Chairs - R299.00 Each</p>

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