

67 Minutes

On the 18th of July 2024, the Nelson Mandela Museum observed International Nelson Mandela Day by dedicating 67 minutes of community service to commemorate a significant moment in Nelson Mandela's birthday. The event was held at the site of the historical Ludeke Circuit, in partnership with the Nelson Mandela Museum, Department of Sport, Arts and Culture (DSAC), Department of Sport, Arts and Culture (DSRAC) and Winnie Madikizela Mandela Local Municipality. The event was celebrated under the theme: **Preserving and maintaining the footprints of Nelson Mandela.**

The Museum identified the Methodist Church of Ludeke Circuit in Bizana to conduct its 67 minutes. The church is in the hometown of Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, where she tied the knot with Nelson Mandela in June 1958. The Ludeke Circuit is the historic church structure that is still standing firm and the Museum dedicated part of the day cleaning and conducting restorative work assisting in the preservation of the church. The restorative work included painting of the walls, replacement of ceiling, replacement of gutters, painting of window frames and cleaning of the flooring.

The cleaning of the church was preceded by 5km fun walk from R61 Main Road to the church and soup kitchen in the morning. A soup kitchen is one of the museum's initiative where people from disadvantaged backgrounds get a free meal. The museum cooked breakfast in the church to serve the community of Bizana and the officials from different government structures who attended the event. The cleaning of the church and soup kitchen was led by the Acting Premier of the Eastern Cape Zolile Williams, DSRAC MEC, other MECS, Nelson Mandela Museum Council and Executives, Executive Mayors of Winnie Madikizela and Alfred Nzo District Municipality.

The cleaning of the church was in line with the candle light prayer service. The candle light prayer service was a powerful symbol of hope and solidarity. Those in attendance from government structures, different congregations, traditional leadership, communities; gathered with candles in their hands remembering Nelson

Mandela and allowing them to unite in prayer and support. Speeches were delivered and raised an awareness about the importance of the day, the role played by Nelson Mandela and also emphasised that the day should not be a public relation's stunts but to make a difference to the needy. It also raised awareness and provided a platform for communal reflection and action.

The last lap of the event brought joy to the Early Childhood Development Centre at Ludeke Village. The museum in partnership with DSRAC renovated the centre and handed over donations of mattresses, fleece blankets, recreational toys and playland. This formed part of celebrations and also dedicating to children that Nelson Mandela loved dearly. It also focused on uplifting the local community and fostering a spirit of service among children and adults alike. Moreover, an Early Childhood Centre helps instil the values of compassion and service that Mandela championed.

The celebration of the Nelson Mandela's Day not only honoured Mandela's legacy but also created an everlasting positive change in the community. The celebration aimed to inspire South Africans to emulate Mandela's selflessness and dedication to building a better world and by engaging in acts of kindness and volunteering, honoured the spirit of Mandela's legacy.