

World boost for reading project

Herald Reporter

Alternative education initiative that includes 'Nal'ibali' language supplement wins award in Mexico

AN initiative in which The Herald and other Times Media Group (TMG) newspapers are partners has won international recognition.

The not-for-profit Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa (Praesa), the Times Media Group partner in the Nal'ibali reading-for-enjoyment campaign, was awarded the Ibbby-Asahi Reading Promotion Award in Mexico City this month.

The award was initiated by the International Board on Books for Young People (Ibbby) and sponsored by the Japanese newspaper company the Asahi Shimbun.

It is presented every two years to two groups or institutions whose activities are judged to be making a lasting contribution to reading promotion for children and young people.

Praesa coordinator Dr Carole Bloch and national training director Ntombizanele Mahobe accepted the award on behalf of the organisation, which has been involved in improving conditions for reading enjoyment for the past 23 years.

"Receiving the award is a real affir-

mation of the work we have been doing for so long. I have always felt that we are doing the right thing, but to be recognised by an international group of people who specialise in reading and children's books is a great reward in itself," Bloch said.

Praesa, which was a joint winner with the Children's Book Bank in Canada, was one of 14 groups nominated.

It was put forward by Ibbby Sweden.

While Praesa received the award for its work in general, the success of Nal'ibali was noticed by the judges as it was the first national programme to be carried out to scale by Praesa and continues to gain ground.

Launched in 2012, Nal'ibali - meaning "Here's the story" in isiXhosa - works with partners to help put into place the conditions that support opportunities for literacy learning of all children irrespective of linguistic, cultural or class backgrounds.

"They [Ibbby-Asahi] love what we

have to offer - our supplements and social media presence as well as the fact that we have managed to translate so many appropriate stories and make them accessible," Bloch said.

The newspaper supplements are delivered to reading clubs during term time as a means of giving those involved in children's reading a supply of material in languages that work for the community.

"The supplements help to create a scaffolding resource in places where books are not readily available," Bloch said.

Since its inception, Nal'ibali and its partners have produced 148 literacy activities and 106 translated stories in 15.7 million supplements and broadcast 78 stories in nine languages on radio.

"Core principles have guided us over the years," Bloch says.

The first is that the "same kind of enriched and inspiring conditions that encourage English-speaking children to become engaged readers and

writers are the same ones that African-language speakers need".

Bloch said: "This should be self-evident, but it isn't. In our work we are countering the low-level expectations of the education system for millions of bright young African-language speakers as they enter and progress through primary school."

She said the second principle was that "nurturing a love of stories offers us all enjoyable inroads to lifelong learning journeys". The hegemonic pressure of schooling to deliver measurable skills, however, had led to a loss of appreciation for the deep educational value of stories.

"We are reviving the value of narrative as an essential part of not just education but also community and home settings.

"I think the judges highly value our emphasis on stories and on multilingualism, the fact that we work across several languages and that we champion mother-tongue education.

"It is clear we have persevered over the years and have an influence in the field," Bloch said.



INTERNATIONAL SUCCESS: Praesa director Dr Carole Bloch and national training coordinator Ntombizanele Mahobe with ambassador Sandile Nogxina and his wife, Nqabakazi Nogxina



CLEAN SCRAPE: PE Provincial Hospital board chairman Rochelle Phillips helps to start adding a shine to the hospital as part of Project Sparkle. Picture: JUDY DE VEGA

Helping hands for hospital brush-up

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DESPITE the stormy weekend weather, Project Sparkle - a venture to revitalise public healthcare in Port Elizabeth - started on Saturday with volunteers cleaning the parking lot and garden at the Provincial Hospital.

The hospital's acting chief executive, Patricia Deysel, also made an appearance to thank the volunteers and Project Sparkle organisers.

"We are very grateful for the help towards the maintenance of the building," she said. "This will make a very big difference to us."

Project Sparkle aims to improve public healthcare in the city by cleaning, renovating and beautifying the public hospitals to make them better to work at and more pleasant for patients to use.

The first task is the renovation of the dilapidated outbuildings at Provincial Hospital.

It is the brainchild of KPMG's Alan Barr and Schalk Fourie from the organisation, Wezmeth.

Last week, the biggest volunteer movement in the city, Just 1hr, also joined Project Sparkle, with coordinator Trevor Jennings urging members of the public to perform the hour of volunteer work for the cause.

Volunteers received health and safety training on Saturday and were there to start phase one, the clean up, after which they will paint and replace the hospital's gutters and downpipes.

They also gathered 20 refuse bags of rubbish from the hospital's parking lot and garden.

● If you want to join Project Sparkle, register by sending an e-mail to info@just1hr.org.za or phone Denise Foster on (041) 484 1528.

HELP US TO SPREAD INSPIRATION



DO you have a similar story? How are you inspiring PE?

Perhaps you are helping out a neighbour, paying a child other than your own's way through school or taking care of someone in your community.

We want to hear, and tell, your inspiring stories. E-mail kimberleym@timesmedia.co.za or send them to us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram by posting or tweeting your stories and pictures with the hashtag #InspireMandelaBay

Search for next-of-kin

TWO Port Elizabeth men were killed in separate incidents at the weekend.

On Saturday morning, a man, 45, was hit by a woman driving a Chevrolet Spark at the corner of Harrower Road and Mount Road. The man, who was killed instantly, was wearing blue jeans, black All-Star takkies and a dark grey jersey. His hair was cut short.

Police spokesman Warrant Officer Alwin Labans said police were looking for the man's family to identify him as there had been no missing persons reported to the police.

Police are also searching for the next-of-kin of another unidentified man, in his early 20s, found at the corner of Community Road and 6th Avenue Walmer on Saturday night.

Labans said: "It looks like the man was robbed and stabbed. He was wearing Adidas tracksuit pants."

In other murder cases yesterday, a Rocklands man was assaulted and stabbed to death, and two men were assaulted and stabbed in Bloukappie Street, Arcadia. One died, while the other is in hospital.

And in Hankey, a 25-year-old man was stabbed dead on Saturday morning. - Rochelle de Kock

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domestic & smaller employers are encouraged to attend



Read to me.



In my language.

Get your Nal'ibali reading-for-enjoyment supplement in English-isiXhosa every Thursday in *The Herald* for children's stories, literacy tips, and reading and writing activities to help spark your children's potential. For more information and stories in a range of South African languages, visit www.nalibali.org and www.nalibali.mobi.

Sparkling children's potential through storytelling and reading

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