Cotlands celebrates on Mandela Day

Over 100 children had an exciting experience at the Johannesburg Zoo in Parkview as they celebrated Mandela Day. Cotlands, in collaboration with the zoo, celebrated the day with 128 children from five of Cotlands’ early learning playgroup sites in Gauteng.

According to Natalie Frank from Cotlands, the organisation is a registered non-profit early childhood development organisation with a rich heritage of over 80 years of experience in serving young, vulnerable children. “Cotlands’ vision is to see children thrive in their pre-school years by increasing their access to play-based early learning opportunities.

“The children came from an informal settlement in Cleveland, from Johannesburg’s inner city, Turffontein and two sites in Soweto. For most of the children, this was their first-time experience at the zoo and it brought a lot of smiles to the children’s faces.”

She added that the Johannesburg Zoo opened the event with a warm welcome which was followed by Cotlands children singing the national anthem.

“Our children were then treated to a Mandela-themed puppet show performed by the well-loved characters from Takalani Sesame, puppets Zuzu and Kami. The children also engaged in creative art activities, imprinting their hand prints in primary colours onto the South African flag in honour of Madiba.”

The Johannesburg Zoo arranged a driving tour around the zoo where children were excited to see their favourite animals. Cotlands extended a special vote of thanks to all their partners who include the zoo who arranged the venues, buses and zoo tours; Takalani Sesame who provided the children’s entertainment and the audio-visual equipment; St John’s Ambulance who were on-site for the on-site medical support; Johannesburg Emergency Services for checking in on the event on the day to ensure the children’s safety and Edcon for sponsoring the children’s refreshments and snacks.

Johannesburg City Parks and Zoo’s acting managing director, Lindokuhle Ngcono commended Cotlands for caring for the neediest children in the City and reinforced that every child has a right to hear and see animals to grow their knowledge around eco-consciousness at the Joburg Zoo.

Some fun, games and singing by the children at the zoo, all thanks to Cotlands.