



2 Somerset Road • Green Point • Cape Town • 8005 • South Africa  
PO Box 6 • Green Point • Cape Town • 8051 • South Africa  
Tel +27 21 418 0322 Fax +27 21 418 6406 Email [info@breadlineafrica.org.za](mailto:info@breadlineafrica.org.za)  
Visit our website [www.breadlineafrica.org](http://www.breadlineafrica.org)

## **A BRIGHTER START FOR LUKHANYISO PRE-SCHOOL ON WORLD NGO DAY**

27 February 2015

Although townships are an intrinsic part of the history and current-day culture of South African society, due to their location – the outskirts of cities' commercial and suburban centres – they continue to experience challenges, from unemployment and poverty, to a lack of access to basic resources and amenities.

Motherwell, in Port Elizabeth, is no different. Laced with RDP (Reconstruction and Development Programme) houses, which are continually being built, the need for resources is never sufficient. This has not prevented Zodwa Plaatjie, who owns and runs an early childhood development centre for up to 60 children.

Today, being World NGO Day, could not have been a better day to launch the Lukhanyiso Pre-school containers with Zodwa. The day signifies an opportunity where NGOs celebrate their achievements while ensuring that small grassroots organisations gain the recognition they deserve – and Zodwa Plaatjie is one who deserves to be praised.

In 2010, Breadline Africa was introduced to Zodwa. At the time, she had made a plea for support for the work she was doing. She was running a pre-school for 60 children between the ages of one and six years, feeding them daily from her small make-shift shack she was using as a kitchen, and running a soup kitchen for the elderly from her meagre earnings. The pre-school operated from a 6,5-metre by 4,6metre shack, with a rusty roof that leaked whenever it rained, and the toilet facilities for the children were no better. The facilities lacked ventilation, and were not fire-proof. To top it off, there was hardly any space for a play area for the little children.

Amid these constant challenges, Zodwa has not only persevered and pushed on, she continues to inspire the general public to become more involved; she encourages and welcomes collaboration with other sectors. Most importantly, she has dedicated her life to others.

The newly refurbished containers: two classrooms, a kitchen and an ablution block, donated by Breadline Africa and co-sponsored by the Marthe van Rijswich Foundation, the Stanley Smith Fund and Containers4Life, have provided not only bigger, safer and securer space for the centre, but also an inviting, child-friendly structure.

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The aptly named pre-school – Lukhanyiso – which means ‘brightness’ in Xhosa, kick-started 2015 with the new facilities. It is hoped that the new facilities will provide a healthy learning environment that is inspiring to children and serve as an encouragement to the community, helping them realise their own potential.

Breadline Africa focuses its energies on the upliftment of early childhood development and their surrounding communities. “Offering early childhood development facilities to create healthy environments for children to develop holistically, especially in poorly resourced areas, is critical to offering a foundation of knowledge, maturity and independence,” said Puleng Phooko of Breadline Africa. “We are proud to be supporting Zodwa, who has shown that despite the odds, she strongly believes in the need to nurture and grow South Africa’s children.



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