

PRIDE 'N PURPOSE PLANT TREES IN FOOD GARDENS FOR ARBOR WEEK

Bushbuckridge, Mpumalanga, September 2008 - To celebrate 2008 Arbor Week, Pride 'n Purpose – the non profit arm of Ulusaba, Sir Richard Branson's Private Game Reserve - will be planting trees at Welani Primary School on the 2nd September at 10.00am. Pride 'n Purpose is committed to the upliftment and sustainable development of disadvantaged communities living adjacent to the reserve. This commitment has been extended to two primary schools located in Dumphries Village in the Bushbuckridge region of Mpumalanga, namely Mahlahluvana and Welani Primary Schools.

Pride 'n Purpose approached South Africa's food gardening and greening organisation Food & Trees for Africa (FTFA) with funding for the development of Permaculture food gardens at the two primary schools. A joint Permaculture project for Welani and Mahlahluvana was started in May 2008 and gardens are already flourishing.

"I know you are just doing your job, but you have no idea how much this programme has changed our lives," said Mr N Ngwenya, the Deputy Principal of Mahlahluvana Primary School to FTFA facilitator Daniel Chitungo, "Most of us have now established food gardens at home and we are already harvesting!"

Mahlahluvana, which means *throwing of bones* in Shangaan, has a total enrollment of 548 learners with 14 educators and looks forward to working with a further 30 community members once FTFA implemented Permaculture skills training is complete. The school distributes supplementary food granted by the Department of Education (DoE), but wants to incorporate more of the organic vegetables and herbs harvested from the Permaculture garden into the school's feeding scheme.

Welani, Shangaan for *coming together for a common goal*, also distributes food from the DoE and hopes to supplement their feeding scheme with fresh produce from the garden, as well as encourage learners to take their Permaculture skills home to established food gardens.

Both schools fall under the jurisdiction of traditional leaders who are extremely active in development projects aimed at uplifting people in their area. Within six weeks of FTFA implementing Permaculture training, the two projects had harvested vegetables to feed the learners at the schools and assist selected families with orphaned and vulnerable children.

In recognition of Pride 'n Purpose's commitment to the local community, leading luxury travel network Virtuoso recently awarded Ulusaba with a prestigious Best of the Best Award in the category of Most Socially Responsible (hotel). This award recognises a hotel dedicated to making a difference through innovative local or global programs – whether a green initiative or a community education program – that make the world a better place to live.

For more details regarding the 2008 Arbor Week event please contact Mr Daniel Chitungo of FTFA at (011) 803 9750 or 0828893972 or daniel@trees.org.za / info@trees.org.za