

KGOSI MABALANE TURNS BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS INTO LEARNING EXPERIENCE

By Vusi Kama and Kealeboga Mothusi

The hills surrounding the village of Mabalstad near Rustenburg were misty; the trees and the grass were green; and when the skies opened it was light showers, drizzling intermittently. And the hall at the Baphiring Ba Mabalane Traditional Authority was packed to the rafters.

“Thank heavens it’s not hot, they would be burning inside that hall,” observed one of the guests at the function amid the hustle and bustle in the courtyard of the Traditional Council.

Inside the hall were high-ranking and low-ranking military airforce officials, senior traditional leaders, a mayor, well-known soap opera stars from *Muvhango*, German tourists and scores of locals, including school-going youth. Between the speeches were the sounds of gospel music, a brass band and local acapella groups. And, of course, the all-important praise-singer.

The event: Day six of a week-long birthday celebration for the local leader, Kgosi Moefi Mabalane.

As birthday celebrations go, this was no ordinary affair. True to a tradition he started more than six years ago, Kgosi Mabalane’s celebrations come with a dollop of social investment to the locals – particularly the school-going youth on whom the spotlight falls at the beginning of the year.

Each year, Kgosi Mabalane hosts his birthday celebrations with a back-to-school emphasis in which uniforms and other essentials are distributed to the deserving youth of the village. However, this year he took a different dimension, and partnered mainly with the South African Airforce to educate the youth about careers in the institution.

As one of the partners the Department of Arts, Culture, Sport and Recreation (ACSR) hosted the youth to its stand at the career expo, where they were taught about careers in librarianship and archiving. The more-than-400 learners were from the Moses Kotane Local Municipality area.

ACSR MEC Mme Virginia Tlhapi said the department’s participation in the expo was part of its strategic thrust.

“In our Province, we do not have enough graduates in librarianship so we often have to rely on neighbouring provinces for staff,” she said. “Kgosi Mabalane’s event helped us preach the gospel to our youth in the Province. I hope their interest has been ignited by our presentations to them.”

She also expressed gratitude to Kgosi Mabalane and wished him well as he grew a year older.

It appears the message of the career expo was well-received by the learners, if two Moefi Secondary School attendees could be used as a barometer. Grade 12 Omphemetse Monnanyana and Lerato Molefe (both 17) say they were excited by the idea of a careers expo.

“Although the specific careers we want to follow were not represented, this event was great because we got to learn about a whole lot of things,” they said. “It was a very informative session where we learnt so much more about the army and the various career opportunities available there. Of course there were many other fields that were presented at the various stalls.”

Molefe wants to be a pharmacist and Monnanyana a lawyer.

Pula!!!