

Retailer targets rivers on World Cleanup Day

The Shoprite Group has partnered with the Department of Water and Sanitation to host nationwide river cleanups on World Cleanup Day (21 September 2019) and everyone's invited to join in.

The Group was the first among the retailers to host regular community cleanups, and will again mobilise its employees as well as communities, this time to help keep our rivers clean. South Africa is a water-scarce country and rivers are not only invaluable sources of drinking water for both humans and animals, they are also essential for irrigation in the farming sector.

"For us World Cleanup Day presents a great opportunity to build on the Department's river cleanup initiative, launched earlier in the year. We're also closing in on our 1000th cleanup and with all the events planned for the day, are racing towards that very important milestone," says Lunga Schoeman, the Group's CSI manager.

The Shoprite Group staged Africa's biggest cleanup last year in which 6 000 people in 11 African countries participated in more than 500 cleanup events taking place over five days. The retailer followed that up by again mobilising volunteers inside and outside of its business to be part of various community cleanups on World Cleanup Day 2018. Since then regular cleanups have become common place for its staff and customers, the latest taking place on Mandela Day 2019 when stores partnered with their communities to remove waste from their neighbourhoods.

Volunteers interested in joining the emerging movement can register for existing cleanups or organise their own on www.actforchange.africa - a digital platform the Group developed in partnership with volunteerism organisation Brownie Points.

"Our aim since starting our cleanup drive more than a year ago has always been to bring about behavioural change, which we believe is at the root of our waste problem. With every cleanup we're seeing evidence of our ultimate goal - to create a movement of active citizens who act for change in their communities," explains Schoeman.

Recycling is a top priority for the retailer, who in its operations has a zero waste-to-landfill approach. Partnerships with waste management companies are therefore a key component of its cleanups: "We encourage all cleanup organisers to partner with local recyclers so that as little waste as possible ends up in our already overtaxed landfill sites.

"We must preserve precious natural resources like water for future generations. Participating in a cleanup might seem like a small thing to do, but if enough people do it, over time it will have a massive impact. So, I urge every South African to go out on World Cleanup Day and do their part to ensure that our children benefit from a clean, safe environment," concludes Schoeman.

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