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### **Industrious retired pastor from Kwadukuza not slowed down by lockdown**

Shakaville resident Simon Kwesaba has not allowed lockdown to let the proverbial grass grow under his feet. He's continued to care for his community providing food parcels from the donation of surplus food he receives from Checkers Mount Richmore Village.

He adds to the food parcels using fresh produce from his Checkers-supported food garden - Seed of Hope: "We harvested vegetables in April and recently planted new crops, which we look forward to harvesting by the end of the year again," says Kwesaba.

Their garden is thriving as a result of the training in permaculture farming methods they received from Checkers as well as the gardening tools, a water tank and irrigation pipes and plant materials the retailer gave them, in addition to upgrading the kitchen of the preschool run by Simon's wife, Eunice.

Seed of Hope is one of the 336 community organisations that have since the start of lockdown benefitted from the R57 million in surplus food, which Checkers' parent company, the Shoprite Group has donated.

"During the hard lockdown children did not go to school and were missing out on the daily meal they would normally get from there. Because of Checkers' support we were able to increase how frequently we served food, from once a week to once a day. With level 1 lockdown, we've gone back to providing food once a week to 50 families," explains Kwesaba, who in the course of the lockdown acquired a bakkie to transport all the goods collected from Checkers.

"Ensuring that members in our communities don't go hungry is an absolute priority for the Shoprite Group," says Lunga Schoeman, the Group's CSI Manager. "In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, we have doubled down on our efforts to provide food to hungry South Africans and have distributed over 20 million meals since the start of the lockdown."

"I can't begin to express how grateful I am to Checkers for their unwavering support through the years and especially now during this particularly difficult time. It's because of loyal partners like them that I can keep on doing what I love, which is to help the people in my community in a meaningful way," adds Kwesaba.

END

CAPTION: A Seed of Hope beneficiary takes home the food she is able to collect because of the organisation's partnership with Checkers Mount Richmore Village, which sees it collecting surplus food from the store twice a week.