

Food garden provides 900 nutritious meals daily

(May 2021) The food garden at the Nokuphila Community Services in Springs, east of Johannesburg, helps to feed 450 school children two wholesome meals a day. Following a recent partnership with Shoprite, the organisation hopes to reach even more vulnerable community members over the next year.

The food garden, started in 2011, helps to substantially reduce the running costs of the organisation. Facility manager Phetheni Maseko explains: “We fetch children in need from schools in the area and assist them with homework and social support. The garden helps us to feed the 300 aftercare learners lunch at the drop-in centre and then a packed supper. We also feed 150 little ones at the day care centre breakfast and lunch, as well as 54 elderly people from the community.”

“With Shoprite’s assistance we want to grow the garden so that we have enough produce to not only cook for our learners, but so that the learners can also take vegetables home a few times a week,” she says.

In line with this vision, Shoprite is providing extensive gardening training over a period of 18 months to Nokuphila's three gardeners, some of the learners, their parents and other staff members. There are also plans to handover 15 ‘garden in a bucket’ starter kits to community members interested in starting their own food gardens.

Shoprite is also installing a rainwater harvesting system for the garden at Nokuphila, including a water tank.

Phetheni is very upbeat about this partnership: “We believe that the learners will pass down their knowledge of how gardening can create food security to their parents. They’ll be able to gain the skill of growing their own vegetables.”

“We’re so glad that together with Shoprite we’ll be able to fight hunger further and have an even greater positive impact on the broader community.”

Shoprite has been supporting food gardens across South Africa since 2015 and has partnered with more than 130 community food gardens and 675 home gardens, benefitting over 32 000 people.

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