

About 3000 families benefit from Pamodzi Emergency Project

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Last week more than R250 000 was made available for food parcels in Welkom and Orkney. On Tuesday, 16 June, 1 950 parcels were distributed to registered employees and their families of Pamodzi Welkom while a further 930 parcels were handed out in Klerksdorp on Friday, 19 June to employees of Pamodzi Orkney.

Chairperson of the Orkney Pamodzi Emergency Fund, Johan Gerber, says some of the money that was raised during the recent OFM/Helping Hand radiothon was used to buy a certain portion of the produce. Each food parcel contained necessities to the value of more than R100 while additional donations by Sasko and farmers who gave sausages and vegetables were also handed out to the long queue of workers. Food parcels will, depending on the availability of funds and the judgment of the various committees handling the process, be distributed every two weeks or every month. The Orkney Pamodzi Emergency Fund was initiated by various church leaders of the area.

During the last week of May, OFM in association with Helping Hand hosted a radiothon in Welkom. The aim of the radiothon was to raise much needed funds for the workers and their families of the Pomodzi mine group in the Goldfields and the North West province. A total of over R1 million was raised within the twelve hours of the live broadcast. According to Dr Danie Langner, executive director of Solidarity Helping Hand, about R850 000 of this amount has thus far been collected, while pledges of nearly R200 000 are still due. Helping Hand is administrating the funds.

All employees of Pamodzi, regardless of trade union affiliation, receive assistance from the feeding project. However, the project requires a registration process, which means that employees must collect a form at their nearest trade union or mine office, complete the form and hand it in at the local Emergency Project committee and provide proof of employment at Pamodzi. People, who have in the meantime found other work, have moved or whose provident funds have paid out, cannot register for the feeding project. The lists are also audited each month in conjunction with Pamodzi management.

About six months after the original salary problems at the gold company Pamodzi Gold, the employees of the bankrupt company and their families are still down and out. Social problems due to financial pressure in these mining communities are becoming more and more common. "The social need in these communities is severe and very urgent. Although the donations received so far can relieve the immediate need, additional assistance is essential. While relief is not yet in sight for the employees of Pamodzi, everything must be done to give social assistance to the community," Langner explained.

More than 1 800 employees work at Pamodzi's Orkney mine just outside Klerksdorp while a further 3 800 and 3 900 work at the Pamodzi Welkom and Pamodzi East Rand mines respectively.

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