

Farming project for HIV and AIDS patients

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29 Nov 2012

MAHIKENG: People living with HIV and AIDS in the North West will be given a chance to work on farms as part of a job creation and empowerment project.



The project will be launched in Mahikeng on Friday and rolled out across the province.

"The project is aimed at assisting beneficiaries, who are mostly people living with HIV and AIDS and their families, to (produce and sell vegetables) to local and other markets," said provincial government spokesman Moses Kgwele.

The project, which was initiated by Premier Thandi Modise, is expected to create permanent and seasonal jobs for the local community.

Kgwele said the event on Friday is part of the build-up event to the National World AIDS Day event that will be hosted in Potchefstroom on Saturday, in partnership with the South African National Aids Council and the Presidency.

Kgwele noted that North West continued to do well in the fight against HIV and AIDS.

"As of December 2011, the HIV testing rate was 93%, and the annual HIV prevalence survey among pregnant women, showed a decline in the province, from 30% to 29,6 %, in the year 2009 and 2010 respectively," Kgwele said.

He said the Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV Programme was strengthened, and all pregnant women were encouraged to know their HIV status in order to increase access to treatment and care.

"The number of community caregivers also increased from to 5 330 to 6 439, while the number of support groups for people living with HIV expanded from 90 to 150," he said.

Kgwele said as part of the programme launch on Friday, Premier Modise will distribute sport kits to schools from disadvantaged communities around Mahikeng.

She will also visit the children's ward at Mahikeng provincial hospital to assess renovations and the impact of interventions done through the Ruth Thandi Modise Health Development Trust.

"The ward was adopted by the premier after she was touched by the conditions and the plight of children from destitute family backgrounds during the 2011 Mandela Week.

"She will also use the opportunity to distribute Christmas lunch packs to children who are admitted at the ward," said Kgwele.

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