

transform.

LOVE CITIES SA NETWORK PUBLICATION

QUARTER ONE 2025



**LOVE POTCH Unites
Leaders to Reimagine
the Future**

PG NO. 10

**LOVE HOWICK Brings
Flood Relief to Stranded
Community**

PG NO. 7

**LOVE MKHONDO
Supports Vulnerable
Children**

PG NO. 9

‘TOGETHER transforming South Africa - one town at a time’

table of contents.

01	INTRODUCTION
02	CEO MESSAGE: TIME TO ACT
03	LOVE CITIES REACH - AFTER 1 YEAR
06 - 17	PARTNER SUCCESS STORIES
18	BECOME A PARTNER
19 - 21	LOVE CITIES NEWS
22	UPCOMING EVENTS
23	SUPPORT US
24	STAY CONNECTED
25	PLACE YOUR AD HERE

welcome.

This Edition of **transform.** celebrates courage, collaboration, and community-led transformation. From the Love Cities Annual Conference in Howick to grassroots heroes in Potchefstroom, Mpophomeni, and beyond, we're reminded that lasting change begins with ordinary people doing extraordinary things.

Through education, clean-ups, disaster response, and youth programs, each initiative builds a stronger South Africa. Flip through these pages and join a movement uniting dignity, opportunity, and hope.

This is more than a network—it's a movement. **Let's keep going—together.**





time to act.

‘Postponement is the father of failure’ - Elbert Hubbard

South Africa has always been a land of opportunity, big dreams and untapped potential. I used to think that all we needed was a more innovative thinking, more growth-orientated strategies, and a stronger sense of **‘togetherness or ubuntu as we call it in Africa’**, to realise these dreams/plans/ideas. But the more I am involved in igniting change at grassroots level across our country through the **‘Love Cities’** movement, I really am beginning to believe that there are more important ingredients needed to start realising this **‘(South) African Dream’**.

I have sat in endless meetings, read countless articles and sat through many arduous dialogues around ‘rebuilding our country’, and there are **SO MANY** ideas, strategies, theories and desires to make a change together. **We don’t lack plans—we lack action** (in my opinion). It feels like people are stuck in endless cycles of procrastination – and have fallen victim to the complacent waiting game. We know that ‘he who hesitates is lost’ and my sense is that this era of our country’s history does not need hesitation but courageous action, lest we get lost in more differed hope. The call to step up, be bold, do something and ‘pitch up’ to bring about change is stronger than ever.

Even if we get it wrong, or don’t quite hit the mark first time round, at least we can say to the generations to come that we *‘dared greatly, took risks and made a move for change’*. I am extremely privileged to be a part of a courageous group of ordinary South Africans from diverse backgrounds, who have decided to ACT and start the onerous task of bringing change in our cities, towns and villages across this great Nation. One-action-at-a-time is our mantra!

This Quarterly Publication serves as a tribute to what’s possible when we leave the spectators seat and take our place in the arena of risk. Take time to read these stories of change, hard work, unwavering commitment, and bold steps taken by everyday South Africans (in amongst their normal day-jobs). These actions are creating the future we all dream of in South Africa, that one day will ring out as key defining moments in our Nation’s history.

It’s time to **ACT** and let this Love Cities Publication spur you on to step up to the plate in your neighbourhood, village, town or city, and start making a difference (no matter how small it is!). Let’s never become bystanders in our own destiny but rather actively participate in creating thriving communities and prosperous people. The future is **NOW** in your community, and the answer to unlock this future is **YOU!**



Matt Hogarty

FOUNDER & CEO

Let’s ACT

love cities network reach.



L♥VE
MANGAUNG

L♥VE
NELSON
MANDELA BAY

L♥VE
HOWICK

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MPOPHOMENI

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NOTTIES

L♥VE
PAARL

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POTCH

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MKHONDO

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MULDERSDRIFT

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nelson mandela bay.

EASTERN CAPE

LOVE
NELSON
MANDELA BAY



*Love Nelson Mandela Bay
Team Leaders
Dirk & Caron van der Mescht*

Love Nelson Mandela Bay (formerly Mandela Bay Community Movement) has partnered with Love Cities, integrating its three-year track record in community transformation into the Love Cities network.

The collaboration will leverage shared strategies and methodologies to enhance local impact, while continuing Love Nelson Mandela Bay's flagship project, One House a Month, aimed at building stronger communities. Each month one house or organisation in strategic areas are chosen for a makeover, where both the built environment and people are transformed through collective acts of kindness. This becomes a doorway to further long term, sustainable projects in that particular area.

The partnership aims to amplify measurable social development in the Eastern Cape region. Love Cities warmly welcomes the new partner, anticipating expanded collective achievements.



'We envision communities that are thriving and vibrant.
Spaces that inspire people and bring hope.
Relationships that allow people to reach their full
potential and reach their dreams.
People that build up and care deeply for others'

Love Howick, in collaboration with the **Rotary Club of Howick and Hilton**, proudly celebrates the success of the **Gear Up Program**. This impactful initiative directly addresses a significant barrier to education faced by many students in non-urban areas: long-distance travel to school.

Recognizing that many students walk more than 10 kilometers daily, the Gear Up Program recently donated **40 second-hand bicycles** to deserving students from four schools in Mpophomeni. To qualify, students submitted heartfelt motivation letters and sketches of their dream bicycles, making the selection process deeply personal and inspiring.

Our Love Howick teams were met with shrieks of delight as students received this 'gift of a lifetime' and most of their parents had come out to witness this moment as well.



Love Howick's EDUTEAM, who are spearheading efforts to capacitate teachers and principals in local schools, highlighted the program's profound impact, noting, *"Community partnerships like this one with Rotary make a significant difference to the lives of people. The sheer joy on kids faces as bicycles were delivered to schools, shows just how much these acts of kindness are impacting our communities."*

Through such initiatives, Love Howick remains steadfastly dedicated to promoting quality education, including literacy, coding, entrepreneurship, and environmental studies, contributing significantly towards building a prosperous, healthy community.

Let's continue working together to ensure brighter futures for our children and community!

muldersdrift.

GAUTENG

LOVE
MULDERSDRIFT

Love Muldersdrift, in partnership with CDR Equipping, Bethany House, and Community Ministries, has successfully surpassed their goal in the recent school shoe drive, **collecting enough funds to provide 600 pairs of new school shoes for local children.**

This initiative highlights the community's dedication to ensuring that children in Muldersdrift begin the new year with confidence and comfort. This remarkable achievement reflects the generosity and collaborative spirit of the local community.

Thanks to everyone involved for making a meaningful difference in the lives of these children.



Empowering our children, one confident step at a time.



Inspiring stories of people who love and care for our community are coming soon! This is part of Love Muldersdrift's mission to **Change the Narrative across our community.** We want to ignite fresh conversations that build HOPE, share stories of kindness and inspire active participation from the community.



Love Muldersdrift, rooted in the **Cradle of Kind Humans**, is all about uplifting our communities.

When we invest in people, restore hope, serve, help, and partner together—positive, lasting change becomes possible.

In response to recent devastating floods in Lidgetton KwaZulu Natal, the Love Howick team quickly stepped into action, **providing urgent assistance to over 200 severely impacted households**. Many residents were left without homes, food, blankets, and other essentials, making this a humanitarian crisis. This operation brought HOPE to hundreds of stranded community members, orving what is possible when we respomnd with compassion.



Building a Brighter Future Through Education

At Love Howick, we believe improving the quality of education is key to unlocking South Africa's future success. Over the past year, we've partnered with **Nhlanhleni SP School** in uMngeni Municipality to drive transformative change, both inside and outside the classroom. Through specialised training in Literacy, Coding, Entrepreneurship, and Environmental Studies, we've equipped educators with tools to inspire a new generation. **The results?** A 23% increase in literacy levels across our partner schools and a vibrant shift in mindset as learners embrace technology and innovation!

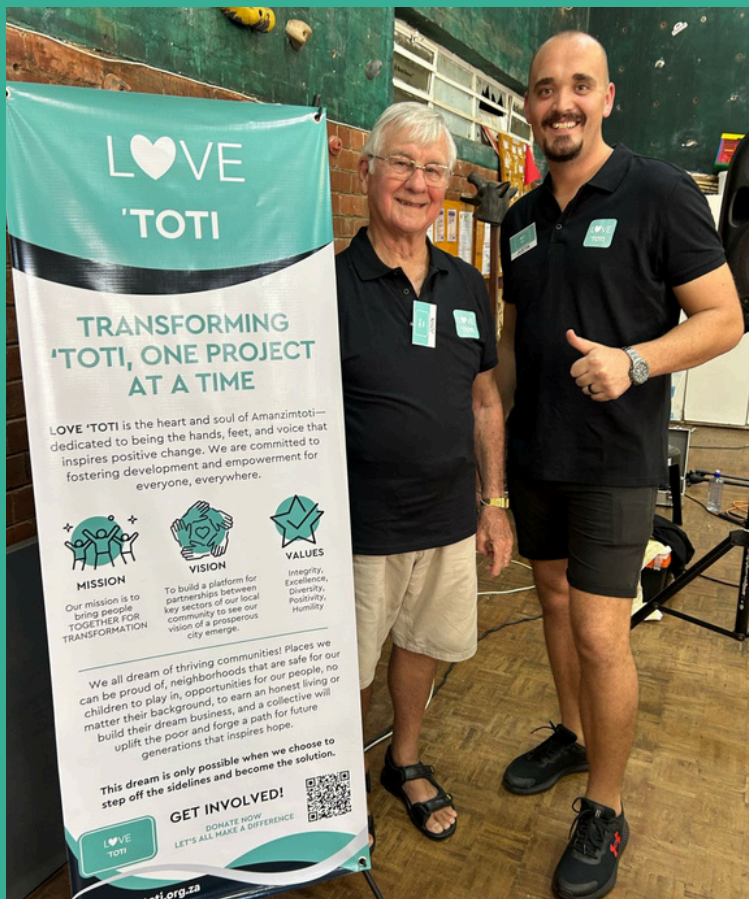
One of our biggest challenges remains crumbling infrastructure: broken roofs, overgrown gardens, and inadequate access to water and electricity. **Halfway Toyota Howick** and **Midmar Building Supplies** teamed up with Love Howick to revitalise Nhlanhleni Primary! Freshly painted walls, repaired fixtures, and rejuvenated grounds are breathing new life into the school.

***"Halfway Toyota Howick is honoured to collaborate with Love Howick in supporting and advancing meaningful community initiatives. Through this partnership, we remain committed to fostering positive change and making a lasting impact on the lives of those in our community."** CEO Halfway Toyota*



Love Toti's official launch event, 'Toti Re-Imagined', brought together passionate Amanzimtoti community members to collaboratively shape the town's future. The gathering featured vibrant discussions, innovative strategies, and a shared commitment to positive change, showcasing the power of community collaboration.

Attendees contributed ideas that Love Toti now aims to transform into actionable initiatives focused on **building unity, tackling waste and CBD rejuvenation**. The organisation thanked participants and encouraged ongoing engagement as they work toward a brighter, reimagined future for Amanzimtoti.



Love Toti in conjunction with Tidy Towns, 1st Amanzimtoti Scouts, Toti Conservancy, Sapphire Coast Tourism and Ethekewini Municipality had a very successful Promenade Rehab. This cleanup will be ongoing as we work together to rehabilitates our built environment - one square metre at a time. We are calling on all neighborhoods to arrange a cleanup and join the movement for positive change!



Love Mkhondo, led by team leader Sheldon Harris of Wellspring Ministries, drives transformative community initiatives in the Mkhondo region. With a collaborative approach and a strong volunteer base, this team are achieving some great impact in their town.

Key programs include:

- **Uzwelo Children's Home:** Shelter and care for 54 vulnerable children.
- **URock Program:** Supports 650+ orphaned/vulnerable children across 12 villages and feeds 1,000+ during school holidays.
- **Maranatha Primary School:** A full-time primary school offering values-based IEB curriculum education.
- **High School Learning Centre:** Provides rural learners with digital resources and teacher support to complete IEB courses online.

Aligned with the Love Cities movement's goals of empowerment and sustainable change, Love Mkhondo aims to further uplift the community through education, care, and holistic support. The initiative anticipates expanded impact as it collaborates with Love Cities.



Piet Retief High School took to the streets to clean up our environment and ensure that our town is restored to one of beauty.

This is how we are changing the story in our town - one block at a time. Thanks to the many volunteers who came out to support our clean up efforts.



Love Potch (Tlokwe) recently facilitated an inspiring and insightful **Community Narrative Development Workshop** at the beautiful Makojalo Venue and Guest Farm. The event brought together **35 influential community leaders from diverse industries to collectively reimagine the future of Potchefstroom.**

Participants engaged in meaningful activities designed to spark deep reflection and collaboration, exploring questions such as:

- *Big Picture:* What does your ideal Potchefstroom look like?
- *Emotions:* What emotions are evoked when you think of our town?
- *Memories:* Reflecting on impactful memories, both positive and challenging.
- *Key Phrases:* Identifying the phrases often used to describe our community.
- *Role Players:* Recognizing influential individuals and groups within Potchefstroom.
- *Pain to Power:* Strategizing how to transform community challenges into strengths.
- *How to Win:* Defining success indicators for community initiatives.
- *Strategy:* Planning effective community engagement and the launch of Love Potch.

The dynamic discussions stirred nostalgia, fostered introspection, and ultimately **realigned the collective vision for Potchefstroom.** The results of this workshop will be used to shape the communications strategy for the town, crafting compelling stories that stir hearts towards an exciting future.

“The moments are vital to unite the community behind a common vision. To create a better future for our community we need to SEE a better future and shift our beliefs in line with this vision. We are on a path towards changing how we see our town”

WESTERN CAPE

Love Paarl NPC proudly announces their exciting venture, 'The Gathering Café', a project designed to foster sustainable business practices and community engagement in Paarl.

Situated on a picturesque property in Paarl's New Orleans area, The Gathering Café is a strategic project that seeks to create:

- **Sustainability:** Generating income to support the broader initiatives of Love Paarl NPC.
- **Networking Hub:** Offering a dedicated space where solopreneurs and local businesses can connect, collaborate, and grow.
- **Training and Entrepreneurship Development:** The Cafe' will act as a hub for training unemployed people in various job skills to help them become more employable or gain courage to start their own business venture.
- **Event Venue:** Creating an attractive setting ideal for meetings, conferences, and celebrations.

The Café has significantly benefited the community by creating employment opportunities, including hiring a dedicated manager to oversee operations. Additionally, the venue's rental costs have been generously waived until the café reaches profitability, thanks to in-kind funding arrangements.

The Gathering Café is swiftly becoming a popular and vibrant spot, bringing people together to network, celebrate, and strengthen community ties.



nottingham road.

KWAZULU NATAL



Love Notties continues to demonstrate outstanding community commitment, leading ongoing **cleanup and maintenance efforts across Nottingham Road**. Their dedicated Cleanup Team sponsored by the Social Employment Fund, a valuable Love Cities Partner, have been hard at work trimming trees, weeding, and conducting general cleaning, ensuring the village remains tidy, welcoming, and well-maintained.



These consistent cleanup initiatives have significantly enhanced the appeal of Nottingham Road, benefiting residents, local businesses, hospitality venues, and visitors alike. The re-opening of the local Post Office further highlights the positive impacts of these community-driven efforts.



Through their proactive approach, Love Notties exemplifies true community spirit, bringing people together to care for and invest in their shared environment. Their efforts reflect a deep commitment to creating a clean, attractive, and vibrant village



Love Notties continues to care for the needs of the most vulnerable in their community through the innovative Love Cities 'Swop Shop' concept. Once a month they supply basic food supplies to those who have earned a food token through voluntary work or bringing in recycled goods. **An exchange of services which benefit all.** Part of the program also involved environmental education where food parcel recipients are versed in the importance of recycling, and environmental sustainability. This win-win program is a sustainable, and dignified way of feeding the poor and ensuring our community is cared for at the same time.



Volunteers restored Chris Hani Road, tackling illegal dumping and fostering environmental pride.

In a remarkable demonstration of community pride and environmental responsibility, volunteers from Love Mpopphomeni recently organized and executed a successful clean-up of an illegal dumpsite on Chris Hani Road, opposite St Anne’s Catholic Church.

The dedicated volunteers generously gave their time and effort to restore cleanliness and beauty to the affected area. This event is part of Love Mpopphomeni’s ongoing commitment to establishing a litter-free environment and actively promoting community engagement.

"Together for a litter-free Mpopphomeni and a cleaner tomorrow," said the organizers, highlighting the positive impact of united community action.

Residents, businesses, and local schools are encouraged to continue supporting and participating in these essential community efforts, reinforcing the importance of collective action and environmental stewardship.



Love Bergville is building thriving communities rooted in safety, opportunity, and collective hope.

By mobilising ordinary people to step off the sidelines and unite behind a shared vision, the initiative drives lasting social transformation through belief in humanity's potential.

Through a dynamic learning community, Love Bergville identifies best practices, forges partnerships with NGOs, businesses, and government stakeholders, and scales investments that empower residents.

This is realised by equipping the community with skills development programs, launching environmental initiatives like urban gardens and waste management, fostering economic growth through entrepreneurship, and strengthening social bonds via cultural and safety programs.

Together, these efforts create a ripple effect—regenerating ecosystems, uplifting vulnerable groups, and inspiring future generations to lead with purpose, ensuring dignity and hope become universal legacies.



"When communities unite, miracles happen, and joy multiplies."

Love Potch, in partnership with Premier Foods, successfully **delivered joy and smiles to 230 children at the Abraham Kriel Orphanage** through their heartwarming Christmas Project. Each child received a thoughtfully prepared gift hamper filled with essential and delightful items.

Premier Foods generously sponsored these special hampers, carefully curated based on advice from the orphanage. Hampers included practical items such as stationery and scientific calculators, as well as comforting gifts like teddy bears. Additionally, lunch boxes and water bottles branded by Blue Ribbon, a subsidiary of Premier Foods, added an extra touch of care and excitement.

This meaningful collaboration showcased the spirit of giving and community care, making the festive season memorable for every child involved. Well done to Love Potch and Premier Foods for their outstanding efforts!



nottingham road.

KWAZULU NATAL

LOVE
NOTTIES

In a heartwarming display of community spirit and collaboration, Love Notties recently facilitated a meaningful connection between Notties Primary School and Guardian Hygiene & Safety. Faced with a surplus of bread rolls, Notties Primary needed support to manage this unexpected excess.



Guardian Hygiene & Safety promptly stepped in, ensuring the surplus bread rolls reached the delighted students of Shea O'Connor Combined School. This act not only helped Notties Primary recoup costs but also brought joy and additional nourishment to the Shea O'Connor students.

This initiative perfectly illustrates the strength and unity within Nottingham Road's community, highlighting how partnerships among local businesses, schools, and residents can yield impactful outcomes.

"Better together!" expressed organizers, underscoring the significance of community cooperation and mutual support. **Thank you, Guardian Hygiene & Safety, for your incredible community spirit!**



We believe in a better **Bloemfontein (Mangaung)** for ALL. By creating a platform where businesses, community and even local government can unite in a mutually beneficial relationship, we set the stage for change to happen. **JUST BELIEVE IT CAN!**



As part of their restoration efforts, **Love Mangaung** has been working on fixing up the **Bloem Shelter** by giving it some much needed maintenance, and a general facelift. The Shelter has been a key supporter of the Love Mangaung cause and this was a wonderful way to show generosity and compassion.

Love Mangaung is gathering key stakeholders in May to present their strategy aimed at fostering a **Safe, Clean, Prosperous, Inclusive, and Vibrant** Mangaung. Let's support this exciting vision!



become a partner.

Join our growing network of dedicated organisations committed to community transformation. If you or your organisation is passionate about making a meaningful impact and wishes to collaborate with like-minded partners, we'd love to hear from you!

Providing passionate community activists with training, strategic direction, resources, a help desk, events, project toolkits, financial and legal support, links to partners and MORE!

To explore partnership opportunities, please visit our website at www.lovecities.org.za or contact us directly via email at hello@lovecities.org.za



online leadership program.

Love Cities, in collaboration with Nationbuilder, has officially launched the LEAD.inc Academy—a transformative eight month leadership training program, tailored specifically for leaders within the non-profit sector. The initiative aims to empower NPO leaders by providing them with practical skills, effective strategies, and access to a supportive network.

The inaugural cohort for 2025 includes 21 dedicated leaders representing six regions across South Africa: Eastern Cape, Free State, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, North West, and Western Cape. These participants are passionate about enhancing their leadership capabilities and driving sustainable change within their respective communities.

The LEAD.inc Academy curriculum offers:

- Tailored learning specifically designed for the NPO sector
- Engaging and locally relevant content
- Practical, weekly activities
- Ongoing support from experienced coaches

This groundbreaking program underscores Love Cities' commitment to fostering impactful leadership and sustainable community development throughout South Africa.

"Equipping leaders, strengthening communities, and driving lasting impact – that's what LEAD.inc is all about," shared the program organisers. We warmly welcome all the leaders to this exciting new journey and look forward to witnessing the transformative impact of their collective efforts.



annual conference.



'When we started the Love Cities journey, one of our core values was to cultivate deep connections, and a relational community of mutual respect, support and encouragement. I remember feeling all alone 9 years ago when we launched Love Howick, with very few people engaged in the work of community transformation in South Africa.. This annual gathering aims to change that' - Matt Hogarty

CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDED:

Theory of Change Workshop (Feb 19-20).
Speaker: Anniza De Wet

Main Conference Insights (Feb 21-22):
Speaker: Johan Oliver

Recharge & Connection Day: Networking in KwaZulu-Natal Midlands

Under the powerful theme "Buffalo-Brave," the Love Cities Annual Conference 2025 successfully united changemakers from across the region at the Mushroom Farm's &KIN Conference Centre in Howick. Over four inspiring days, attendees embraced challenges, celebrated courage, and explored innovative strategies for driving meaningful social change.

This annual gathering underscored the resilience, dedication, and bravery of community leaders committed to promoting equity, health, and economic empowerment. **Special appreciation goes to our sponsors, REMA TIP TOP and DUNLOP, whose support was integral to the event's success.**

Attendees departed with renewed energy, practical tools, and an expanded network of fellow changemakers, ready to boldly and strategically tackle the challenges ahead.



activation event.

Love Cities Hosts Inspiring Community Empowerment Activation Event



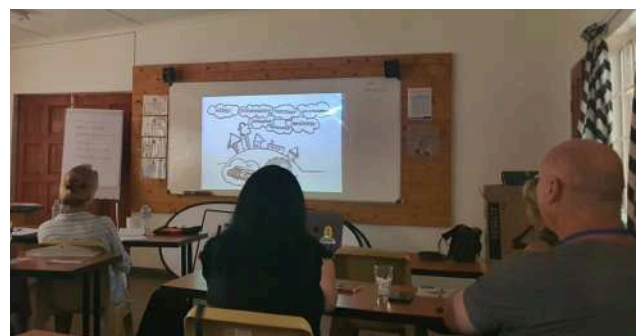
From February 25-27, Love Cities hosted a dynamic training event led by Matt Hogarty, focusing on empowering communities through collective action and sustainable change. The event highlighted innovative communication strategies, including arts and music, to shift narratives towards positive, asset-based stories filled with hope and possibility.



Participants explored effective community-building tools such as the **Greenlight Poverty Tool** and the **Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD)** approach. These methodologies are designed to build resilient, confident communities capable of driving meaningful and sustainable progress.

Additionally, the training introduced the Platform for Partnership, a structured framework to facilitate effective community development and ensure ongoing, impactful monitoring. Love Cities Partners spent the day visiting various sites to see **HOW** projects are run.

The event was more than just a training session; it represented a significant step toward fostering communities where **every voice contributes to creating united and thriving environments.**



upcoming.



LOVE CITIES SA EVENTS

One of the key ways we support Community Transformation Initiatives across our network is through monthly training and co-lab sessions.

These provide a valuable time for capacity building, sharing of ideas and solution orientated discussions. Please diarise these dates and join us.

THU 24 APRIL	08:30 - 09:30	Co-Lab: Greenlight	Host: Greenlight Team
THU 24 APRIL	13:00 - 14:00	Online Information Session - New Partners	Speaker: Matt Hogarty

MON 5 MAY	08:30 - 9:00	Marketing Online Discussion	Marketing Team
TUE 6 MAY	08:30 - 9:30	Leadership Circle: Event Planning	Facilitator: Bridgitte Brown - Events Manager (Michaelhouse)
10 / 11 MAY	08:00	Mzansi Mile: Fundraiser	Various Sporting Codes
TUE 20 - 22 MAY	ALL DAY	Activation Training: New Partners	Venue: Love Howick
TUE 27 MAY	08:30 - 09:30	Co-Lab	Host: Judith Mtsewu
TUE 27 MAY	13:00 - 14:00	Online Information Session - New Partners	Speaker: Matt Hogarty

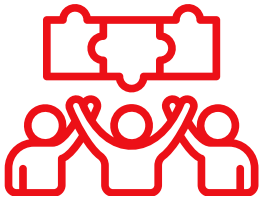
TUE 10 JUNE	08:30 - 09:30	Leadership Circle: Building a Strong Team	Facilitator: HR Consultants & Matt Hogarty
TUE 24 JUNE	08:30 - 09:30	Co-Lab	Host: Doni Hogarty

FRI 18 JULY	ALL DAY	Mandela Day : City Serve Day	All Partners
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support.



Section 18 (a) Tax Exemption Certificate Available



Participate in our upcoming events and volunteer opportunities.



Consider starting a Love Cities project in your area!



Engage with us on social media to spread the word about our impact and share your stories.



Consider sponsoring a town through our network, providing vital support to kick-start transformation projects.

Zapper™



BANKING DETAILS:

Love Cities NPC

Account no: 630 998 48302

Branch no: 220 725

First National Bank Howick



STAY CONNECTED

Follow our journey on social media for live updates, behind-the-scenes content, and announcements of upcoming events. Your active participation enriches our community and enhances our collective impact



CONTACT US

hello@lovecities.org.za www.lovecities.org.za

EVERYONE. EVERYWHERE. EMPOWERED.



WALK | RUN | CANOE | SWIM

MZANSI MILE

(LOVE CITIES PARTNER CITY)

Sat 10 / Sun 11 May 2025

TICKETS: R100pp



PLACE YOUR
AD **HERE**

HELLO@LOVECITIES.ORG.ZA

CONTACT US TODAY