



Legal Aid SA's Advocate Brian Nair and Mr Patrick Hundermark with Mr Zhao Dechang

LEGAL AID SA WELCOMES DELEGATION FROM CHINESE MINISTRY OF JUSTICE

On December 4, 2017 a high profile delegation led by the Deputy Minister of Justice for the People's Republic of China, Mr Zhao Dechang, was welcomed by Legal Aid SA's Chief Legal Executive Mr Patrick Hundermark; National Operations Executive Advocate Brian Nair, Gauteng Provincial Executive Advocate Wilna Lambley and Pretoria Head of Office Ms Flavia Isola, at the Legal Aid SA Pretoria Office.

The aim of the visit was to exchange ideas,

explore and mobilise opportunities that will enable good relations with institutions of global significance within the legal fraternity. The Deputy Minister of Justice for the People's Republic of China was very pleased with the effective processes and systems in place at Legal Aid SA, which are aimed at making access to justice a reality both locally and globally. He also congratulated our organisation for affording career opportunities to Candidate Attorneys.

The delegation also met the Chief Executive Officer of the Law Society of South Africa and the Deputy Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development in South Africa, Mr John Jeffery.



Mr Victor Mfanafuthi Shabangu

WELCOME TO OUR NEW COMMUNICATION EXECUTIVE

Legal Aid SA is pleased to announce the appointment of Victor Mfanafuthi Shabangu as the new Communication Executive, based at National Office. Mr Shabangu joined us on 1 October 2017, and brings over 20 years of work experience to our organisation, of which 15 have been in executive positions in the marketing and communication space. He has worked in various sectors such as mining, from where he joins us; property development; telecommunications and fast-moving consumer goods to name a few.

"I am very happy to be joining Legal Aid South Africa, which is at the coal-face of protecting people's legal rights and by extension their basic human rights. Having worked for brands such as Tiger Brands, Clover and Vodacom, I look forward to building on what has already been achieved, and further leverage the Legal Aid South Africa brand and promote access to justice for the indigent," he says. Mr Shabangu holds a BA Communication degree and a Post-Graduate Diploma in Marketing Management from UNISA.

Please note that our offices are closed between 18 December 2017 and 7 January 2018. We reopen nationwide on 8 January. Wishing you a restful holiday season!

OUR VISION

A South Africa in which the rights and responsibilities enshrined in the Constitution are realised to ensure equality, justice and a better life for all.

LEGAL AID SA CELEBRATES NATIONAL ACHIEVERS

Legal Aid SA recently hosted its annual National Achiever Awards in Mahikeng to show appreciation for employees who have gone beyond the call of duty and excelled in the provision of access to justice.

At this event, legal practitioners and support staff are recognised for their commitment and service excellence demonstrated during a particular reporting year. CEO Ms Vidhu Vedalankar; Board members; Provincial Executives and senior managers were in attendance on the evening.

Keynote speaker Judge Martha Mbhele, a previous Legal Aid SA high achiever, highlighted the crucial work that the organisation does in noting that ethical lawyering and quality legal services cannot be divorced from one another. All staff celebrated at this event are testament to this, and we applaud their dedication, passion and innovation in championing access to justice.

We applaud all our achievers!



Winners were awarded in nine categories:

CATEGORY	WINNER	LEGAL AID SA OFFICE
Support Employee	Mapule Marema	Limpopo/Mpumalanga Provincial Office
Paralegal	Bridget Nkashe	Westonaria Satellite Office
Supervisor/Programme Manager	Dayalan Naidoo	National Office
Manager	Cuma Siyo	Botshabelo Office
Business Unit	Athlone Office	Athlone Office
Lawyer	Dineo Sono	Kroonstad Office
Lawyer	David Malan	Graaff-Reinet Office
Civil	Jabulile Duba	Cape Town Office
Lawyer	Pregasen Marimuthu	Durban Office

STAKEHOLDERS STRENGTHEN TIES TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO JUSTICE AND SERVICES IN MONTCLARE



Stakeholders involved in the networking forum

The Teddy Bear Clinic along with Legal Aid SA's Johannesburg Office; the South African Police Service and South African National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence convened a forum to discuss how these organisations can pull together their services to bring a holistic solution to social issues experienced in communities, particularly the community of Montclare, Johannesburg.

Each organisation took the opportunity to share their services and which target groups they focus on. The networking and information-sharing session saw various contacts being established and common ground identified to better service clients who approach these organisations in abuse cases or other related situations.

The generosity of the officials from Legal Aid SA's Johannesburg Office was displayed when they donated perishable foods to a children's soup kitchen in Montclare.



Eastern Cape Regional Court President, Samson Dunywa (centre, at podium) with (from left): Queenstown Head of Office Yolundi Ngxola-Tshona; Uitenhage Office Supervisory Legal Practitioner Jacques Meyer; George Office Supervisory Legal Practitioner Pieter Terblanche and Uitenhage Head of Office Dr Henry Lerm

LEGAL AID SA PRAISED FOR DILIGENCE AND ETHICAL CONDUCT

Eastern Cape Regional Court President Mr Samson Dunywa shared a few good words on Legal Aid SA's professional and ethical conduct at the recent memorial service of our Eastern Cape Provincial Legal Manager, Mr Vuyisile Dayimani. These comments were made with the knowledge that the late Mr Dayimani had been with Legal Aid SA for over a decade. "Legal Aid SA practitioners are professional, ethical and very diligent," stated Mr Dunywa.

He paid homage to Mr Dayimani, asking many to follow in his footsteps of selfless dedication to his work. He commended Mr Dayimani for agreeing to be transferred from office to office, often far away from his own home, to see to it that the needs of ordinary South African citizens are met.

Mr Dunywa also commended Legal Aid SA legal practitioners for maintaining and upholding the image of the legal fraternity and the organisation, saying that in all the towns he had presided over as a magistrate, he had never encountered difficulties from a Legal Aid SA attorney. Continuing on the same note, he emphasised that "you have been mandated with an honourable job, that of defending the rights of the poor and vulnerable. Continue to work hard, your work is really commendable". We remember Mr Vuyisile Dayimani and will certainly ensure we follow in his footsteps.





Panel of representatives at the Life Esidimeni arbitration hearings addressed by the retired Deputy Chief Justice Dikgang Moseneke

LEGAL AID SA DRIVES MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

World Mental Health Awareness Day is observed every year on 10 October with the aim of raising awareness about mental health issues around the world, mobilising efforts in support of mental health and fighting the associated stigma. This day affords an opportunity for all stakeholders working on mental health issues to consider what more needs to be done to make mental health care a reality in South Africa. This is especially timely in light of the Life Esidimeni arbitration process still underway, where Legal Aid SA is representing survivors of the Gauteng Mental Health Marathon Project and their families.

Research and statistics confirm that more than 560 million people globally suffer from one of many complex mental illnesses such as depression or anxiety disorders. The statistics also show that in reality, one in four adults will experience a mental illness at some point each year.

World Mental Health Awareness Day encourages people to put initiatives in place to promote mental health and to support members of society who have mental illness. Legal Aid SA is proud to play a part in the Life Esidimeni arbitration hearings, especially as the rights of those who struggle with mental health are often overlooked. We are also funding a Section 27 lawyer at the hearings.



Ms Ncenekile Zikalala addressing the community

SUCCESSFUL LEGAL CLINIC FOR BUSHBUCKRIDGE COMMUNITY

The community of Bushbuckridge was recently visited by a number of state institutions tasked with ensuring the safety and care of all citizens, particularly women and children. Legal Aid SA was joined by the Provincial Department of Health; South African Police Service; the Commission for Gender Equality and priests from the religious fraternity.

Paralegal Ms Ncenekile Zikalala from our Bushbuckridge Satellite Office introduced Legal Aid SA and detailed our services, also taking the opportunity to speak on matters affecting children. She provided legal advice to the community as well.



The Legal Aid SA team spreading awareness of legal rights

ADDING VALUE TO RIVERLEA EXTENSION COMMUNITY'S DIALOGUES INITIATIVE

As part of a build-up programme to a series of activities aimed at raising awareness and fighting the scourge of women and children abuse, Legal Aid SA along with the Department of Social Development and other provincial stakeholders recently took to the streets of Riverlea Extension in Johannesburg.

All stakeholders had a services exhibition which saw Riverlea community members encouraged to use state services to fight the scourge of abuse. Legal Aid SA sent a team of legal practitioners from its Johannesburg Office and our Call Centre to deliver on our mandate of providing education and information about legal rights and obligations to the people of Riverlea.

One of the community members, ex-offender Dennis Peterson, approached the Legal Aid SA team and attributed his positive view of the South African legal system to the work done by our organisation after he was assisted with his appeal processes.



Advocate Elizabeth Nieuwoudt from Legal Aid SA; Mr Phillip Molekoa of SAHRC and SACSSP Registrar Ms Langi Malamba speaking on the DoJ's Let's Talk Justice radio show

PUBLIC ENTITIES TEAM UP TO MAKE BIGGER IMPACT

In the true sense of the theme for this year's 16 Days of Activism campaign, *Count Me In: Together Moving a Non-Violent South Africa Forward*, the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC); Legal Aid SA and the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP), partnered to use community radio stations to reach the public.

Radio is a powerful platform to engage the public and raise awareness of gender-based violence. With the mandates of these three organisations being complementary, a partnership during the 16 Days of Activism campaign was a logical means of engagement with communities. A number of communities were targeted through the discussions, which provided insight into the law and spread legal awareness.



CIVIL LEGAL ADMIN OFFICER RECEIVES LAW QUALIFICATION – CUM LAUDE

Legal Aid SA is the biggest law firm on the African continent and boasts a unique pedigree of socially conscious legal professionals, who in their everyday work, defend and protect the rights of the country's most vulnerable groups. While we offer legal practitioners a comprehensive career path offering opportunity for specialisation in criminal and civil law, we also find many support or non-legal staff inspired to join the legal fraternity.

One such employee is Civil Legal Admin Officer Ms Yvonne Ramchander, based at our Pinetown Office. Ms Ramchander recently bagged her Law degree in style by graduating Cum Laude!

A Legal Aid SA employee for more than 14 years, she has always been curious about the legal system and was keen to learn more. Being involved in the drafting of legal processes and documents piqued her interest in the field: "All of this fuelled my desire to want to expand my knowledge and understanding of the law and its operations. I then decided to study part time through UNISA. I have to admit, it has not been an easy road juggling books, work and family life."

Ms Ramchander successfully completed the six-month practical legal training course in June 2017 and wrote her Admission Exams soon thereafter.

"I am grateful to the team I work with at Pinetown Office; not only have they inspired me but they have also supported me throughout. I am also indebted to Legal Aid SA for funding my studies. This is really an exceptional achievement and I have surpassed even my own expectations." Congratulations!

