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Media Statement

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For Immediate Release

“Dream Big, Stay Safe”: City of Johannesburg Empowers Apex Primary Learners

The City of Johannesburg successfully hosted a Learner Awareness Programme at Apex Primary School in Lenasia Extension 10, aimed at empowering learners through messages of education, self-belief, safety and social responsibility.

The programme commenced with Cllr Godfrey Lebea, who welcomed learners, educators, City officials, and delegates. He emphasised the importance of collaboration between the City, the Office of the Regional Director and the MMC in advancing learner development and community upliftment initiatives.

The Regional Director, Mr Mickey Padiachee, engaged learners by asking who aspired to become presidents, doctors, and lawyers, encouraging them to work hard and remain committed to their studies. He also highlighted the importance of maintaining cleanliness within the school environment before introducing the panel of speakers.

Delivering the keynote address, MMC for Group Corporate and Shared Services, Cllr Sithembiso Zungu, shared his personal journey as a local of Zakariyya Park, motivating learners to prioritise education. He stressed that education opens doors and shapes individuals in many ways. The MMC encouraged learners to respect their teachers, remain disciplined, and show love and respect towards one another. He commended educators for instilling discipline and neatness among learners and committed to returning annually to monitor learners' progress.

Ms Buhle, a social worker, addressed learners on issues of bullying, self-acceptance, and self-esteem. She encouraged learners to report any form of mistreatment to teachers or social workers and emphasised that every child, regardless of background, skin colour, or disability,

has value. Learners actively participated by affirming positive statements such as, *“I can do my best, I am special and I am learning every day.”* She further indicated that an activity would be provided to educators for learners to complete and be assessed.

A representative from the Substance Abuse Unit of Social Development warned learners about the dangers of substance abuse, highlighting how easily young people can be exposed to drugs. Learners were informed about available support services, including rehabilitation assistance and advised to avoid experimenting with unfamiliar substances. Reference was made to the social worker at Thembelihle Clinic as a point of support.

Ms Regina, a Child Care Officer responsible for monitoring Early Childhood Development programmes, addressed learners on child safety and protection. She spoke about the dangers of child trafficking and the importance of not engaging with strangers. Learners were encouraged to report any situation where they felt unsafe to trusted adults such as teachers, parents, neighbours, the school principal, or the police.

The programme concluded with learners performing a song on child abuse, through which they memorised the Child Abuse Hotline number: 0800 055 555, reinforcing awareness in a memorable and impactful manner.

Ends

Issued by the City of Johannesburg

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