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**Lifesaving KZN South takes Surf Safety Seriously**

The Lifesaving Association KZN South, affiliated to Lifesaving SA, illustrated their serious commitment to surf safety when they held their Water Safety Awareness Workshop, part of their "Project Amanzi", on Sunday 29 October 2006, at Amanzimtoti beach. This project incorporates water safety awareness tips for rivers, dams, pools and the sea.

About 80 school children and teachers, from Kwatambo Primary School in Folweni and Orient Hill Primary School in Isipingo attended the workshop which started at 10.30 a.m. and ended at 15h00 that afternoon. Guest of Honour was Local Ward Councillor, Mr Freddie Maistry. Executive Officers of the Lifesaving Association KZN South officiated, together with assistance from voluntary lifeguards from local lifesaving clubs, Winklespruit, Warnadoone, Amanzimtoti and Isipingo Surf Lifesaving Clubs.

The highlights of the day were the Emergency Rescue Drills and demonstrations by the Isipingo and Amanzimtoti voluntary lifeguards which served to educate the children on what lifesaving is all about.

The Emergency Rescue Drills incorporated various scenarios such as enactments of swimming, boating and beach incidents as well as an accident on the rocks, which the Rescue Drill Squad had to attend to. Many of these enactments occurred simultaneously as they occur in real life. The exciting part of the enactment was the fact that the Rescue Drill Squad did not know what situations they were going to have to deal with, so it was also a great test of their alertness and initiative to deal with situations as they arise; their various lifeguarding skills in performing rescues and treating patients in accordance with their 'injuries'; their effective ability to contact paramedics and control onlookers and finally the stage of successfully handing over their patients to the Emergency Medical Services. Isipingo and Amanzimtoti Lifesaving Club members were tasked with these Rescue Drills and Provincial Association officials were on site to assess their readiness and fitness, training methods, reactions and responses as they demonstrated it in each enactment.

The other aspect of the day included a water safety awareness programme to educate the children on how "LIVE SAFELY NEAR WATER" by making them aware of the dangers of water and how to keep themselves safe in the vicinity of dams, beaches, pools, and rivers.

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The children were divided into groups and rotated between 3 initiatives, (a) a lifesaving video and water safety booklets, (b) beach events of relays, flags and sprints, and (c) water events with bodyboards and fun in shallow water such as wading, frog jumping and swimming for those who were able. Dedicated lifeguards in charge of each group were in the water with the children keeping a close eye on them.

Lifesaving KZN South is proud of the dedication from their voluntary lifesavers and lifesaving clubs for the incredible community service they provide in their local areas. They have performed in excess of 27 000 man-hours of voluntary beach duty in the past year in their "spare time". Lifesaving members come from all walks of life, such as businessmen, factory workers, attorneys, mechanics, secretaries, computer technicians, estate agents, scholars, university students, etc. but have made a commitment to get trained, keep themselves fit, and assist their local community by performing this public service of patrolling and safeguarding the beaches, voluntarily, every Sunday and Public Holiday. Some lifeguards have turned their hobby into their employment and have become professional lifeguards, working for local municipalities and holiday resorts.

Project Amanzi is just another way of showing Lifesaving KZN South's commitment and dedication to ensuring that the KZN South Coast beaches remain safe havens for beachgoers all year round.

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