CITY VISION
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# Children praised for good work

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Scores of parents and children gathered at JL Zwane Centre for Training and Development Hall in Gugulethu on Tuesday 29 March for a visual art exhibition.

The event, organised by entre, was aimed at showcasing hidden skills and talent from within the community.

The centre is a non-profit organisation (NPO) that specialises in empowering community with certain skills, especially youth.

Nokubonga Mepeni, the centre's programme manager, described the event as a way to take kids off the streets.

"These are our leaders for tomorrow," she said. "By having this kind of event we are trying to encourage them to continue doing the great work that they are doing. We are also trying to lure other young children to join us".

Mepeni described art as a communication tool. "Not all children are good at academics. As parents we need to monitor our children and guide them in the right direction," she stated.

Mepeni said the training accommodates 30 children from six to 13 years old. "We meet every Friday from 13:00 till 16:00. We divide them according to their age groups," she said.

Artist Lindisipho Gulwa, from Lotus informal settlement in Gugulethu, mentors the children on visual art.

She said the project gives children a platform to express themselves and showcase their talent. It also uplifts their self-esteem.

"We started the project last year and it is our second year. Our aim is to continue doing it so that people, especially young children, can join. The painting helps in getting rid of the tension within and calms you down. It is also an investment because you auction the painting to get money which is part of job creation," he stated.

Parent Nomfusi Magqeku, from NY 42, praised the centre for the initiative.

"It's a great initiative. It's a safe space for the children. Initially I was reluctant when my son came here. But I noticed that he liked what he was doing so I allowed him to come. I'm really happy to see their drawings on the wall. Now, I know why he is always coming here," said Magqeku.

She urged other parents to support their children in whatever they do.

Aliviwe Hlathi (9) applauded the organisation for teaching him how to draw. "When I started here last year I didn't know how to draw. But now I am able to draw and put different colours on a painting," said Hlathi.



Some of the visual arts are pasted on the wall.

PHOTOS: UNATHI OBOSE



JL Zwane Centre for Training and Development programme manager Nokubonga Mapeni addressing the crowd during the event.