

Mayor's keynote address at the Deaf awareness celebration, Dr CN Phatudi FET College, 14 October 2011.

Programme Director

Members of the Executive Committee

Councillors

Disability Council

Distinguished guests

Ladies and gentlemen

We are here today to celebrate deaf awareness month to recognise and to celebrate the achievements of the deaf community. In the past the rights of the deaf person were not taken into consideration and we are happy because the present government has made it possible for the deaf society to be treated equally like others.

We would like to pay our respect to the department of Education for making sure that sign language be taught in public schools to enable able bodied learners to communicate better with the deaf. It is no longer a shame for people to hide that within their families there are deaf people within them.

For us deaf awareness should be an everyday activity with a purpose of teaching all to communicate effectively in sign language. We are proud that as the Municipality has forged relationship with deaf schools in the province to enrol learners from our jurisdiction. We would like to applaud the good work done by our Disability unit to fight for the rights of the disabled. We would like to encourage members of the society to visit our office to get more information.

Our role as government is to ensure that basic services are rolled out every member of the society including the deaf community. We will make sure that decent housing, free electricity, water and other amenities are fully enjoyed by the deaf people. It should not only be grants but other facilities that will make the lives of our fellow brothers and sisters easy.

We would like to make a special appeal to the deaf persons not to limit their horizon. We are saying ``the sky is the limit`` and we want you to expose the talents that God gave you. Do not hide behind your disability, you are capable of doing more and compete with the able bodied persons.

Our appeal is for everybody to learn the sign language in order to accommodate each other. As the Municipality we will try by all means to have resources needed to implement the interpretation services. We still have a long way to go but together we can make a huge difference in the lives of our community.

I thank you