

Farmers bring arts education to local schools with innovative programme

Farmers families from Eston, KwaZulu-Natal, are working together to provide arts education to children in the Mkhambathini district through an innovative program called Eston Outreach. Here junior school pupils are taught the value of art by using waste items to encourage the "reuse, reduce, recycle" principle.



Source: Supplied

Here junior school pupils are taught the intrinsic value of art by using waste items to encourage the “reuse, reduce, recycle” principle.

Founded in 2020, by the Beaumont Eston Farmers Association (BEFA), to simultaneously uplift the lives of children in the greater Eston area and to clean up the community, Eston Outreach now consists of 25 volunteers from within the local farming community. Eston Outreach works with Hope Valley Primary School, Fairleigh Primary School, Thorner Primary School and Cosmoore Primary School.

"For many of these children, this was the first time they have ever participated in an art class, as art does not form part of the national school curriculum. We understand the intrinsic value of arts education in fostering imagination, critical thinking, and emotional expression among young minds and want to provide these children with these vital life skills, while teaching them to use everyday waste items used in their homes," says Wynne Smith from Evangrass and co-founder of Eston Outreach.







Through their collaboration with Illovo Sugar Mill, which donates extra art supplies needed for each project, the pupils are encouraged to join in on collecting the waste items needed for each project which in itself is an opportunity for education. Local businesses have joined in, assisting in additional activities such as school shoes donations and funding to add some

colour to these schools with wall murals.

Eston Outreach has also implemented a weekly recycling collection initiative together with the Mkhambathini Municipality.

The initiative not only introduces these children to various art forms but also imparts life skills, such as teamwork, communication, and self-confidence.

"We like to recognise when children go that extra mile, like helping unpack the materials, assisting a friend, persevering and completing a difficult project, and saying please and thank you. Learning these skills will make them stand out in their future and we reward them with something special for this behaviour when they least expect it," says Robyn Armstrong, co-founder of Eston Outreach.

Farmers in nurturing their community

"Farmers have a unique role to play in nurturing the growth of our communities – their commitment to the land extends to their commitment to the people who live and thrive on it. These art classes are an embodiment of that commitment – sowing seeds of creativity and fostering a sense of belonging. We look forward to seeing this programme grow and encourage local agricultural businesses and others to get involved.

"It warms our hearts to see farming communities uniting to create a positive environment for all those who depend on the industry," says Sandy La Marque, Kwanalu CEO.

In celebration of the growth of the project and pupils, the artworks will be placed on display at the upcoming 69th Eston

Agricultural Show on 26 and 27 August at the Beaumont Eston Club. For more information on Eston Outreach, follow them on Facebook and Instagram.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>