

African Bank Ltd press release

June 2021

African Bank to help little learners beat bullies this Youth Month

Youth Month is set to leave a lasting impression with primary school learners in three Gauteng schools this week as African Bank employees head into the classroom to help little ones find their inner hero.

Kennedy Dembetembe, Senior Manager: Corporate Social Investment (CSI) at African Bank, explains they are conducting a “self-esteem” reading campaign at these schools as part of the bank’s volunteer CSI programme.

“Last year, African Bank partnered with Forgood, an online organisation that connects passionate people with needy organisations, to develop a volunteering platform aligned with our CSI focus - education - and one which allows employees to become involved in a variety of different programmes.

“The schools reading campaign, aimed at grades three to seven, is an extension of this and we’re very excited to be presenting it in Youth Month,” he says.

On June 10 and 11, African Bank Forgood employees will enter the gates of the SA Volunteer Work Camp (Soshanguve), Beaular Land Primary (Germiston) and PND Centre for Homework and Study in Informal Settlement (Blousbosrand) - not only filled with excitement and passion, but also armed with a secret weapon - the children’s book *Remy: A Book about Believing in Yourself*.

Written by Mayuri Naidoo, the book is an inspiring tale about discovering and understanding your uniqueness in the world. It explores the realities of bullying and the coping mechanisms that can be used to overcome it.

“We are all aware of the ongoing problem of bullying in schools,” Dembetembe says. “It is something which can have a lifelong effect on a child if not addressed and a detrimental effect on their education. We believe the story of Remy will resonate with young learners and make an impact around the topic of bullying.”

In the book, Remy is bullied by a boy named Jayden because he is short and has red hair. The taunts infuriate Remy who turns to violence and rage in an attempt to solve his problems.

“He finds little solace from his mom and feels defeated until a chance encounter with a stranger in the park one day,” Dembetembe explains. “The stranger says he should embrace his differences as strengths and this is where Remy’s path takes a more positive turn.

“We can’t wait to share the story of Remy with the learners at the three schools we will be visiting. The children will be read the story and each school will receive copies of the book too.”

He adds that in addition to the book donations, African Bank is also utilising its African Bank Forgood platform to host virtual reading sessions with employees and children from various other worthy causes across the country during Youth Month.

“Bank employees have become increasingly involved in what Forgood has to offer and they are bringing their own ideas forward, helping to make a difference in areas that are important to them.

“It’s become a space for African Bank people to do more as part of their roles and careers. Covid-19 has highlighted the need for programmes like this and the need for greater compassion and humanity,” Dembetembe concludes.

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