



Bloem Secure Centre children exhibit their hidden talent



Some of the Artwork exhibited at Bloem Secure Care Centre

Bloem Secure Care Centre celebrated their Child protection week earlier than expected by exhibiting their art work to journalists at the centre from last week Thursday 24 May 2012. The exhibition is part of the outreach programme organised by the Department of Sports Arts and Culture under the leadership of Mr Red Goniwe. The programme started six(6) months ago with children awaiting trial at Bloemsecure Centre.

Bloem Secure Centre is used as a centre to provide diversion programme to young offenders. This forms part of the New Child Justice Act that provides for diversion programme as a new approach of dealing with children in conflict with the law. Diversion is an approach of channelling young people from the criminal justice system into programmes that hold them accountable for their actions. This process usually implies the provisional withdrawal of cases against the accused on condition that the accused participates in particular programmes or makes reparation to the victim.

Diversion focuses on the child and not the offence. It is further intended to help the child to be accountable and to reform. It is not a punishment and as such should focus on the best interest of the child. Children are screened and a certain criteria is followed to put children under diversion programme



Mr Mokalakala (Chief Child Care Worker at Bloem Secure Care centre) and Mr Red Goniwe from the

About 10 children between the ages of 14 and 17 attended painting or art classes at the centre and proceeded to sculpture molding using recycled paper. According to Mr Goniwe, the exhibition is organized in an effort to teach these young children that there is life beyond crime as well as to raise funds for the centre to buy more materials for the art work.

Two of these children from Brandfort and Welkom were interviewed by the Express newspaper Journalist and they told the journalist that the art classes will assist them to continue in life and forget the past, as the continuation of their art work will help them to leave crime. One of them Jabulani*(not his real name) was not aware of how valuable the art work is as he told the journalist that he can charge only R50 for the painting. According to Mr Goniwe the art work will be around R500 or more if sold at an exhibition of this nature and if these funds are available children will be exposed to more advanced forms of art even after their trial at Bloem Secure Centre.

According to Mr Mokalakala, the Chief Child Care Worker at Bloem Secure Care centre the children who are awaiting trial or sentence at the centre are exposed to recreational and development programmes that impart skills and will assist them when they leave the centre. Children need to be supported by the community or community based organizations in order for them to continue with their art. The art will help these children with job creation as well as to become the source of income as some of them were involved in crime because of poverty experienced by their families.