

## **HOW IS MORELETA PARK CHURCH INVOLVED IN WOODLANE VILLAGE (PLASTIC VIEW) – THE INFORMAL SETTLEMENT NEXT TO MORELETA PARK CHURCH.**

### **1. What is the history of Woodlane Village (Plastic View)?**

Many of the residents of Woodlane Village have lived in the bushes in the area where the Village currently is. One of the main reasons for people living in such circumstances in the East of Pretoria is that they wanted to be near their place of work. Tswelopele Step-by-Step NPO and the Home Owner's Associations in the area has approached the court about the situation and the end result was a court order that the City of Tshwane had to organise a settlement and supply water, sanitation, rubbish removal and security to the settlement. In January 2009 when the settlement came to be, Tswelopele-Step-by-Step did very important work to teach the residents life skills, help them to organise village leadership and establish rules for the residents. Woodlane Village was the name that the residents chose for this settlement, but in time it came to be known as Plastic View. Originally 3000 people were registered in 856 shacks and the rule was that people were not allowed to rent out shacks to others and that if a person moved or passed away, the shack should be broken down and the space left open. Since about middle 2016 the City of Tshwane was not able to afford a security company any more and more people moved into the Village and the area around it has become an illegal dumping ground. Currently there are about 9000 residents in about 950 shacks. Moreleta Park Church acknowledges that this situation is not sustainable and like the rest of the community hope for an outcome that is acceptable to the whole community, the residents of Woodlane Village included.

### **2. Who supplies the water and sanitation for Woodlane Village?**

As mentioned before, the City of Tshwane is legally compelled by the existing court order to supply water, sanitation, rubbish removal and security to Woodlane Village. The land on which Woodlane Village is, is the property of the City of Tshwane. Since that is the case, the residents are not allowed to put up any permanent structures. Originally there were 4 water tanks, but since Lockdown in March 2020, 4 tanks were added. The water tanks are filled up by the City of Tshwane on a daily basis. There are 41 toilets in the village that are cleaned by a City of Tshwane contractor twice weekly.

### **3. What is the current situation in Woodlane Village?**

At the moment no clear statistics of the residents of Woodlane village exists. Because of our work with Woodlane Village we guess that at least 60-70% of the people are from Zimbabwe, about 20 % from the RSA and the rest from Lesotho, Malawi and Mozambique. When the Village started about 25% of the households had one person in the household working in the area, but currently it is about 85 % of the households that has one person that works. The reason why this village exists is because people find work here. People say

that Moreleta Park church keeps the residents of Woodlane Village here with all our projects but the people from Woodlane Village find work in the area and the community itself is responsible for “keeping the people here” with the jobs that are supplied.

Moreleta Park Church is not involved in Cemetery View, the informal settlement next to the grave yard/The Wilds at all, and no projects have been extended to this informal settlement. Currently Living Word Church, UP and Doxa Deo church are running some development projects in this illegal settlement (no court order exists in terms of this settlement).

### **3. How is the Moreleta Park Church involved in Woodlane Village?**

Moreleta Park Church (MPC) has registered a NPO in April 2016 with Art 18 A and B status (193-318-NPO, PBO 930059625). This legal entity, “**LIFT Community Development**” facilitates and finances all the projects that MPC has in Woodlane Village. Lift Community Development is a self-funded/self-sustained organisation that depends on donations from national as well as international companies, **and not from the church.**

These projects include:

- The Woodlane Village Clinic
- The Domestic Worker Training Course
- Support Groups for Women
- The Veggie Project
- The Pendula Children’s Store
- Needlework Project
- ArtLIFT
- English classes
- Conferences
- Evangelistic outreach

Other projects are:

- Pure Hope School
- Shining Light Church

#### **4.1 How does the Woodlane Village Clinic operate?**

The Woodlane Village Clinic started on 8 February 2017 in cooperation with the University of Pretoria. The Clinic operates on Wednesdays from 7:30 to 12:00 (basic medical care, dietetics, HIV testing and counselling) and Thursdays from 8:00 to 10:00 (family planning), and is part of the COPC (Community Oriented Primary Care) project that UP has in cooperation with the Department of Health. COPC involves clinics that are rolled out in informal settlements. UP supplies a medical doctor and Dietician and pay for 6 community health workers (4 in Woodlane Village and 2 in Cemetery View). LIFT has provided 3

containers where the service is delivered and manages the clinic. LIFT also employs 2 Community Health Workers and a medical sister. Each Community Health Worker (CHW) works 25 hours per week and their job is to do Household assessments in the Village using the AITA system where data is captured on smartphones. This system is used by UP in all informal settlements where CHW's are working. The CHW's also follow up on patients, share critical health information, help with pre-and post-natal care and the running of the clinic on a Wednesday morning. They have received 2 weeks training prior to their employment and receive in-house training every Thursday that is based on the Department of Health's training for CHW's. Patient's details, diagnosis and medication are captured on the national system called Synaxon. The services that are provided at the clinic are basic medical care, dietetics (children under 6 years are weighed and measured), family planning and HIV testing and counselling. Since the clinic focusses on basic primary care and screening only, many patients are referred to Pretorius Park Clinic or Tshwane District hospital. We are not able to supply chronic medicine, ARV's, draw blood, do pap smear etc. All pregnant women are also referred. We help malnourished children with supplementation for a month and then they are also referred to Pretorius Park for further supplementation. Since 8 February 2017 about 10 000 patients have been seen at the clinic.

A health day for the children six years and younger is held twice per year where the children are weighed, measured, Hb tested, and Vit A and deworming are given and immunisation done in cooperation with Pretorius Park Clinic.

#### **4.1.1 Why did LIFT start a clinic for the residents of Woodlane Village?**

Pretorius Park clinic is only 3 km away from Woodlane Village, but in the past foreigners without documentation have not been helped at Pretorius Park Clinic. Since Woodlane Village clinic has started, a relationship has been built with Pretorius Park clinic and when we refer chronic patients, HIV positive patients, pregnant women, malnourished children and other patients, they are now accepted and treated at Pretorius Park Clinic. This means that sicknesses can actually be dealt with and prevented from spreading to the rest of the community.

As MPC we believe in Matt 25:35 that says: "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in."

Medical help for the people of Woodlane Village is not just given for a practical reason, but also because it is our moral and spiritual responsibility.

#### **4.1.2 Why is the clinic important for the whole community?**

Many residents of Woodlane Village work in the wider community as domestic workers, gardeners, construction workers, waiters etc. They work in our houses, restaurants, gardens etc. If they work in the community with untreated TB, HIV and other infectious diseases, members of the broader community – our family members - are in danger. The

circumstances in the Village are very unhygienic and residents struggle constantly with flu, bronchitis, scabies (“vuilsiekte”), TB, ring worms etc and if it is left untreated, they AS WELL AS the wider community suffer from the consequences.

A malnourished child is not able to learn well at school. If the child cannot learn well, he/she will fail and not finish their schooling. If the child cannot finish schooling he/she will eventually become dependent on the Government or fall into crime. Woodlane Village Clinic is trying to empower children as early as possible with good health.

#### **4.1.3 Why do patients at the clinic not pay for the services that they receive?**

As stated before, the Woodlane Village clinic is done in cooperation with the University of Pretoria as part of their COPC project and the medicine is received from the government. Since this is the case LIFT Community Development (who is managing the project) does not have the right to charge for the services delivered.

#### **4.2 What is the Domestic worker training program all about?**

The Domestic Worker Training program has been presented since 2016. So far 130 women have been trained.

During the program 10 women from Woodlane Village attends 6 cooking classes of 3 hours each, and sessions on washing and ironing, general cleaning and work ethics, alcohol and drug abuse, HIV/AIDS, domestic violence, parenting skills and communication skills are presented. Volunteers facilitate all the training sessions. The women pay R60 each to attend the course and receive a certificate at the end of the course. A Bible study is held daily over the lunch hour.

#### **4.3 What is the Support Groups all about?**

Domestic violence is a big problem for the women of Woodlane Village and support groups are facilitated to help the women cope.

Support groups for mothers with small babies and mothers with toddlers are facilitated weekly at the Woodlane Village Clinic.

All the sessions are presented by volunteers. Most of these women do not understand English and translators from the Village are used.

#### **4.4 What is the Veggie project all about?**

At the Woodlane Village Clinic we have discovered that most of the children under the age of six years are stunted (to short and to light for their age). Some of them suffer from medium to moderate malnutrition. Since our policy is not to give out food, we have started with veggie gardens and veggie bags for families where there are children that are stunted or that suffer from malnutrition as well as other families in need. About 160 families have

already received help to start veggie gardens/bags. The veggie gardens/bags are still being extended to more and more families.

#### **4.5 What is the Pendula Children's store?**

The Grade R to Grade 7 children in Pure Hope School do recycling for six weeks in the second school semester. They receive tokens/paper money equal to what they have recycled and then they have the opportunity to spend the money on toiletries, stationary, non-perishable food, clothing, toys and sweets in a pop-up shop. Over 100 volunteers pose as recycled material "buyers", sales assistants, and shopping guides. With this event the children learn that hard work brings rewards, that if you do not take responsibility it has consequences. They learn about the value of recycling, how to do proper shopping and some other economic principles. They also learn that they can provide for their family since they also need to buy "responsible" items such as food and toiletries.

This project is just the opposite of "just handing out stuff....."

#### **4.6 What is the needlework project all about?**

The needlework project has been in existence for many years and is mostly attended by domestic workers in the area and not just women from Woodlane Village. The classes are presented on Mondays (sewing) and Wednesdays (knitting and crochet). The women are taught to produce articles that can be sold and some of them are sewing children's clothing for a company. The project is presented by volunteers.

#### **4.7 ArtLIFT project**

Since 2017 women in the village are taught how to make different crafts and LIFT then sells these products for them to help them create a small income to support their families. Around the crafts table we also talk about parenting skills, hygiene, and daily challenges.

#### **4.8 English classes**

A weekly English class is presented to mostly women from the village. This empowers them to speak for themselves with confidence and to find jobs to support their families.

#### **4.9 Conferences**

LIFT has organised a women's conference talking about women's issues and their identity in Christ. We also had a men's conference focussing mostly on domestic violence.

#### **4.10 Evangelistic outreaches**

LIFT shares the Gospel with village residents that attend our projects and employs a pastor that spends 5 hours per day in the village building relationships and bridges in order to impact people's lives with the Gospel. LIFT in cooperation with Shining Light (the African

languages of Moreletapark Congregation) has shown the Jesus Movie and Shining Light followed up on those interested in the Gospel. Shining Light also has Sunday school classes for the children in the Village, present Bible studies and often has Evangelisation outreaches on the village soccer field. They have started with a House of Prayer in Woodlane village where the assistant pastor is available during the week. There is also a prayer meeting every Friday morning in the Village.

#### **4.11 Pure Hope Kindergarten and Primary School**

The Pure Hope School is a registered NPO and started in 2010 with a playgroup for 7 children from Woodlane Village. Currently the Pure Hope School consists of a registered pre-primary and a registered primary school with 360 children.

At the moment there are 75% students from RSA and 25 % are foreigners.

Only 50% of the children in the school are from Woodlane Village. The rest are from Mamelodi or children of domestic workers in this area. Since the Department of Education are very strict all the children in the school are documented. Pure Hope also has full accreditation from Umalusi.

All English schools in the East of Pretoria are full with a long waiting list, and if Pure Hope did not attend to the need for education these children would not receive any at all.

#### **5. Why does the church help when shacks burn down in Woodlane Village?**

Since 2016 there were 6 fires in Woodlane with lives lost and many shacks burning down each time. Some people say the residents do that on purpose. Those of us who helped with the relief efforts and saw the desperation and sadness, know otherwise. For someone who lost EVERYTHING, 4 plastic bags of food, a blanket and a few pieces of clothing is not much and certainly not worth the effort of burning down everything you own.

There is a very clear difference between relief and development. As LIFT Community Development we try to adhere to the principles of **development** where a community is empowered to look after their own well-being and people are treated and trained and supported in a way that they can start to live with dignity because they take responsibility for their own lives.

**Relief** means that people with serious need (such as a disaster/crisis of your house burning down) are assisted and supported. Once the serious need is alleviated, the relief effort and support are stopped. In a crisis such as the times when shacks burnt down in Woodlane Village, the victims were assisted with basic relief items and within three days the help was stopped. Moreleta Park Congregation offered logistical help in cooperation with the Disaster Relief Department of the City of Tshwane, but at least 90 % of all relief items were donated by organisations, companies, other churches and NPO's and the wider community.

As Bob Goff says in his book “Everybody Always” – grace seems unfair until you need a little yourself.

## **6. Do the people of Woodlane receive clothing from the Church?**

The Church has a Community Store and articles for the store are donated by the congregation members. The articles include clothing, shoes, toys, kitchen equipment, furniture etc. The church supports 26 organisations (children’s homes, old age homes, homes for the deaf, disabled etc) with the contents from the store. We receive an abundance of articles and on certain days during the week the residents from Woodlane Village, the homeless, congregation members and any one in need can buy articles from the store at a minimal price. The money from this venture is then used to buy a part of the non-perishable food that MPC gives to 22 of the 26 organisations. Every second week on a Thursday, 4 women from the Village help to sort the clothing that are donated and then receive clothing as compensation for the 4 hours that they spend sorting. Women from the Village are used as translators for the support group or on the Children’s Health Days, and for the veggie project. For their time and effort, these women receive tokens with which they can buy clothing at the Community Store.

**Moreleta Park Church has always been willing to answer any questions about our involvement in Woodlane Village. People who need more information can contact Retha Erasmus at 012 997 8006 or [retha@moreleta.co.za](mailto:retha@moreleta.co.za)**

## **HOW DO WE HELP THE REST OF OUR COMMUNITY?**

### **1. Our Community Store**

Congregation members donate used clothing, shoes, kitchen ware, toys, bags, linen and furniture to our Community Store. We donate these articles to 26 welfare organisations and NPO’s in our community. Each of these organisations is invited once per month to come and choose articles and clothing that they need.

Of these organisations, 22 receive a donation of non-perishable food each month. Our small groups donate a part of the food and the rest are paid for with the sales from the excess clothing in the store.

We give donations to the following organisations:

<b>Name</b>
Eersterust Welfare organisation for the Aged
Bramley Children’s Home (in Groenkloof)
Groei Goggas Leersentrum

(Pre-Primary in Danville)
Whispers (A centre for the deaf in Lynnwood Glen)
Centurion Raad vir Bejaardes
Christian Faith Ministries (services to the homeless, prostitutes, street children in the midcity)
Harmonie Oord (Senior citizens in Sunnyside)
Horison Sorgsentrum (People that are disabled in Silverton)
Huis Oeboentoe (Foster Care in Rietfontein)
Huis Vergenoeg (Senior citizens in Villieria)
Jacaranda Children's Home in East Lynne
Child Services (Midcity, Elandspoort, Atteridgeville, Mamelodi, Eersterust)
General Nic Smit Primary School (in Claremont)
Margaretha Ackerman SAVF (Senior citizens in Pretoria-West)
Nelmapius Worship Centre
NG Kerk Derdepoort
Via Nova School (Children that are disabled in East Lynne)
Phyllis Robertson (People that are disabled in Gezina)
Pta Raad vir Bejaardes (Sonskyn Dienssentrum in Capital Park)
Pta School for the Disabled in Gezina
Tswane Leadership Foundation (MidCity)
National Youth Development Outreach in Eersterust
PEN (Midcity and Sunnyside)
CMR Moreleta
Danville Project (families)
Wolmer Project (families)

Moreleta Park Church also supports PEN, Vastfontein, Ons Huis, Phyllis Robertson, Clinics4Jesus (mobile clinic), Harmonie Oord and Helpflift financially every month.

## **2. Our Wholeness Centre**

Here are some statistics for 2021 that will help to understand what MPC does for the Community:

*2021*

- *Alimentation and food vouchers to people in need from all 3 Moreleta Congregations – a total of R212 226,00*
- *The 3 CMR social workers had a case load of 89 families with 64 children (of which nearly 70% were congregation members and the rest community members)*
- *Services were rendered to 459 individuals including different race groups (of which 109 were black, 5 coloured and 345 white )*
- *The last 3 years CMR's main focus was on church members and their families. Social services were also rendered to the rest of the community of Moreleta Park.*

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