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Freedom Park celebrates Youth Month with packed itinerary

To celebrate Youth Month this year, Freedom Park arranged various events and initiatives to engage with and uplift youth from various cultures, backgrounds and geographical locations.

We invite all South Africans to commemorate the tremendous role our youth played in the freedom and democracy we enjoy today. As such, we are offering free entrance to Freedom Park on Saturday, Youth Day, 16 June 2012. Guided tours take place at 9:00, 12:00 and 15:00. Guests are also welcome to pick up an information leaflet at reception and tour the Park on their own.

In line with the 2012 Youth Month theme of "*Together We Can Do More to Build Infrastructure and Fight Youth Unemployment, Poverty and Inequality*", 13 youth interns joined the Freedom Park team on 1 June 2012. Freedom Park worked with the Department of Tourism to identify interns who have completed post-matric tourism studies and required the necessary practical experience. "The internship provides an opportunity for our youth to gain experience of a work environment in general," says Mr Fana Jiyane, CEO of Freedom Park. "Moreover, as a heritage institution, Freedom Park can also offer specific, on-the-job training in line with their chosen career path. Our aim is thus to equip our youth with the skills, self-confidence and professionalism to ensure a sustainable career."

Since Youth Month coincides with Environmental Month, Freedom Park also participates in an annual Environmental Clean-up action in and around the Salvokop area. In Youth Month we remember the vital role that our youth played in attaining the democracy and freedom we enjoy today. It is, however, crucial that we also educate the youth of today that there are many more freedoms than only the political kind. "The Constitution grants us certain rights – the right to a clean and safe environment, to sanitation and drinking water. But these rights also come with

certain responsibilities. Failure to care for the environment we live or teaching our children to do so will cost us dearly in the years to come.”

Freedom Park is for all South Africans. Geographical distance coupled with a lack of the necessary finances does unfortunately mean that some South Africans might never have the opportunity to visit Freedom Park personally. As such, an initiative was launched to ‘take Freedom Park to the nation’. This Youth Day, Freedom Park visits the youth of Delft, a primarily coloured and underprivileged community on the Cape Flats in the Western Cape. “In a community rife with poverty and unemployment, we want to bring a message of pride, self-worth and strong community values,” says Mr Jiyane. Partnering with the Delft branch of the South African Police Services, the Department of Education and the City of Cape Town, the day will include motivational discussions, dialogue opportunities for the youth and fun outdoor activities.

“We want to give the youth their say. Often we are quick to impose our ideas and strategies of what we believe to be right. However, we want the youth of Delft to share with us their ideas on how they can contribute to reconciliation and nation building – within the Western Cape, but also throughout the rest of South Africa.” In this way, Freedom Park aims to empower the youth to realise their potential to not only make a positive change in their community but also to pursue their dreams.

For its fourth initiative, Freedom Park partners with the City of Tshwane to provide 5 000 underprivileged learners from schools in the Tshwane area with an opportunity to experience the history, heritage, culture and spirituality of South Africa first-hand. “Through tailor-made visitors’ packages of Freedom Park and the Voortrekker Monument, these learners will learn about the events that shaped the South Africa we live in today and why we face the issues we do. Moreover, they will be empowered with the knowledge of the great heights we can achieve as a nation through a road of reconciliation and nation building.”

This initiative launches on 27 June 2012 with the first group of learners visiting Freedom Park and Voortrekker Monument.

Freedom Park concludes its Youth Month celebrations on 27 June 2012 with a dialogue between military veterans and youth from Alexandra. Entitled “Remembering June 16: In dialogue – the youth of yesteryear with the youth of today”, this seminar presents a unique platform for struggle veterans and the youth to exchange values and experiences, while reflecting on the current issues that impact on communities as a whole today.

Detailed information on each of these events will be communicated in due course.

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