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## Media request

Pretoria, 16 July 2012

### **Freedom Park offers a helping hand to inhabitants of fire-ravaged informal settlement in Pretoria West on Mandela Day**

In line with the spirit of Mandela Day of 'service to one's fellow human', Freedom Park will on Wednesday, 18 July 2012 at 9:30, visit the Bremmer Informal Settlement in Hermanstad, Pretoria West to lend a helping hand to the inhabitants who lost all their worldly possessions in a terrible fire.

On 24 June 2012, a devastating fire raged through the informal settlement in Hermanstad, destroying nearly 50 shacks and leaving hundreds of men, women and children homeless and destitute. The Bremmer Informal Settlement is home to 49 families across all races.

Freedom Park's approach to support and empower the inhabitants of the Bremmer Informal Settlement is multipronged. At present, Freedom Park hosts a drive amongst its staff members and visitors to the Park to raise non-perishable food items, blankets, toiletries and clothing to be donated on Mandela Day. A mobile soup kitchen will also be set up within the informal settlement to prepare a healthy, nutritious meal for all inhabitants. To empower the inhabitants to function in a more sustainable manner, a number of vegetable gardens will be planted with a variety of vegetables. Inhabitants will thus be able to cultivate the gardens and thus enjoy fresh produce.

At present, the situation in the Bremmer Informal Settlement is dire. In the course of a few hours, various families' earthly possessions were reduced to a heap of smouldering rubble. Mother of five, Josephine Mabotja, said in the New Age article *Fire Destroys 'Everything'* on 26 June 2012, "I have lost everything, including my children's expensive school uniforms that I worked so hard to buy. I am unemployed – what has happened to us is terrible." In the midst of winter and without any resources to feed their children, parents are in a desperate state.

But the devastation goes far beyond material possessions. Our homes are our security, a shelter from external ravages. Loosing this sense of security equates loosing a sense of hope in the future. It is up to us to show that their plight and suffering does not remain unseen, that although they have lost their material possessions, their human dignity is still in tact. Mandela Day issues a call to us all: "It's in your hands to make the world a better place". This call is not only about material contributions, it is about showing that we care, that we support our community and that there is hope, no matter how bleak the present, there is hope for the future.

"As we reach out to the Hermanstad informal settlement we do so with the spirit of *Ubuntu* resonating strongly in our hearts. We are all in this journey of life together. Let us remember that we as South Africans should support each other through this journey in order to build a united nation through strong communal ties. "Motho ke motho ka batho." – "I am because we are", concludes Mr Jiyane.

Freedom Park calls on the public to assist us in our drive to collect non-perishable food items, blankets, toiletries and clothing. Items can be dropped off at the Freedom Park itself (visit [www.freedompark.co.za](http://www.freedompark.co.za) for directions). Alternatively, contact Tinyiko Baloyi at [tinyiko@freedompark.co.za](mailto:tinyiko@freedompark.co.za) or (012) 336 4147.

The Bremmer Informal Settlement is located at 97 Marin Street, Hermanstad, Pretoria West.

Issued by Freedom Park

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