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Liquor Authority and stakeholders promote social responsibility school outreach program

The KwaZulu-Natal Liquor Authority collaborated with key stakeholders for a school outreach program called 'Children with a Future Don't Drink' on Friday, July 21. The initiative aims to raise awareness about the detrimental impact of underage drinking on school children. As part of the program's efforts to address socio-economic challenges caused by alcohol abuse, the KZNLA donated thirty-four (34) uniforms and school shoes to underprivileged learners at Vikingozi Secondary School. Vikingozi Secondary School, located in KwaMakhutha within the South Durban Basin, was chosen as one of this year's beneficiaries of the school visit program due to the prevalent socio-economic difficulties faced by its learners. According to the school enrolment profile, it has 633 learners, and the school is confronted with an array of social ills such as teenage pregnancy, alcohol and substance abuse, and poverty. The KZN Liquor Licensing Act 06 of 2010 places significant importance on the Authority's duty to implement measures aimed at reducing the socio-economic and other effects of alcohol abuse. Moreover, it emphasizes the promotion of a responsible and sustainable retail and micro-manufacturing liquor industry that actively embraces social responsibility. The Acting KZNLA CEO, Mr Bheki Mbanjwa, stated that the purpose of this initiative is to collaborate closely with learners, school staff, key stakeholders, and the community to promote a responsible and sustainable liquor industry that fosters social responsibility. The program, 'Children with a Future Don't Drink,' provides support, education, and awareness to underprivileged learners, specifically addressing challenges such as teenage pregnancy and

drug abuse. The goal of the program is to shape the future of the learners. In her address, the KZNLA Chairperson, Ms Mbali Myeni, proposes parental involvement in such programs, as parents play a vital role in their children's exposure to alcohol. She further acknowledges that opening liquor outlets is a means of livelihood for many, and it aligns with the liquor authority's purpose of enhancing licence accessibility in the Province. However, she urges all licence holders not to forget their sense of responsibility to the community and the regulations that come with those licenses. Ms. Myeni further urged the learners to prioritize their studies over alcohol, stating, "It is of utmost importance to make informed choices that will positively shape your future. While the allure of experimenting with alcohol may be tempting, it is crucial to fully comprehend the risks involved." She strongly condemned the prevalent "pens down" culture after exams, aiming to prevent tragic incidents like Enyobeni Tavern, where 21 lives of underage learners were lost. "I implore you to reflect upon the long-term effects and potential harm that alcohol abuse can inflict. Instead, redirect your focus towards your goals, aspirations, and the construction of a vibrant future." The Chairperson expressed her deepest appreciation to everyone involved in this program, highlighting their dedication and commitment to the cause. She called for unity in their mission to create a responsible and sustainable liquor industry while safeguarding the well-being of our youth.



