

ASTONISHING TALENT WITHIN STUTTERHEIM



Photo 1: The beautiful artwork by Zolani assisted by Kwakhanya

“A True Artist Is Not One Who Is Inspired, But One Who Inspires Others.”

~ Salvador Dali

The Eastern Cape Umbrella Fire Protection Association (ECUFPA), based in Stutterheim are implementing the Forestry Support Programme (FSP) on behalf of Working on Fire (WoF) in the Eastern Cape. At the back of our offices were an unsightly container and the team decided to do something about it.

The FSP embarked on a search for a casual skilled art painter to give work opportunity to persons residing in the surrounding disadvantaged communities in Stutterheim. The requirement was to paint the FSP storage container showcasing a beautiful landscape of veld and forest fires with communities surrounding the plantations. As the programme focuses on fuel reduction and fire prevention activities in plantations belonging to the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE).

Mr Zolani Sabalele, a 40-year-old male, born and raised in Stutterheim, was highly recommended as a talented and skilled painter from the Mlungisi township. Zolani Sabalele proves to be a true inspiration, working hard, and a real “go-getter”, regardless of his shortcomings.



Photo 2: Zolani Sabalele

“I’ve always loved art and enjoyed it from my primary school days” said Zolani.

At the age of 10, Zolani went playing in the fields with his brother and it changed his life forever. As they were playing, kicking, and collecting plants that’s pleases their eyes, they had unfortunately picked a poisonous plant that his brother consumed out of curiosity.

Later that day, they were both rushed to the Stutterheim Hospital and later, had to be transferred to Frere Hospital in East London - to save his life Zolani's hands had to be amputated, but sadly, his brother did not make it.

Learning to adapt to the new changes, Zolani found interest in art at a tender age, and he spent most of his time drawing and making sketches. After finishing Matric, he went to further his studies in Art at Border Tech in East London, where he was able to improve his art skills and learn other skills such as pottery, making sculptures and signage.

"Living with no hands limits you from a lot of things, people often think you cannot do things by yourself, but I learnt to be independent and

work hard at a very early stage". Through his passion, Zolani uses his skills to put food on the table. He has created several signage boards and art paintings for schools and small coffee shops in Stutterheim.

FSP has been inspired by the determination and hard work Zolani has shown and wishes to spread the inspiration through his remarkable creativity, discipline, and focus. Kwakhanya Sabalele played a role in the completion of the project by assisting where possible and also learnt skills from Zolani.

The ECUFPA would encourage other businesses or entities to make use of the services of Zolani. Anyone that would like to use or contribute towards Zolani is welcome to contact Thinus Botha at 082 9228 637.

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