Youth month event

Komati Youth Day Celebration Blended Sport, Arts and Community Spirit.

By Mthokozisi Mthethwa

Sporting champions, cultural performers and local entrepreneurs took centre stage as the community celebrated youth talent and honoured the legacy of 1976.

The Komati Sports and Recreation Ground came alive on Youth Day as residents gathered to celebrate young people through sport, arts and culture during an event that brought the community together in honour of the youth and the legacy of i-Youth Endala, as the younger generation affectionately refers to those who came before them. The celebration reflected on the sacrifices and struggles of the youth of 1976, while creating a platform for today's young people to showcase their own talents, creativity and dreams.

Sport, music and culture came together, with football and netball matches taking place alongside a programme of cultural performances that kept the crowd engaged throughout the day. Local dance groups, traditional dancers, Mango Groove-inspired performers and Sarafina-style acts brought energy to the event, transforming the venue into a celebration of young talent.
According to one of the event organizers Othaniel Sibambo, affectionately known to the community as 'Otto', including arts and culture in the programme was a deliberate decision.

"We saw the need to include performing arts because there is talent in the community, and young people need to be given exposure by putting them on stage," said Otto. "The aim is to encourage young people to use their talents and voices to make themselves seen."

Othaniel Sibambo

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He said the initiative was also aimed at creating positive opportunities for young people. It was not only about what happens on Youth Day and ends there, but about creating something that continues beyond a single celebration. The organizers hope the exposure will encourage young people to come together, form their own art groups and create spaces where they can regularly practice, develop and showcase their talents.

"This also gives them something meaningful to do, instead of dedicating their time to crime, drugs and alcohol," Otto explained. "We want to show the youth that we see them. We see their contribution to making life better for them."

Throughout the day, families and community members supported both the performances and sporting activities, creating an atmosphere of unity and celebration.





Residents gathered to celebrate young people through sport, arts and culture during an event that brought the community together.

Sporting Glory on Youth Day

The day was a reminder that today's youth are beneficiaries of the sacrifices made by those who came before them.

The organizers encouraged young people to value the opportunities they have today while remembering the courage and determination of the youth of 1976.

On the sporting fields, teams battled for Youth Day glory in front of an enthusiastic crowd. In the soccer tournament, Komati, Mahlathini, Big House and Koornfontein competed for the title, with Komati securing the final win.

Local entrepreneurs and informal traders also benefited from the gathering. Food stalls, caravans and community vendors added to the atmosphere of the day while creating a chance for local businesses to make some income.

"The event also benefited local vendors. We had caravans and abomama selling food, drinks and snacks throughout the day, giving them an opportunity to make some profit," Concluded Otto.

Otto believes that events like these can become a starting point for young people to discover talents they may not even realize they have, while also learning from one another across different backgrounds and cultures. "Everyone has a talent that needs to be unearthed," he said. "In the future, I would like to see even more acts from different cultures participating in events like this."
He said bringing together different forms of expression creates an opportunity for young people to learn, collaborate and celebrate the diversity within the community.

His hope is that future events will continue to grow into spaces where young artists, performers and creatives feel encouraged to step forward, share their abilities and inspire others.

Keeping the Spirit of 1976 Alive

This year's Youth Day carried special significance as South Africa commemorated 50 years since the 1976 Soweto Uprising, when young people courageously stood up against an unjust education system and helped shape the country's future. For those who participated in this year's activities, the occasion provided a memorable opportunity to honour that legacy.

As the celebrations drew to a close, the event left a lasting impression on participants and spectators alike. Through sport, arts and entrepreneurship, the community not only commemorated a historic milestone in South Africa's history but also created a platform for young people to be recognized, celebrated and inspired.