

National boy-focused GBV intervention launches

A ground-breaking national preventative Gender Based Violence (GBV) intervention that focuses on boys was launched in Johannesburg today, attended by high-profile industry stakeholders and CEOs who have given their support to the programme.

The programme – titled **What about the Boys?** – aims to tackle gender-based violence by working with 10 000 high school boys across the country. Created by youth-development programme facilitator Primestars, the programme is designed to guide boys to break free from the rigid and often damaging stereotypes of traditional masculinity that contribute to GBV.

Talking at the launch at the JSE today, Managing Director of Primestars Martin Sweet said: “It’s time to reinvent masculinity and **What about the Boys?** proposes a liberating paradigm shift teaching boys how to inhabit masculinity responsibly. It is designed to engage them to share emotions in healthy ways, accept and connect with others, stand up and speak out against bullying and inequality, and break free from rigid stereotypes.”

The programme is targeted at Grade 8-12 boys from urban, township and rural schools from more than 100 schools this year. It includes an educational film and toolkit, as well as various ongoing activities, built on pillars that include self-awareness, accountability, responsibility, empathy and compassion.

“The conventional set of rules for being a man is outdated and unhealthy. It traps men in an emotional straitjacket. It steers them towards isolation, selfishness, sexism and sometimes violence. It deadens their souls. And when they act in horrifying ways, when they hurt, beat or assault others in a way that goes against the human spirit, what do we say? ‘Boys will be boys.’ We are puzzled when boys act terribly, failing to realise that this is precisely the bar we set for them,” says Sweet.

By leveraging edutainment, the programme follows an evidence-based approach to influencing positive behavioural and societal changes in the long-term, and to facilitate this, participants will be required to take a pledge in order to create a measurable standard of behaviour that they commit to following.

A mentor process run in-person and/or digitally will ensure that the programme’s teachings are not time-bound, but instead create long-lasting, changed patterns of behaviour. Participating companies will provide male mentors to partner with the schoolboys to facilitate continued dialogue and guidance, and over time it is envisaged that learners will become future mentors. Primestars invites all South Africans to join us in **RAISING A NATION OF GOOD MEN.**

ENDS

INFORMATION

For learners, teachers and schools looking for more information:

www.primestarsdigital.co.za For organisations looking to make a difference and get involved, as well as media enquiries, please contact: projects@primestars.co.za

ABOUT PRIMESTARS

Primestars is no stranger to learner education, and over 14 years has created national youth empowerment programmes for high school learners in under-resourced schools. Using cinemas as “theatres of learning”, as well as digital platforms, 100 000 learners annually have benefitted from a range of educational content, including maths and science revision lessons, entrepreneurship, and Career guidance.

ABOUT PARTICIPATING STAKEHOLDERS

- Key Executive Sponsors include **CHIETA, Markham, Seriti, Nelson Mandela Children’s Fund, Sasol, and the Ford Foundation.**
- Co-sponsors include **Love Life, Old Mutual Foundation, Spar South Rand, Women’s Development Bank, Bidvest, Brand SA, Pareto, Anglo American, EOH and Smollan.**
- Supporting GBV sector stakeholders include **Father-A-Nation, Umlambo Foundation, Sonke Gender Justice, Mr South Africa, Luke Lamprecht, POWA, Tears Foundation, ADAPT, Professor Malose Langa and Young Men’s Movement.**
- Patrons of the programme include **Dr Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Bonang Mohale, Dr Jerry Mofokeng, Sello Maake ka Ncube, Brighton Mhlongo, Elias Monage, Lindi Dlamini, William Lehong and Dr Reuel Khoza**