

More than 300 chefs, 10 cities, over 67,000 litres of soup for Mandela Day

Over 300 chefs took to their stoves on Mandela Day, producing 77,455 litres of soup to feed the vulnerable in South Africa. In 10 cities, a nutritious soup was cooked with compassion and care by chefs from restaurants, hotels, cooking schools and catering operations, serving a total of 309,820 cups of soup.



The initiative was made possible by a collaboration between two not-for-profit organisations founded in a philosophy of rescuing surplus food to nourish those in need - Chefs with Compassion and SA Harvest. "The success of this initiative comes down to collaboration, and we welcome all opportunities to work together with other rescue organisations," comments Ozzy Nel, operations manager of SA Harvest. "Through the collective involvement of two rescue organisations, over 300 chefs in 10 cities, at least 20 partners and sponsors, and over 80 beneficiary organisations, the seemingly impossible target was reached."



Commenting on the participation of chefs in 10 cities, whose labour resulted in delicious, nutritious soup being served around the country, Chef Coo Pillay, national project manager of Chefs with Compassion, says, "There is no doubt that the competitive spirit of the chef came into play, as the 'big four' cities fought to not only exceed their target, but also to beat the other cities in the count of litres cooked and, most importantly, lives impacted."



The participant producing the largest volume of soup from one kitchen was the Primi kitchen at Primi World, captained by Chef Bob Knuckey and co-ordinated by Ozzy Nel. The extensive logistics involved in collecting soup from 16 kitchens before sunrise on Saturday morning to deliver it to 23 beneficiary organisations in 29 locations by sunset was executed by Cape Town operations manager Manu Wegmershaus and assisted by Meridian Wines, who stepped in to assist with vans and drivers.

Overall, it was Johannesburg who won bragging rights for their volume of 22,092 litres prepared by 36 kitchens, followed by Cape Town with 18,850 litres cooked by 16 kitchens, Pretoria with 14,838 litres prepared by 17 kitchens, and Durban with 11,285 litres cooked by 17 kitchens. The city with the highest average was Rustenburg, with 4,200 litres from one kitchen.



Gratitude from beneficiaries flooded social media on Saturday afternoon, from far and wide across the country, as over 300,000 people received their meals. In Joburg, 2,000 cups of soup were delivered from the Lerato Educational Centre in Jackson Park informal settlement, a SA Harvest-supported Rhema South beneficiary. Scott Headrick from Rhema South Family Church, which feeds between 400 to 800 children daily, commented, "Hearing the news that we were going to get between 2,000 and 2,500 soups to feed the Jackson community, we decided we wanted to bless the adults. We've been planted in this community, which is home to upwards of 6,000 adults, for 10 years. On Saturday, we gave between 800 and 1,000 children ice creams in the morning and asked them to call their parents to receive a cup of soup when it arrived in the afternoon."



#67000litres for Mandela Day by numbers

1. Johannesburg: 36 kitchens prepared 22,092 litres for 88,368 people served by 55 beneficiary organisations.
2. Cape Town: 16 kitchens cooked 18,850 litres for 75,400 people represented by 23 beneficiary organisations.
3. Pretoria: 21 kitchens prepared 14,838 litres served to 59,352 people from 47 beneficiary organisations.
4. Durban: 17 kitchens cooked 11,285 litres for 45,140 people from four beneficiary organisations.
5. Rustenburg: One kitchen - the Buffalo Foundation - produced 4,200 litres for 16,800 of their beneficiaries.
6. Vereeniging: Four kitchens cooked 2,570 litres for 10,280 people served by four beneficiary organisations.
7. Nelspruit: One kitchen, Healing Wings, produced 1,200 litres for 4,800 people.
8. Mokopane: One kitchen, the Limpopo Chefs Academy, cooked 1,020 litres for 4,080 people in collaboration with Mokopane FM and five beneficiary organisations.
9. Bloemfontein: Two kitchens - the FBI Culinary Institute producing 900 litres and BON Hotels producing 100 litres - cooked 1,000 litres for 4,000 people from one beneficiary organisation.
10. Port Elizabeth: Capsicum Culinary Studio produce 400 litres, feeding 1,600 people from MES in PE.



Chef Coo Pillay, national project manager of Chefs with Compassion, concludes, "When you set out to achieve something that will do justice to the legacy of Madiba, something that will give South Africa a glimmer of hope and belief in the resilience of our nation, only a massive national initiative will suffice. We are both humbled and proud to have been able to deliver an initiative as meaningful and impactful as this in honour of Nelson Mandela. Through the funds raised from generous donations in amounts ranging from R10, deposited with the reference 'With love', to more than R10,000, Chefs

with Compassion will be able to continue delivering meals to the most vulnerable in society far beyond Mandela Day.

"We humbly thank SA Harvest for making this initiative possible, the hundreds of chefs around the country for giving so freely of their time and talents, our partners, sponsors and supporters who are too numerous to mention, the dozens of volunteers who worked tirelessly to bring this project to fruition, and to the public who followed up and supported us along the way," said Pillay.

For more information on the ongoing Chefs with Compassion campaign, [click here](#).

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