

The Housing Conditions We Strive For

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A house should be a safe space and one of the most important things a human being can have in life. If we do not have a home, everything we stand for feels incomplete. We find ourselves in mental states with different health problems because of the conditions we are living in.

We also find ourselves in abusive situations, like financial abuse because of unemployment. There is emotional abuse because the place is too small, and everything feels untidy and dark, with no space to move. Our children are affected. After all, we all stay in one small place, and the children witness everything that happens between their parents, including the fighting in the house.

We register for housing and have to wait many years. We are placed on a waiting list, and some people have been waiting for 30 years or more. There are people who registered in 1996 and are still waiting. These include elderly and disabled people who have waited for so long, despite the many efforts and organising of community activists.

For people who have spent decades waiting for a house, housing is not just about having a roof over their heads. It is about dignity, safety and having a place where families can live with peace of mind.

Mr Chief Xam Keith, an elderly man in his fifties from Eldorado Park, is standing up for the community on housing and human rights. He attends housing meetings and comes back with feedback from the Department of Human Settlements.

Many people have received houses in different places, including Jabulani, Lehae and Pimville flats, among other areas. His work gives people hope that more families can receive housing.

He could have chosen not to worry because he already has his own house, but he still cares for the people. He believes in the community and continues to stand with those who are waiting.

One of the messages shared by Chief Xam Keith and the housing beneficiaries' group is:

"Housing Beneficiaries group also serve for all who registered from 2000 to date. Southern Farms is not just a project, it is our fight for dignity, housing and land.

Together we rise. Together we build. Together we claim our rightful place in Southern Farms."

This message shows that housing is not only about individual families receiving houses. It is also about the community coming together to fight for land, dignity and a better future.

Chief Xam Keith is not a politician, but he believes in people, their dignity and their well-being. He also stands with elderly people who face problems with their pension money.

Some senior citizens have been affected by deductions from their pensions that they do not understand. Others have been tricked into signing documents under false pretences. These are serious concerns for elderly people who depend on their pensions to survive.

The seniors came together and organised a sit-in at the Eldorado Park SASSA office. They carried boards with messages such as:

“Our senior citizens are being tricked into signing documents under false pretences.”

“Our senior citizens are not being treated with dignity and respect.”

The sit-in showed that elderly people are not willing to remain silent when their rights and dignity are being affected. They are standing together and demanding to be treated with respect.

The community in Eldorado Park also stood together because people could not wait any longer for housing. Some residents put up shacks in Extension 6, next to the grounds, and called the area Action Ville.

Their structures were later taken down and broken by the police. But the people did not give up or turn their backs on one another. They continued to stand together in solidarity.

Some people are still staying in shacks, and some appreciate the help they have received from their fellow community members and Chief Xam Keith’s team.

The housing struggle shows how difficult life can become when people wait for many years for a home. Families need safe and decent places to live, and elderly people need to be treated with dignity.

Research shared in the article states that in 2026, 84% of people live in formal houses, 12% live in shacks, 70% own their homes, and women lead 60% of houses owned by women.

These figures raise important questions about the housing conditions of working-class communities. While some people have homes, many others are still waiting for housing or living in overcrowded conditions.

The people of Eldorado Park continue to organise because they believe that housing is a right. They want homes where families can live safely, children can grow up without witnessing constant fighting, and elderly people can live with dignity.

There is nothing for us without us. Together, we rise. Together, we build. Together, we claim our rightful place.

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