

Transgender Guardian Alliance Hosts a Dialogue in Daveyton

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Transgender Guardian Alliance (TGA), an organisation that deals with transgender issues, in partnership with Access Chapter 2(AC2) which advocates for queer rights, was joined by parents from the Parents Family, Friends of South African Queers (PFSAQ), and the queer community of Daveyton, Benoni. Together they held their first dialogue at Ntsikana Primary School on 10 February 2024. The dialogue was meant to educate the parents and the queer community about issues that affect transgender people, physically, mentally, psychologically, and medically.

Donwell Mpofo who is the founder of the TGA opened the dialogue by talking about his experience as a transman from Zimbabwe who also has kids and now living in Daveyton. The dialogue was also attended by other organisations such as Ekupholeni Mental Health, Rainbow Refugee Africa (organisation that works with refugees and asylum seekers advocacy for socio-recognition dismantled xenophobia within the system), and the Ekurhuleni LGBTIQ+ Organisation (formally known as EPOC).

Lee-Ann Mabaso from AC2 spoke about Trans-Affirmative Medical Education where she educated parents and the community about how surgical procedures are done and about the effects of Hormonal Replacement Therapy (HRT) and Anti-Retroviral Treatment (ART).

Lee-Ann who is the first woman to do the whole procedure out of 78 women, was part of the discussions and encouraged other transgender's to always attend the therapy sessions as transitioning happens not only physically, but also mentally and spiritually, "transitioning can happen six months to two years if therapists find that you are doing it for yourself, but it will take more than that if only they find out you might be doing it for your family, friends or your partner," said Lee-Ann.

Lucricia "Noxy" Tshabalala, an ally who was part of the dialogue, said "It is important to infiltrate such spaces as our daily life teaches us how to live with other people. The grassroots work starts at home, then we go to schools, engaging with educators who can also provide lawyers will help teach the kids human rights, acceptance, and how to create a safe space and teach love and unity".

During group discussions, the groups were given different topics to engage in, each group had a mixture of parents, queers, and allies.

"These discussions are very informative, we are all learning, and we need to teach each of our kids to accept themselves and the journey, [and] also to never tolerate compromise or accept being misgendered. Professional and Social spaces should not change us, with advocacy we can make the world understand, today I know of pronouns and how to address others because of such conversations. Our kids should not shy away from learning about the queer community," said Tshabalala.

Noxolo Mavuso from the legal office at Access Chapter 2 advised on the cases she has dealt with, services available and Human Rights Violations for Transgender people and people living with HIV. Sarah Ndhlovu a social auxiliary worker from Ekupholeni Mental Health (who works with traumatised families that need

psychological help) advised the queer community on the services they provide for the queer community and invited the community of Daveyton to use their services “We have a Victim Friendly Room (VFR) that works at the Police Station and seats at the front desk to welcome people who enter the station and can identify people who may need psychosocial support and they are also qualified”. The question-and-answer session was more based on how issues the whole queer community faces with parents and families. “This community knows who they are and what they want. All we must do is know and understand them” concluded Mam’Ndhlovu. Food and drinks were served at the end of the session.

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