

R3m upgrade for Sterkfontein Psychiatric Hospital complete

The new occupational therapy and sports facilities at Sterkfontein Psychiatric Hospital were opened this month, coinciding with Mental Health Awareness Month.



IDC volunteers

The project, an initiative of the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) in partnership with the SA Medical and Education Foundation (SAME) and the Gauteng Department of Health, was earmarked as a Nelson Mandela Centenary Legacy Project by the IDC, and was launched on Mandela Day 2018.

Since the launch, the hospital has received complete upgrades and furnishings of its occupational therapy library and media centre, restaurant, kitchen, and tuckshop. A new multi-purpose sports facility was also established, with a new soccer field, athletics track, tennis and netball court, clubhouse, change rooms and ablution facilities.



Soccer field before



Soccer field after



Tennis court before



Tennis court after

Mental healthcare often overlooked

“The reality of mental healthcare in South Africa is that it’s often overlooked. The prevailing stigma around mental illness, the fact that infectious and non-communicable diseases are at the fore putting immense pressure on public facilities that often run at overcapacity, as well as the expansion of primary healthcare services to rural areas all take priority over mental healthcare,” says Tyrone Pols of SAME.



New restaurant

Speaking about the importance of investing in mental healthcare, Pols says: “In the wake of the Life Esidimeni tragedy, the importance of having a strategic focus on improving healthcare services to vulnerable groups such as the mentally ill cannot be underestimated. At the hearings of the South African Human Rights Commission, it was stated that mortality rates of people with mental illness are 2.5 times higher than that of the general population. This shows the immense need for specialised facilities such as Sterkfontein Hospital.”



New recreational area

The hospital serves as a referral centre for most central, regional and district hospitals in southern Gauteng and parts of the North West province. The new facilities are extremely important to the treatment and rehabilitation of hundreds of patients. The hospital is also a training institute for Wits University, University of Johannesburg, North West University, University of Pretoria, Ann Latsky and Chris Hani Baragwanath Nursing Colleges.

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