

## NEWS

# New recycling programme piloted at Motherwell school

BY GUY ROGERS - 11 March 2020



**GARBAGE GOBLER:** Bay residents Gabriel and Jemima Reilly with the wire model of Munch the coelacanth

Image: SUPPLIED

It takes a fish to save a fish – and it helps if it is a very wise, old fish.

That is the vision of a new Sustainable Seas Trust (SST) recycling project developed from an unusual concept introduced by two innovative Port Elizabeth youngsters.

It is called Munch on the Move and the centrepiece is a large wire model of a coelacanth, the rare prehistoric fish once thought to be extinct but which was rediscovered in 1938 on the Eastern Cape coast.

The model, created by non-profit group SST and creative community wire worker Cosmas Hawker, is divided into five waste

compartments for plastic caps, polythene terephthalate (Pet) plastic bottles, paper, high-density polythene (HDPE) plastic items and aluminium cans.

The aim is to move Munch around between schools to spark a recycling ethos and in line with this approach it is being piloted in Motherwell at Mfesane Secondary School.

The trust's education head Nozi Mbongwa said on Monday the aim of the programme was to measurably reduce plastic pollution on school grounds around Africa.

"This will be achieved by assessing the abundance and accumulation rate of plastic litter in schools and by monitoring changes over time," Mbongwa said.

"Munch is being used together with various support aids as the key tool to get the children excited about recycling."

Original films were being developed to support the programme but in the meanwhile relevant films were being sourced online, she said.

"Supportive games and activities are geared around identifying recyclable items in different parts of the home.

"We use colouring in for the younger pupils and for the older ones matching the items and recycling codes.

"The SST team has also developed a comic strip around Munch and his even older and wiser Uncle Tony who educates his nephew about marine plastic pollution.

"We leave the speech bubbles blank and the learners get the opportunity to fill these in, which is both fun and educative."

Patricia Mapuma, a teacher at Mfesane, and founder and co-ordinator of the school's environmental club, said she and her pupils were excited about the programme.

"The environmental club pupils are always seeking opportunities to reduce the waste within our school, and this is going to be a fun

project for them to champion.

“This programme is going to encourage environmental responsibility among all the pupils, and hopefully they’ll take the message back to their homes.”

The concept of Munch was conceived and introduced to the trust by the Reilly siblings Jemima, 8, and Gabriel, 12.

Jemima said they wanted to raise awareness about plastic pollution after watching a video of a turtle with a straw lodged in its nose.

“We wanted to get Munch because there’s a lot of rubbish on the beach that we don’t want the fish to eat.”

“All the plastic that goes into this metal fish structure will actually be how much plastic the fish in the sea would eat.”

Mbongwa said Munch was first hosted and piloted at Pearson High School in October 2019 and the programme was developed prior to before launching the pilot at Mfesane.

The aim is to roll the programme out to four more schools, two in the Bay and two in Gauteng, before May.

“Global trends indicate that Africa is the second most polluted continent on Earth and will soon become the most polluted if these trends continue. This is a major concern, and it is why SST has developed an education programme calling upon schools to take action and lead the way for their communities,” Mbongwa said.