

THERE IS A WAY OUT of an abusive relationship

Rustenburg / Mooi nooi – Grace Help Centre extends a hand of support to women in the Bojanala and Madibeng districts. During lockdown, many women find themselves victims of gender-based violence. Grace Help Centre's doors are open.

They are a registered non-profit organisation and registered place of safety for victims [and their children] of gender-based violence. If the following is a reality in your life or that of a close friend or family member, they don't have to remain trapped in the situation.

Look out for these signs of abuse:

- Physical violence that includes slapping, pinching, kicking, choking and shoving.
- Mental abuse that includes intimidation, coercion, ridiculing and harassment.
- Financial abuse involves controlling a victim's ability to acquire, use, and maintain financial resources.
- Forbidding contact with friends or family.

THE PLACE TO START PLANNING YOUR ESCAPE IS TO CREATE AN EXIT PLAN.

Step 1
If you can, take photos of any abuse and save them on your phone. If you have any records or reports from doctors, keep them safe. They can be used as evidence.

Step 2

If the abuser has sent you any threatening or abusive messages save them on your phone.

Step 3

Fill a travel bag with a few items of clothing and shoes, important documents like a birth certificate or IDs, scripts or any day to day essentials and a few small keepsakes. This will help for when you feel it's time to leave or you have no other option.

Step 4

Become familiar with your abuser's routine so that you will know when it will be a safe time to make your getaway.

Step 5

Save Grace Help Centre's contact number. When you leave, make your way immediately to a police station and report to them that you are a victim of gender-based violence and that you want to be transferred to Grace Help Centre. You can give them Grace Help Centre's telephone number and ask them to contact the centre.

If you cannot go to a police station contact Grace Help Centre directly and we will meet you at a central location.

Grace Help Centre can be contacted on 014 574 3476 or their Crisis Line on 072 348 6526.



PULLING TOGETHER TO COMBAT COVID-19

Rustenburg – On Thursday 21 May, the Rustenburg Local Municipality (RLM) in partnership with local business owners handed out sanitisers, face masks and mattresses as part of a wider initiative to curb the spread of COVID-19.

This is just one of several initiatives by RLM executive mayor councillor Mpho Khunou since the announcement of the COVID-19 lockdown. Three non-governmental organisations (NGOs) received much-needed items.

Beneficiaries from Bakwena-ba-Mogopa Home-based Care in Bethany [village], Tlhokomelo Health Care in Maumong [village] as well as Community Answer Home-based Care in Rankelenyane [village] were very grateful for the generous donations.



Social distancing was adhered to during the handover.



Various NGOs received donations to help them fight the spread of COVID-19.

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**Staan Saam Rustenburg is
'n baken van hoop.**

Staan Saam en doen jou deel.

Juanita
083 444 6391

ALTERNATIVES TO DUMPING YOUR BABY

Rustenburg – We are at risk of becoming desensitised to the horrors of newborn babies being abandoned and left for dead every so often. Newborns are being wrapped in plastic, left in the veld or dumped in dustbins like a piece of trash. What would drive a mother to do such a thing?

Some of these women are alone, underaged, ashamed or do not have a solid support structure to help them care for the baby, however, no matter how desperate the situation, safe and legal alternatives are available which does not include killing the babies.

Môrester Kinderhuis director Helen Lotz deals with cases like these regularly. "I have been doing this for many years and everytime I hear of a baby that was dumped somewhere, it breaks my heart," Lotz told *Platinum Weekly*.

Lotz currently cares for 19 newborns and provides a safe place for abandoned children. **Lotz advises that should you decide not to keep your baby, at least go to a hospital to give birth. This will not only give the baby a chance on life - it is also beneficial for your health.**

"You can just tell the social worker that you intend on putting the baby up for adoption and this person will assist you without any judgement," said Lotz. **If you do this through the correct channels the baby will also receive an ID number which will help with the adoption process of which the mother has 90 days to change her mind.**

What if the baby is born at home and you still decide that you do not want to keep it? You can still go to the hospital and speak to a social worker. There are also many other organisations that you can contact that will assist you.

"I know an unexpected pregnancy can be terrifying, but if the thought of leaving your baby on a rubbish dump or in a storm drain ever crosses your mind, even if just for a brief moment, I want to encourage you to contact me. I will advise you and offer support to assist in making informed choices," pleaded Lotz.

Police spokesperson captain Elsabé Augoustides confirmed that if an abandoned baby is found,

a DNA-test is done to locate the mother who will face criminal charges if caught. "Mothers who abandon their babies will be charged with concealment of birth," she said.

There are instances where women give birth at home and the baby is stillborn. This can cause a woman to start panicking. "If a baby is stillborn, a doctor needs to be contacted who will declare the infant dead. If it is classified as an unnatural death, the police also need to be informed," said Augoustides. If you did nothing wrong, there is nothing to be afraid of as this is just the normal procedure.

Should you ever find a baby that was abandoned by the mother, the first thing you should do is to immediately contact the police. They will obtain the required documents from the Department of Social Development to ensure that the baby can be taken to a place of safety like Môrester Kinderhuis. Whatever your circumstance is, no matter how afraid you are or whatever your reasons may be for deciding not to keep your baby, please do the right thing and follow the right procedures to ensure the life of the child is protected.

If you do not have someone close to that you can confide in and you want to learn more about the options that are available contact Lotz on 082 460 8418.

Give your child a chance to live.



WINTER IS HERE

Rustenburg – The official start of winter is on Monday 1 June, however everyone had to put on their jackets on Wednesday morning. To some it might be a sigh of relief and a means of escaping Rustenburg's scorching heat... to others it might be a nuisance to unpack the winter woollies.

Most of the trees have started to shed their leaves and nature is flaunting hues of brown and beige dancing in the wind.

For as long as I can remember, the Rustenburg Show, historically held on the last weekend in May, was the opening act of winter. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting lockdown, this winter will have an unusual start – change is upon us and we have no choice but to adapt.

According to the Department of Education, schools will slowly be inviting back their students as from 1 June, although parents are not obligated to send their children to school and people will finally be able to return to work on Monday. Our very first lockdown winter.

Weather SA indicated that Rustenburg will experience its first cold front on Wednesday reaching a shivering temperature of max 20 °C/ min -1 °C on Thursday 28 May.

We would suggest dusting off your thickest winter coat and staying warm. With the cold temperatures, you are more prone to catch a cold. Snuggle up in front of the TV with a nice warm drink and make sure to take your vitamins regularly to strengthen your immune system to stay safe and healthily this winter.

On the bright side, at least your mask will help in keeping your face a wee bit warmer this winter!



Trees are standing bare in the cold winter winds.