

## HSH Princess Charlene's trip to South Africa

On the occasion of HSH Princess Charlene's trip to South Africa, the South African branch of the Princess Charlene of Monaco Foundation organized a cocktail function in aid of water safety and drowning prevention.

Drowning is the 3<sup>rd</sup> leading cause of unintentional injury deaths across the world. The Princess Charlene of Monaco Foundation works tirelessly to save lives.

On the 21<sup>st</sup> of April 2017, HSH Princess Charlene hosted a cocktail function in Sandton to personally speak on behalf of Her Foundation and engage guests on the importance of its work: "Here in South Africa, drowning is the second leading cause of accidental death after road accidents." She adds, "We can save so many lives, simply by teaching people essential water safety skills and how to swim and by focusing on one person, one family, one community at a time."



HSH Princess Charlene visits children from the Gugulesizwe Primary School  
© Eric Mathon/Palais Princier

Many prestigious South African personalities attended the function and some of South Africa's most highly-regarded athletes such as Mr. Francois Pienaar, former Springboks Captain and advisor for the Princess Charlene of Monaco Foundation, and Mr. Ryk Neethling, Olympic gold medallist swimmer, spoke about the work that the Foundation does.

The Foundation was created to raise public awareness about the dangers of water, teach children preventive measures, and teach them to swim. According to the World Health Organisation, in 2012 approximately 372 000 people died from drowning, making drowning a major public health problem worldwide (1).

Children, particularly in low and middle-income countries, are at the highest risk of drowning. HSH Princess Charlene is passionate about promoting water safety and fighting against this scourge.

Mr. Gavin Varejes, President of the South African branch of the Princess Charlene of Monaco Foundation includes, “By working with children in underprivileged areas, who are at greater risk, to teach them about water safety, the Foundation is ensuring that fewer senseless deaths from drowning occur. These children can go on to live healthy and fulfilled lives, and that is key to the future of our country.” In South Africa alone, the Foundation’s three programmes reached the following number of people in 2016: Learn to Swim – 2 507 people; Water Safety – 27 242 people and Sport & Education – 467 people.

Her Serene Highness has also been active at several South African events during Her stay. On Friday the 21<sup>st</sup> of April She visited Gugulesizwe Primary School where She studied, in order to meet with staff and children there. As part of Her visit, Princess Charlene, who is also a Patron of the South African Red Cross, supervised a first aid and CPR training session for the teachers and the children. Mrs Sinazo Masina, Mayoress of Ekurhuleni and Mr. Lesiba Mpya, deputy Mayor, attended the event.

On Saturday the 22<sup>nd</sup>, the inaugural “Princess Charlene Ladies Day” was held at Turffontein Racecourse in Johannesburg. This charity race day was created to benefit three organisations: the Red Cross, Gugulisizwe Primary School and the Highveld Horse Care Unit.

There also were two maiden plate races on the day and the Empress Palace Stakes, each of which carried the name of HSH Princess Charlene. The event was a big success.

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