Community activist awarded

SANDY IMMELMAN

At the recent inauguration of Julie Kydd as president of the Helderberg Sunrise Rotary Club, Léanne Keet, founder of Masikhule – an NPO that trains women from marginalised communities of the Helderberg in Early Childhood Development (ECD) – was awarded Paul Harris Fellow recognition.

The Paul Harris Fellow award is given to someone that the Rotary club recognises as having performed “Service Above Self”.

Ms Kydd said: “Our club felt that Léanne, through her work with early childhood development, was a well deserving recipient of this award. This year our club gave one first-time award, to Léanne, and a Paul Harris Sapphire was awarded to District Governor Lynette Stassen. It is a great honour to be recognised in this way and a Paul Harris award is worn with pride. There are many well-known people who have been awarded a Paul Harris, including Boris Yeltsin, Jimmy Carter, Arnold Palmer and Mother Teresa.”

Helderberg Sunrise Rotary Club has supported Masikhule in their goals over the years, including them in their annual Wine to Whales vehicle transport project, facilitating a sizeable international grant which was awarded in 2017.

Masikhule aims to break the cycle of poverty through education, and train over 300 women from marginalised communities in ECD and mentor up to 30 ECD centres a year.

They impact positively on the emotional, social and intellectual development of more than 1 800 young lives every year.

Ms Keet said: “I feel incredibly honoured and grateful to Helderberg Sunrise Rotary Club for granting me the Paul Harris award.

“This recognition of service extends to the entire Masikhule team, as it is only through our shared vision, compassion and dedication that we can make a difference.”