Inspiring South Africa to do good

HEARTLINES for Good.
This is the message from the Mass Media Project in 2008 as they talk about taking positive values to the next level – action. After the success of the first phase of the project, which saw millions of South Africans involving themselves in dialogue around positive values, HEARTLINES now wants to inspire South Africans to do good. This is what the HEARTLINES team had to say about their role in the organisation and the need for values in South Africa:

“HEARTLINES has researched more about behavioral change and what really drives it compared to many other organisations that are trying to do the same thing.”

“South Africa needs HEARTLINES because the sound moral values it stands for are the solution for the malaise of the country.”

“People need to change their hearts so we can all live in harmony.”

“We are a country with incredible potential. We are not reaching this as we have lost dignity within ourselves. If we could live with values, it would be great.”

“I feel every one of us has a role to play in this world and by being a part of HEARTLINES I can play my part towards making sure I leave the world a slightly better place than I found it.”

“Every human being has a conscience which dictates what is right and what is wrong. All major faiths agree on universal values and when these are lost, humanity becomes the victim.”

“HEARTLINES is there to help us think about the choices we are making and to question our beliefs and our values system.”

“For me HEARTLINES is an incredibly creative and innovative concept that uses the power of mass media to communicate with a view to bring about behavioral change. HEARTLINES provides a platform to promote values.” — HEARTLINES Features
**Fiction that inspires**

**Heartlines** is set to inspire South Africa with a series of dramatic narratives to be broadcast on television regularly. The 60 second narratives are similar to the Heartlines Minute (see opposite) as they feature good people doing good things that impact positively on the community.

“The way people view themselves, their community and their country is often determined by the mass media. The Heartlines Feature Service will aim to bring true, inspirational South African stories to the forefront that will allow people to see that there is good news in the country.”

According to Mkosi the feature service will provide the media in South Africa with a continuous source of good news stories. “This service will tell the stories of South Africa’s good people – those who are taking their good values and actions to the masses,” said Mkosi.

**Good news stories for the nation**

Mass media is seen as the most powerful social change agent in the world. It is one of the most prominent ways of how society perceives itself. According to Zama Mkosi, Heartlines’ Executive Manager of Media Programmes.

With so much negativity in the country due to power failures and the crime rate, the dramatic narrative is promising to bring a breath of fresh air.

“This Heartlines initiative will inspire people and bring the message that good values can make a difference in the way we act,” said Mkosi. “We'll use fiction to challenge and inspire people to live out positive values,” she said.

Using drama and story-telling Heartlines will aim to shift perceptions of what constitutes normal behaviour from negative to positive and inspire positive values-based action.

“We want to challenge people on a deeper level. We want them to be introspective about their own values by using powerful and moving stories,” said Mkosi.

“Life gets people down. We all get caught up with in our fast-paced daily existence and often forget about the things that really matter. The dramatic narratives will be the stimulation and inspiration to bring about change to South Africa,” Mkosi said. — Heartlines Features

**It only takes a minute**

The Heartlines Minute is about good people doing good things.

These 60 second radio and television inserts will reflect the heart of South Africa by bringing good news to listeners on a daily basis.

“Tell people to make a difference,” she said. “Tell people that they are living their values and putting their values into action,” said Zama Mkosi, Heartlines’ Executive Manager of Media Programmes.

According to Mkosi the Heartlines Minute initiative is necessary for the country as it has become important for us as a nation to understand who we are and what we are doing.

“The media is bombarded with bad news. We want to ensure a steady diet of good news about good people. People need to see that all is not bad in our country,” said Mkosi.

She believes this will encourage and inspire people. “The more we hear about the good things people are doing, the more we will realise that we can make a difference by acting out the good values in which we believe. The Heartlines Minute will be broadcast on a variety of radio and television stations in several languages in an effort to reach as many people as possible. The focus will be on motivating people to do good while also highlighting the values people live by.”

“What underlines the good actions of the people we are portraying in the Heartlines Minute are good values. We want to show that the belief in positive values can be turned into good action,” said Mkosi.

— Heartlines Features

**Valued networking supports positive values**

Many good people do not stand up and make a difference. This is often because they feel they are helpless to change things.

According to Heartlines many good people do not stand up and make a difference. This is often because of the negative messages we are bombarded with daily.

Heartlines believes that positive values can make a difference in the way we think.

“If people feel connected to a broader move for good they are more likely to take positive action,” said Derek Muller, Heartlines’ Chief Operating Officer.

“Heartlines aims through the use of information technology – cell phones and the Internet – to connect people to an inspirational and supportive network of like-minded individuals and institutions.”

In coming months the mass media project is set to tap into this virtual network by developing a massive database of people.

According to Muller the organisation will develop the platform that will connect people and institutions to each other – inspiring them with content around events, ideas and activities.

Heartlines will work among others, faith-based organisations (FBOs), schools and families to create a supportive environment for people to act.

“Over 60% of the population attends an FBO at least once a month.”

In addition these organisations have a key mandate to help people live positive values.

Our aim is to support these organisations and in that way mobilise and transform society,” said Muller.

“This is all about ordinary people who do extraordinarily courageous things if they feel they are part of a collective,” said Muller.

We at Heartlines are determined to provide the collective.” — Heartlines Features

Scenes from one of the dramatic narratives that are aimed at inspiring South Africans to do good.
Making a difference with values

“Our youth need to be taught to live their lives in an uncompromised manner, to know their values and not fall prey to the harsh world that is exposed to them almost on a daily basis.”

So says HEARTLINES patron and Olympic swimming medalist Penny Heyns. After hanging up her swimsuit in 2001, Heyns, who is still regarded as the best breaststroke female swimmer of all time, established herself as a highly sought-after motivational speaker.

Heyns became a household name when she bagged two gold medals at the Atlanta Olympic Games in 1996 becoming the only woman in history to win both the 100 and 200m breaststroke at an Olympic Games. The first South African to win an Olympic gold medal in 44 years, Heyns proved she was a sporting phenomenon when three years later she took swimming to a different level by breaking 11 world records in three months on three different continents.

Throughout all of her achievements Heyns always maintained that her success as swimmer only ever counted as much as her contribution back to society. Her biggest achievement, according to her, is her rock-solid value system.

“Having values has always been important to me as they guide you in daily life. I have always maintained that I swam not to win gold medals, but because of the responsibility that I have for my talent.”

A devout Christian Heyns has gone from the world’s swimming pools to its stages talking to especially young people about values.

“I believe HEARTLINES supports the values and morals I push myself to live by on a daily basis.”

“It was thus easy for me to agree to become a HEARTLINES patron as I support their initiative fully. I was very humbled when asked to become a patron. “I believe HEARTLINES supports the values and morals I push myself to live by on a daily basis. I am very excited about HEARTLINES phase two that will see us taking discussion about values to the next level – positive action. It can only get better,” said Heyns.

Her motto is that one must always know why you are doing what you do. Her integrity, honesty and positive attitude led to her swimming success, but they also drive her daily existence.

“Our society is indoctrinated with the world’s way of thinking that tends to support very poor morals and values. HEARTLINES looks to change this.

“It’s already touched so many lives through the quality of the movies and the content of its messages. The campaign encourages young people to live in an uncompromised manner and to always value themselves,” said Heyns. While she admits enjoying people appreciating and acknowledging her work, for her, it has always been more about the acknowledgement to one’s self.

“It really is not what other people think about me, but rather what I am doing with my time and my talent. I hope to make a difference by sharing my experiences with people.”

According to Penny young people lie close to her heart as they are the future.

“South Africans, with the emphasis on young people as they are our future leaders, need to stop conforming to the much publicised American lifestyle. The American culture is so indoctrinated in our lives; this in the form of television, publications and the much-hyped celebrity lifestyle. Our youth are exposed to this lifestyle which in my view promotes very bad morals,” she said.

Her message is clear – South Africans need to live by a set of good values.

Heyns hopes to be involved with HEARTLINES through a variety of projects that will see her meet up with young people across the country.

“This will grant me the opportunity to speak to the youth and share my knowledge on being in the public eye – to tell people how I learnt how to not loose myself and stay firm in what I stand for,” she said.

“I am dedicated to give back to a nation that has served me so well,” said Heyns. — HEARTLINES Features