

**DR KNACK Biomass Day**  
**DR Ruth Rabinowitz Director of MamaEarrth**  
**28<sup>th</sup> July 2011.**

Teachers, pupils, university students and researchers, donors and NGOs, teamed up to educate children in Alex, using practical demonstrations and collective wisdom at the start of the MamaEarth Sustainable Education Program on Thursday, bringing warm smiles into the chilly Joburg morning.

“Everything comes from the sun and we are part of that everything. The way we deal with nature and that energy, impacts on our lives in myriad ways. “

This was the fundamental message that MamaEarth in a partnership with University of Johannesburg SeTAR (Sustainable Energy technology and Research Centre), WITS Engineers without Borders and Young SESSA (Sustainable Energy society of SA) shared with 145 Gr 7 pupils and their teachers at Dr Knack School in Alexandra Township .

The Biomass Day was the first module in a program that MamaEarth, (a foundation that promotes healthy people on the healthy planet), offers to schools, wanting to offer more than textbook lessons on sustainable living and climate change. The program introduces children to issues around solar energy, healthy lifestyle, thinking skills, entrepreneurship, problem solving and maintaining a healthy environment through caring approaches to waste recycling, water and energy usage.

Divided into small groups the children experimented with making fires in a cleaner way, putting out fires, adopting safe practices around burning and protecting themselves and their families from burns. There was not a bored face in sight and many other pupils wanted to participate but had to be sent away to class. Teachers were left with work books and questions which the students will complete during class time. Those achieving highest marks will be awarded with certificates and caps. Hence not only will science become livelier, but the understanding of the relevance to the school syllabus will be enhanced.

The current program is sponsored by Pareto and administered by Rotary of Rosebank. MamaEarth hopes to receive additional funding to be able to offer the program further afield, stimulating SA's youth to take an interest in the natural sciences, the care of their planet and of themselves. We aim to inspire students through teaching that combines questions, facts, actions, experience and creativity. In this way learning becomes an adventure and the world a fascinating place.