

Green hearts beat fresher

Written by Sana Ebrahim

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Passionate about living green, the Green Heart Movement is determined to have everyone wearing a green felt heart during COP17.

The citizen-based Green Heart Movement was initiated in association with Cycles 4 Social Justice (C4SJ) and encourages arts and poetry experiences around themes of ecology, sustainable living and cycling. Green Felt Hearts Poetry Arts Experience sessions will feature as part of the Green Hub festivities for COP17. The initiative is registered with the World Poetry Movement.

“The Green Felt Heart concept originated with the fabric called felt and has now been adapted to include green hearts made from beads and wire. We would like to see Green Felt Hearts - which originated in Durban - evolve into a legacy symbol for future COP meetings,” says Michael John Peppas, co-founder of the Green Heart Movement. “Writing-green using macaronic versing in a variety of languages is encouraged in spreading the living green message amongst youth across the globe. Some of the slogans we have thought up include Green the extra mile, Green-consciousness, Green with glory, and Green hearts beat fresher. The plan is to establish an international Green Heart Movement.

“To enhance awareness around COP17, we would like to see People Movers and aeroplanes bearing images of green hearts alongside the text ‘I heart COP17, Durban, 28 Nov – 09 Dec 2011’; hotels and restaurants serving green heart biscuits with coffee; horticultural plantings in and around KwaZulu-Natal in the shape of green hearts featuring the text COP17; and government officials, pilots and flight attendants, university chancellors, interfaith representatives and COP17 delegates wearing green felt hearts. Our aim is to position Durban as Green Heart City, just as New York is known as The Big Apple and Paris as The City of Love,” added Peppas.

Green Felt Hearts Poetry Arts Experience in conjunction with Alliance Française (AF) is all set to host a ‘10 Days to COP17’ Tree Planting Celebration on Friday, 18 November. The event takes place from 2.30pm to 5.30pm at the Alliance Française de Durban, 22 Sutton Crescent, Morningside. Members of the public are invited to dress in green and participate in an afternoon of fun-filled green activities. Some of the excitement includes: a ‘10-day to COP17’ bike ride from the Green Hub to AF arriving 14h30; Musician Steve Fataar appearance introducing special cycle song for the event; a giant Green Heart Cake for a surprise announcement; prizes for Adventure Nature Drawing; tree planting; macaroon tasting, macaronic versing and more. Courtesy Smarties, M&Ms and Astros will be provided. Participants are encouraged to bring

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some of these sweets along with them to be placed in the gift box for the disabled youth attached to C4SJ.

Members of the Green Heart Movement created atmosphere by handing out green felt hearts to delegates at the KZN Pre-COP17 Summit and visitors to the Imagine Durban Sustainable Living Exhibition held during September 2011. "We encourage people to make their own green hearts and hand them out as a greenwill gesture," says Sana Ebrahim, co-founder and media liaison of the Green Heart Movement.

Team Green Felt Hearts Poetry Arts Experience was declared second best in the Amateurs Category of the Durban Sandcastle Contest held at New Beach in October 2011. Guided by the C4SJ concept, the team built a giant Re-Cycled Saddle and decorated it with a bicycle wheel, Brazilian flag (Soccer World Cup hosts 2014), Brazilian mascot on a bike, hooter, microwave that transmitted the first signal for Greater Durban Television (GDTV) in 1994, green felt hearts, and recycled bottles and caps. The result: Art Technology in Action.

Established in January 2010, the Cycles 4 Social Justice project aims to instil a love for the cycle and widen the enthusiasm for cycling as sport and transport in South Africa. A specific emphasis is placed on making the cycle a central aspect in the lives of youths facing challenges. The organisation has kick-started a variety of projects in collaboration with KwaZulu-Natal Blind Tandem Cycling and The Community Resource Centre in the build-up to COP17.

Bike enthusiasts interested in joining the '10-day to COP17 Living Green' bike ride should contact the Green Hub at 031 303 8476.

For more information about the tree planting celebration at the Alliance Française de Durban, contact Michael John Peppas (Ecology & Cycling) at +27 73 923 1446 or Sana Ebrahim at +27 82 545 6792.