**MAYOR WELCOMES 2018 BABIES**

While others were deep in their sleep from the New Year’s Eve hangover Mayor Maripe Mangena was already deep into his ceremonial duties, welcoming New Year’s Day babies. Mangena dressed in a blue shirt and blue jeans arrived at Dr CN Phatudi hospital with the first lady just a few minutes before 8am, the time scheduled for the start of his ceremonial responsibilities. They were not alone, Tzaneen’s fist family was trailed by a group made up of councillors, municipal officials and community members, some representing political parties.

Just like on Christmas day, the hospital has successfully delivered two babies and coincidentally both mothers are from Burgersdorp not far from the hospital. Mangena and his entourage also visited the paediatric ward where seven children were to spend New Year’s Day before leaving for Letaba hospital.

Mangena arrived a Letaba hospital where two babies were prepared for presentation, but there seem to be some form of miscommunication in relation to the mayor’s arrival time. The Mayor arrived at 10:30 on Christmas day but an hour earlier on New Year’ Day. It took at least 45 minutes before things got underway, but the visitors remain patient despite the scotching heat. Finally Matron Mashapa, the nursing manager arrived and things got underway.

It was a very short but celebratory programme full of singing and clapping. Praises were showered at all directions, to the mayor, the nurses and the mothers. Mangena thanked the nurses for their work which he said “save lives”. Matron Mashapa said “We appreciate the gifts and the time you made for our Christmas babies and for sacrificing your time to be here today (New Year’s Day”. Sister Khumalo thanked the mothers for showing confidence in the hospital and the nurses for preserving the lives of both babies and their mothers. The mood at Letaba Hospital was so jubilant that the mayor, his entourage and nurses danced and sang from the maternity hallway all the way to the gate to the amazement onlookers.

Running behind schedule, the entourage sped off to Van Velden Hospital where two mothers waited with their babies. Only one baby was born at the hospital, the other was delivered at home but the both mother and child had to be admitted. It was so hot on the day that the ceremony had to be taken to another room either than the one initially identified.

At the hospital the Mayor met Lesedi, a fourth-year medical student who had come to give toys to children at the hospital through a foundation she established in 2016. Her foundation “Put a smile” indeed put a smile on the faces of children at the paediatric ward at the hospital as she gave each one a toy. It was all formalities, mothers got their gifts from the first lady and a pep talk from the mayor. Wisani Tshuketani, the hospital’s Community Liaison Officer promised to give the two mothers the gifts from the hospital the next day.