

Solidarity Holiday: Czech Republic

For Phila Mkemezulu volunteering is a passion, and now his passion is taking him on a journey of a lifetime.

Mmasabata Mofurutsi

Phila Mkemezulu, a production technician for Blast Furnaces at Vanderbijlpark Works has been working for ArcelorMittal for 14 years. He is amongst the six ArcelorMittal South African employees nominated to do volunteer work for the 2012

Solidarity Holiday's Programme. On 7 July 2012 Phila left for Ostrava Kuncive and Vitkovice in the Czech Republic where he is currently involved in activities such as building pavements, parking lots, planting, gardening and dancing workshops. He is working with an NGO named St. Alexander Caritas. This institution operates sheltered workshops for

handicapped clients, runs a textile workshop, joinery workshop, ceramic workshop, plastic crusher and waste separation workshops.

When asked why he applied to take part in the Solidarity Holiday's Programme Phila replied: "To fulfil the creed, for the hungry to be fed, the naked to be clothed, the sick to be nourished, the aged be protected and the

infants be cared for".

Phila has been involved in volunteer work for as long as he can remember. He started doing volunteer work with ArcelorMittal with the renovation of the Bophelong Community Hall in 2008. He has also been involved in building houses for the Corporate Social Responsibility in Orange Farm since the inception

of the project.

Phila also does volunteer work for NGO's around the community such as the Busy-Bee hospice in Vanderbijlpark. He says: "Being able to contribute, brings a smile to the needy or those that cannot do for themselves and that is humbly fulfilling". He believes that it is essential that those that are fortunate help with

humanitarian projects.

"Volunteering gives one the opportunity to practice important skills used in the workplace, such as teamwork, communication, problem solving, planning, organisation and implementation. Also, this is a great way to meet new people, and also strengthens one's ties to the community".



My Solidarity Holidays in the Czech Republic

Phila Mkemezulu

I left South Africa just after 22:00 on the 7 July. Arrived at Dubai at 08:00 in the morning, boarded a plane to Prague at 10:30. Arrived at Prague Airport at 15:20. Checked for the taxi driver, but saw someone with ArcelorMittal logo who identified himself as a Hotel Rep. He took me to Jan Kvech, the taxi driver who was already waiting with Dave from America and Aziz from Morocco. Jan Kvech transported us to city centre and we met Narasimha from India. We had a guided tour of Prague, then at 19:30 drove to Ostrava. Checked in at the Hotel Puls at 23:15 and went straight to bed.

Monday, 9 July

Woke up at 05:15, Breakfast at 08:00, arrived at ArcelorMittal Ostrava for Safety

Presentation and welcomed by Jan Rafaj - HR Director, Tapas Rajderkar - CEO and Sanjay Samaddar -EO Flat Carbon Business Division East. Drove in bus to St. Alexander Charity in Kunčičky and arrived at 11:00. Introduction and presentation by the director of Charita sv. Alexandra, Pavel Folta. Paving work until lunch at 12:30, then worked until 16:00. The bus took us to the hotel, took a shower and visited Ostrava City hall, viewed the city from the tower. Walked to the city centre until 19:00 and had food and drinks. Arrived at the Hotel just before 22:00, discussion about our respective countries and exchanged gifts with the team. Slept at 00:00.

Tuesday, 10 July

Woke up at 05:20, breakfast at 07:15 and left for site at 07:50. Worked on the paving for the whole day. The bus took us to the hotel, took a shower and then walked to Chateau for brewery

visit and dinner with the CEO and HR Director of ArcelorMittal Ostrava until 21:00. From 21:30, rehearsed for the song to be performed the following day. Slept at 00:00.

Wednesday, 11 July

Woke up at 05:10, breakfast at 07:15 and left for site at 07:50. Worked on the paving until 15:00. Had a barbecue (braai) and performed a song for ArcelorMittal Ostrava volunteers, NGO and ArcelorMittal Ostrava Management (CEO, HR Director and CMO). Had a presentation on Colours of Ostrava by Radim. The bus took us to the hotel, took a shower and we went to Shopping Park for laundry and shopping. Slept at 23:00.

Thursday, 12 July

Woke up at 05:00, breakfast at 07:15 and left for site at 07:50. Worked on the paving until 12:30. Wrap up of project and hand over. Departed for

ArcelorMittal Ostrava for a guided plant tour, Coke Making and Rolling. Check in at Colours of Ostrava Festival just after 16:30. Danced in a Dance for Life tent to help Charity projects. Checked the opening of ArcelorMittal stage by the CEO and performance by musicians. Left the festival at 23:00 by tram and went to bed at 01:30.

Friday, 13 July

Woke up at 06:00, breakfast at 07:15 and check out of the Hotel 08:00. Departed for ArcelorMittal Ostrava Hotel Kovak to deposit our luggage. From just after 09:00 had a guided tour at the Museum of Mining. Went to Nova Karolina shopping centre and had lunch at Pizza Colloseum at 13:00. Walk to at Colours of Ostrava Festival, danced in a Dance for Life tent. Checked the Blast Furnace Museum and took photos. Left for the hotel just before 22:00, packed our luggage and departed for Prague at

23:00.

Saturday, 14 July

Arrived at Prague at 04:00 and dropped Dave, Zdravko, WU Jing and Margarita at the airport and then went to sleep at ArcelorMittal Guest House. Woke up just after 09:00, Tiffany, Aziz and Magdelino had already left the country. Breakfast and took a taxi to Prague airport at 13:00. Left Prague for Dubai just after 16:00.

Sunday, 15 July

Arrived at Dubai at 00:00, slept at Admiral Plaza Hotel. Woke up at 06:00 and took a taxi to the airport at 07:15. Left Dubai for South Africa at 10:20 and arrived in South Africa at 17:00.

Ostrava Team

Zdravko Grbic from Bosnia, Jose Francisco Cuellar from Brazil, Jing WU from China, Narasimha Hegde from India, Margarita Vid from Kazakhstan,

Magdaleno Viveros from Mexico, Aziz Hamdoun from Morocco, Tiffany Noelle Jaynes and David Trikonos from the United States of America.

Conclusion

This was a humbling, fun filled adventure and rewarding experience that I will never forget, with a team of hardworking and caring people and a warm welcoming by our host and the handicapped charity residents. The reception from the ArcelorMittal Ostrava team and their Top Management (Jan Rafaj - HR Director, Tapas Rajderkar - CEO and Sanjay Samaddar -EO Flat Carbon Business Division East & Chairman of the BOD) was overwhelming.

Thank you to ArcelorMittal Foundation, Maggie Mopedi and everyone involved for this opportunity and friendships that will last forever.