

Halala awards celebrated



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Inner city champions are honoured by the Johannesburg Development Agency for their contributions in uplifting the area.

ELEVEN projects have received accolades for their contribution to the revival of the inner city, receiving prestigious Halala Awards from the Johannesburg Development Agency.

The annual Halala Awards gala evening was held on 11 June, with high-powered representatives from businesses, investors and community organisations active in the inner city. Guests were greeted by the mellow sax sounds of Tuxedo.

According to the JDA's chief executive officer, Lael Bethlehem, "This recognition of extraordinary efforts made by developers, investors, communities and individuals in the inner city serves the dual purpose of acknowledging the phenomenal work done to support and sustain the inner city. But further, it brings to the attention of every resident the high degree of urban regeneration and development that has taken place."

Now in its second year, the Halala Awards aim to recognise and acknowledge outstanding contributions and commitments to regeneration of the inner city made through private and public sector projects.

Halala aims to encourage effort in building sustainable regeneration projects, which recognise the role and relationship between private and public sectors. Partnerships are also fostered in the regeneration of the inner city.

Some 200 guests attended the glittering function at Constitution Hill, which was decorated with a backdrop of the city, lit up by sparkling lights.

Following last year's awards, the JDA gave careful consideration to the categories for this year to ensure that each project, individual and programme could be evaluated in an equal manner. This resulted in the addition of two new categories, "Sustaining



Barry van Wyk with the Colosseum award given for Turbine Hall Square

Joburg" and "Colosseum".

New categories

"Sustaining Joburg" highlighted the original and exciting use of well-managed public space and projects that support the regeneration of the inner city.

There were two winners in this category: Main Street Mall and eKhaya Neighbourhood Improvement Programme.

The property owners in Main Street saw the need to uplift the area and make it accessible to the inner city community, while also creating an exciting, clean, safe and landscaped environment for owners and tenants.

According to the JDA case study, the Main Street Mall upgrade has brought in many new developers and investors. There has been an increase in restaurants and other public space-oriented businesses, bringing a vibe to the once run-down street.

Main Street Mall has not only regenerated the area but also helped increase the value to property and investment.

eKhaya Neighbourhood Improvement Programme, initiated by the Johannesburg Housing Company (JHC), brought together property owners, caretakers and community organisations to share the vision of refurbishing damaged buildings and rebuilding Hillbrow.

The programme spans a number of Hillbrow city blocks and has had a direct impact on some 6 000 residents living in 33 buildings.

According to the JDA case study, "the success of eKhaya is located in the commitment and active participation of all stake holders, but can specifically be attributed to three essential elements, namely investment in physical repair and ongoing maintenance of buildings and public space infrastructure, good management of both and critically the development of strong relationships among all stakeholders that recognise roles, responsibilities and accountability".

The Colosseum Award, celebrating the restoration and preservation of inner city buildings, went to Turbine Hall Square.

Two other finalists, Beacon Royal and the Old Reserve Bank Building, both received special certificates of achievement.

Other winners

"Caring Joburg", with the theme Supporting Joburg's Citizens, focused on individuals and organisations that create the "caring heart" of the city.

Three winners were chosen for this category: Makhulong A Matala; City Kidz Pre and Primary School; and Friends of the Inner City Forum.

Makhulong A Matala is a non-profit, public benefit organisation that provides community development and social support services to 9 000 tenants housed in JHC social housing projects in Joburg.



Main Street Mall won the award for Sustaining Joburg



The organisation provides community programmes on issues such as social rights, life skills, and income-earning opportunities. They have two primary focus areas: tenant support services and youth and children development.

The Colosseum award went to Turbine Hall

CityKidz Pre and Primary School, an Afhco Holdings project. In 2007 Afhco decided to take a more "developmental" approach in the conversion of an old school building. Instead of creating apartments, the group, with sponsor partners, decided to create an inner city school.

CityKidz, in Goud Street, City and Suburban, is a safe, stimulating environment for 210 young learners from Grade R to Grade 7.

Friends of the Inner City Forum aims to protect and represent the interests of the owners of residential properties, provide advice and support them. The Forum also encourages participation in clean-up campaigns of city and training programmes.

"Relaxing and Playing Joburg" recognises the original use of public space, urban art, sport and recreation, and entertainment facilities, such as gyms, restaurants and theatres, among others.

This award went to Smart Gym, a company that focuses on providing exercise and gym facilities to residences in the inner city in a manner that supports and sustains social inclusion.

"Working and Buying Joburg" distinguishes innovative commercial and retail developments that attract people to the business hub.

This award went to Olitzki Property Holdings.

Key to their success has been the Umoya House, which instigated the changes in Gandhi Square; Marlborough House, honoured for Fox Street's transformation; and the Lunga House project to the south of Gandhi Square. In these project the change in one building had a domino effect of recovering a much larger area.

"Living Joburg" looked at the creation of homes. There were three winners in this category.

The first was the Sara Leon Building in Lorentzville. Here owner Nqobile Khumalo, with funding from TUHF, took ownership of the building in 2007 and overhauled the building from the bottom up. The first tenants moved into the building in July 2008.

In their case study, the JDA noted that "Mr Nqobile Khumalo has undertaken a project that would challenge a well established company armed only with his desire to succeed and the support of sector specialists who have provided assistance in accessing funding".

The Ashanti and Dogon Buildings, owned by Leungo Investments, were recognised for "the impact ... on the broader precinct development".

The two buildings in Anderson Street provide high end accommodation through luxury rental apartments and a condominium hotel. The developments have a definitive African feel.

Afhco Holdings' Sambro House was the third winner for the creation of substantial affordable apartments. In the case study report, the JDA notes "Afhco's contribution to a quality standard of living in the inner city, coupled to the relationships that they have forged with their tenants and the broader community, underscores the need for more than 'fixing buildings in isolation' as a way to provide inner city residents with homes rather than houses."

All winners received a wooden carved trophy depicting the inner city.

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