




#### THE DAD WHO MAKES A DIFFERENCE

**Meshack Kekana, 41, an IT business analyst, is raising Reetsang, 14, Koketso, 12, Reabetswe, 9, Agang, 7, and Shadi, 4, with his wife Dora.**

Being a father to five children is a magnificent achievement in its own right, but Meshack Kekana is also the founder of Dads in the Picture, an organisation that promotes active and positive parenting among fathers.

“There’s a need for father figures in children’s lives,” says Meshack. “And not just biological fathers. We need male figures who are prepared to step up and be role models for young boys.”

Over a braai at a Dads in the Picture picnic, Meshack describes what he believes is the problem with dads today. “They’re either absent or simply not prepared to give their kids quality time. They think providing money for their children’s needs absolves them of their responsibilities. Go to the pubs, and they’re full of guys, and most of them are fathers. Other men work hard, then come home and collapse on the couch instead of interacting and spending time with their children. That’s not good for the children. Kids want time, not money.”

Dads in the Picture hosts monthly trips, picnics and camps at resorts and nature reserves. At these events, dads and their children can spend quality time swimming, braaiing, going crazy on jumping castles and generally enjoying themselves and creating memories.

For Meshack, a father’s purpose is to guide and establish stability. “Children need to know that whatever they’re afraid of, you’re there to protect them. Also, with your partner, you’re there to instil values. You’ve got to set rules, and stick to them – otherwise, if you start making exceptions, they will run amok.”

Despite being easygoing, Meshack runs a tight ship at home. “It’s okay to be friendly with your kids, but remember that you’re their parent, not their friend. Sometimes the line blurs. And it’s difficult, for instance when you come home late. You want to spend some time with them, but they need to go to bed, because there’s school in the morning. You basically have to love in a disciplined manner.”