

SARON

ADVICE OFFICE



ACCESS TO JUSTICE

The small rural Western Cape town of Saron is part of the Drakenstein municipality of the Western Cape, located 20km south of Porterville and 31.3km from Tulbagh. The town which is tucked away at the foot of the Saronsberg mountain was established as a mission station by the Rhenish Missionary Society in 1848 by Johannes Heinrich Kulpmann.¹ The name, Afrikaans for Sharon, is of biblical origin (1 Chronicles 27:29, Song of Solomon 2:1), meaning 'flats' or 'plain'. The main economic activities of the Drakenstein² municipality are finance, insurance, real estate and business services (21.29%). There are 7,843 people living in Saron, 97.3% who identify as Coloured 97.3% and 1.8% who identify as Black African. The predominant language spoken by 96.8% of the population is Afrikaans.³

The Saron Advice Office deals with cases involving paralegal disputes such as housing allocations by government. They are also involved with youth empowerment programmes with the ultimate goal of eradicating substance abuse among the local youth. As a member of the Community Policing Forum (CPF), the LDA staff volunteer their services to support victims of abuse and other forms of violence at the local police station trauma facility.

1. Raper, P. E. (1989). Dictionary of Southern African Place Names. Jonathan Ball Publishers. p. 397. ISBN 978-0-947464-04-2 - via Internet Archive.
2. Drakenstein Local Municipality - Overview. (2019). Retrieved October 14, 2019, from Municipalities of South Africa website: <https://municipalities.co.za/overview/1208/drakenstein-local-municipality>
3. Frith, A. (2019). Census 2011: Main Place: Saron. Retrieved October 14, 2019, from census2011.adrianfrith.com website: <https://census2011.adrianfrith.com/place/166001>



FAST FACTS

NAME: Saron Advice Office

LED BY: Shirley Adams

MAIN CHALLENGES FACED BY THE COMMUNITY: unemployment, labour disputes, gender-based violence, substance abuse

MAIN ACTIVITIES: Paralegal support; youth development

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BORN TO SERVE AND PROTECT



Sharon America coordinator of the Saron Advice Office (SAD) talking to Colleen Alexander Julies and paralegal Shirley Adams.



Shirley Adams (paralegal) and Sharon America.



Sharon America conducting a meeting with community members.



SHARON AMERICA

SHARON AMERICA'S PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF ABUSE HAS LED HER TO RUN WORKSHOPS EDUCATING THE COMMUNITY ABOUT THEIR RIGHTS.

I was born in the small town of Saron. The town is located between Gouda and Porterville. The town's name is not visible on any of the road signs that give directions. Saron offers little work opportunities.

Many of our husbands leave the village to go into the city to work. On Monday mornings there is lots of singing as they get into the bakkies and trucks. Here and there, someone who overslept is called. The closest train station is in Gouda. Our people need to get up at four o'clock in the morning to take the taxi to the station to catch the train.

Many of the men are builders and carpenters who leave the village on a Monday and return on Friday to take care of their families.

Around Saron are various fruit and vegetable farms that provide seasonal work. There is also a canning factory in Tulbagh that provides seasonal work to most of our people. When the season passes, there is unemployment. Everyone looks forward to the seasonal work.

I was there when the Advice Office opened its doors in 1998. We have received training from different institutions (including SCAT). I am passionate about working with people in the community. My personal experience of abuse has driven me to offer workshops in the community about family violence, child abuse as well as about knowing your rights. The aim of workshops is to protect and encourage women and children to talk about it. We assist by making sure that men who physically or sexually assault their wives or children are prosecuted. Families also approach us to assist with their parents' estates.

We work closely with the community and handle different matters such as evictions in town and on farms. We also deal with the brutality of police in prison cells, social problems and unfair dismissals.

GEBORE OM TE DIEN EN TE BESKERM

Ek is gebore op 'n klein dorpie, Saron. Die dorp is geleë tussen Gouda en Porterville. Nêrens is die dorp se naam aangebring op die naamborde wat pdaaanwysings gee. Saron bied min werk geleenthede aan.

Baie van ons mans verlaat die dorp om in die stad te gaan werk. Maandag oggende is dit 'n gesingery soos hulle die bakkies en vragmotors klim. Hier en daar word iemand geroep wat verslaap het. Die naaste trein stasie is op Gouda. Ons mense moet al vieruur opstaan om die taxi te neem na die stasie om die trein te kry.

Baie van die mans is bouers en skrynwerkers wat die dorp op 'n Maandag verlaat en weer terugkeer op Vrydag om vir hul families te sorg.

Rondom Saron is verskeie vrugte en groente plase wat werk verskaf aan seisoen werkers. Daar is ook 'n inmaak fabriek in Tulbagh wat seisoen werk aan die meerderheid van ons mense verskaf. As die seisoen verby is heers daar werkloosheid. Almal sien uit na die seisoenwerk.

Ek was daar toe die Advieskantoor sy deure oopgemaak het in 1998. Opleiding het ons gekry vanaf verskillende instansies. Dit is my passie om te werk met mense in die gemeenskap. Met my persoonlike ondervinding van mishandeling het dit my gedryf om werksinkels in die gemeenskap aan te bied oor gesinsgeweld, kindermishandeling asook ken jou regte.

Die doel van die werksinkels is juis om vroue en kinders te beskerm en aan te moedig om daarvoor te praat. Ons help om seker te maak dat mans wat hulle vroue of kinders fisies of seksueel aanrand gestraf word. Families nader ons met hul ouers se boedels.

Ons werk nou saam met die gemeenskap en hanteer verskillende sake soos uitsettings in dorp en op plase, die brutaliteit van polisie in tronkselle, maatskaplike probleme en kantoor bedien die omliggende plase en plaaslike gemeenskap.



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