

## **Loving is caring**

Martha Letsoalo from the Eastern Cape is a 60-year-old pensioner. She's also the breadwinner of a family of seven, including her grandchildren. She works as a lead counsellor at a home-based care organisation called House of Hope and says it has always been her dream to help less fortunate people.

Although she doesn't have a formal tertiary qualification, she tries in many ways to be professional; and her experience supplements her lack of formal qualifications. "I studied nursing but I didn't pass; however, I did not give up. I've worked for many organisations caring for people, including crèches."

Prior to her involvement with House of Hope, she stayed at home after she quit at the crèche she was working. She really needed the job to survive. "As we are volunteers, it was really sad because we got nothing, but the stipend is a lifesaver.

"I'm very old, but the level of work I can do will surprise you! I'm committed and am grateful that the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) is funding House of Hope, because a lot of people benefit from it."

Letsoalo joined House of Hope in 2006 and says her age is not a stumbling block, as long as she has the love and passion to help people.

Although she failed her nursing course, she hasn't given up on her dreams of getting a formal education. She explains that the project has helped her in many ways, including giving her a chance to be educated and reigniting her need for education. "I'm currently enrolled for my Adult Based Education and Training Level Four and I have to thank EPWP, because if it wasn't for the stipend, I wouldn't be able to do this. I would instead be looking for a way to make money."

She says although the money she gets paid doesn't seem like much – especially for someone her age and with such a large family to feed – it can go a long way. "Ever since I began receiving the stipend, there hasn't been a day my family didn't eat. I pay my electricity and buy the necessities around the house."