

Kids meet Gandhi grandson



By Bernice Maune

PUPILS of three high schools were invited to meet Prof Rajmohan Gandhi, the grandson of the late freedom fighter, Mahatma Gandhi, at Sir Pierre van Ryneveld High School last week.

Prof Gandhi is in the country for the second time in 16 years to conduct special visits with Initiatives for Change, a team of people from various countries.

Global secondary school, Tembisa High School and Sir Pierre van Ryneveld were the schools privileged to attend the talk.

Prof Gandhi opened the talk with a short introduction to his life. He is the son of the fourth child of Mahatma Gandhi and was born and schooled in New Delhi, India. He currently resides in the USA where he is a research professor at the University of Illinois.

His studies include the state of South Asia, Hindu-Muslim and India-Pakistan relations and the resolution of ethnic tensions.

He has also written extensively

about the Indian independence movement and its leaders, India-Pakistani relations.

Prof Gandhi is a published author having written a widely acclaimed biography on Mahatma Gandhi in 2006.

He said the purpose of his visit was to inspire change and encourage the youth to realise that they should be the change they want to see in the world.

"I realise I have a role to play, one of clarifying people's thinking, encouraging reconciliation within racial groups and urging forgiveness.

"I made a commitment 53 years ago to do what God wants. Although as human beings our nature is weak, I remember my commitment to work outside my human nature," Gandhi said.

He told pupils to listen to their inner voice, take note of what others have to say and create a team with others to empower one another.

Commenting on his stint in the Indian government and his consequent retirement from politics, Gandhi said the party which had sent him to parliament had become weak.

"To succeed in politics one not only needs a powerful party but luck



PROF Rajmohan Gandhi, the grandson of the late freedom fighter, Mahatma Gandhi, visited Kempton Park last week. Pictured with him are pupils who were invited to meet him and members of Initiate for Change. Seated: Wadiaa Khoury, Hudson Matsena, Mahlaku Jiyane, Paballo Moerane and Keth Mbusi. Front: Cleo Mohlaodi, Mary Ramapa, Joanita Nabbanja (Uganda), Fabiola Benavente (Mexico), Azep Girmai (Ethiopia), Bukiwe Maseko, Portia Mosia, Prof Gandhi, Chris Breitenberg (USA), Edward Peters, Rob Lancaster (Australia), Ernst van Biljon (Sir Pierre principal) and Henry Bidgood (deputy principal).

and favourable circumstances.

"Through my writing of articles, books and research, I have made an impact in India but it is not sufficient, as we need fellow fighters around the world to join us in creating change,"

Gandhi said.

He said since his visit he had been struck by the warmth of individuals and people's thoughts and concerns for the future.

One pupil said they admired

Gandhi's enthusiasm and felt spurred on to initiate positive change.

A fellow pupil added that he had been motivated to succeed in life and would become an example to his peers and community.