

Cheese thief in rat's hole



Mfanafuthi Phungula was convicted and sentenced to twelve months behind bars for stealing.

The state alleged that the twenty-nine-year-old did unlawfully and intentionally steal 3 packs of Parmalat cheese from a reputable supermarket in Mount Edgecombe. The suspect was apprehended by security guards, who had witnessed Phungula concealing some items under his jacket. The

security officers approached the suspect, took him to another room, where they requested to search him, to which he consented. After recovering the stolen items, police officers were called and the suspect was arrested and conveyed to the local police station, where he was formally charged. Phungula pleaded guilty to the offence and was convicted as such. In mitigation, the defence attorney, Mr Mncube from Legal Aid South Africa, submitted Phungula's personal circumstances and that he pleaded guilty to the crime. According to Mncube, his client had shown remorse by admitting to his offence. The public defender suggested that the court impose a wholly suspended sentence as Phungula had already spent time in custody since his arrest.

The state prosecutor, Mr Govender, did not agree. He highlighted the seriousness and prevalence of the offence. Govender asked the court to impose a custodial sentence since Phungula had not learned from his string of previous convictions, which included theft, housebreaking and assault. In handing down the sentence, Magistrate Parshotam considered Phungula's personal circumstances and that he pleaded guilty to the crime. The magistrate also considered the interest of society and that Phungula was a repeat offender, who was not willing to change. "You clearly don't want to learn from your previous mistakes. You have been fined and a suspended sentence imposed on you but that has not deterred you from committing the same mistake again", he warned. Parshotam sentenced Phungula to twelve months in jail.

Tongaat SAPS aim for child safety



Photo: Communications Officer at the Tongaat SAPS, Captain PZ Ngwane.

SAPS Tongaat is highly concerned about cases reported pertaining to the abuse of children due to parents negligent.

Communications Officer at the Tongaat SAPS, Ngwane told **The Rising Sun** that since the schools have been closed for holidays, parents should always take heed of certain rules to keep their children safe.

"Children must know their full name(s), age(s), telephone number(s) and address(es). Children must know how to contact you as the parent, the SAPS or another close relative in an emergency. When children are alone at home, they should tell people who phone that you are there, but that you are busy and cannot come to the phone. The person who is phoning, can phone back later. Teach your child to end any telephone calls with strangers immediately and hang up the telephone if he/she continues to talk", Captain

from you in a store or shopping mall, he/she/they must go to a store employee or cashier for help immediately. You must know where your children are at all times. Know their friends and be clear with them about the places and homes they may visit. Never leave children unattended in a vehicle, whether it is running or not.

"Listen to your children. Pay attention if they tell you they do not want to be with someone or go somewhere. Notice when anyone shows your child a great deal of attention or begins giving gifts. Ask your child about the person and find out why that person is behaving that way. Teach your children that they have the right to refuse any unwelcome, uncomfortable or confusing touch or actions by others and get out of those situations as quickly as possible. If they cannot leave, children should be taught to kick, scream and resist by yelling loudly, 'this person is not my father/mother/guardian' and then immediately tell you what happened.

He added: be sensitive to any changes in your children's behaviour or attitude. Encourage open communication and learn how to be an active listener. If your children tell you about problems, try to stay calm, be reassuring, and non-judgemental. Work with them to get help to resolve the problem. Practice basic safety skills with your children. Make an outing to a mall or park an educational experience in which your children practice checking with you, going to the bathroom with a friend and finding adults who may be able to help if they need assistance. Do not let your children wear clothing or carry items that bear their names in public. It makes it too easy for a stranger to approach them. Develop code words for anyone you trust to fetch your children and teach your children the words. Tell them not to go with anyone who does not know the code words.

Childline on 08000 55555 should be called to report any crime against children.

Children must know that adults, especially strangers, rarely ask children for help in finding things or for directions. Explain to your child that men and women are strangers. Children must know that if he/she/they become separated

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