Press Release:
UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Healthcare workers can stay for free thanks to Ubuntu Beds, but urgent funding is required!

(Cape Town, 16 July 2020) Ubuntu Beds have partnered with Ubuntu Beds, an NGO founded by hotel owner Kim Whittaker, that pairs healthcare workers who are at the forefront of the fight against COVID-19 with accommodation close to their workplaces, at no cost.

As the South African healthcare system prepares for the peak of COVID-19, healthcare workers continue to run the risk of infecting their families and others while traveling to and from work. Since the virus hit, hundreds of healthcare workers have become infected, with nurses accounting for the majority of cases. A lack of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), over-exposure due to shortage of staff and long commutes in public transport are all said to have contributed to its spread.

After contracting the virus herself, hotel owner Kim Whitaker launched the Ubuntu Beds digital accommodation platform in March this year, in an attempt to unite hospitality businesses that now stand empty with healthcare workers. To ensure the success of the Ubuntu Beds initiative, the digital platform needed to be impactful and easy to use. Being the experts in creating competitive advantages for Hospitality and Tourism businesses in Africa, rainmaker digital was quick to jump on board for this worthy cause.

The rainmaker VISTA.frontdesk Hotel Management System which is part of the VISTA Destination Network an Open Platform and Ecosystem for Destinations, allows hospital managers and HR leads to book accommodation directly with accommodations on the platform. This is extremely useful as it allows the hospitals to have an overview of where their staff are staying and can help B&Bs, guesthouses, and apartment owners in outlying areas to earn a small income. The geo-location of the ESRI maps, means healthcare workers may be placed as close to their hospital as possible, sometimes within walking distance. The finances, booking, and blocking off of room inventory is controlled by the platform in real-time.

"As a social enterprise, we are always focused on the positive impact we have in the African Hospitality and Tourism Sector. While we democratize technology and make it inclusively available foremost for all emerging, small, medium independent providers, we immediately loved the idea of Ubuntu Beds. It really helps accommodation providers who currently have no income otherwise to stay afloat and it helps the hospitals and health care workers to stay safe in the direct vicinity of their workplace", says Thomas Mueller, CEO of rainmaker digital.

Ubuntu Beds founder, Kim Whitaker says: *"The spirit of Ubuntu has been particularly prevalent amongst South Africans during this time. We are grateful to rainmaker digital for coming onboard. They've played an integral role in our quest to show gratitude to the healthcare heroes as well as supporting local tourism businesses. The Ubuntu Beds digital platform is efficient and user-friendly thanks to their expertise."*

Through private donations and corporate sponsorship, the initiative is able to accommodate up to 2.500 public healthcare workers at no cost.

To date, 6153 nights have been booked, 642 healthcare workers signed up, 351[1] doctors and nurses have been placed and 1026 [2] establishments with approximately 16.000 [3] plus rooms situated across the country, close to hospitals and clinics, have signed up to the platform. The average stay is between 7 and 14 days and is open to both the private and public healthcare sector. Healthcare workers have access to self-catering facilities and in some instances Wi-Fi, TV, and laundry services.

Cleanliness is of utmost importance and all accommodation providers need to adhere to a cleaning guideline developed by Ubuntu Beds, based on the guidelines set out by the Department of Health for self-isolation and self-quarantine accommodation. Specialist cleaning companies do a deep clean post-stay, which includes a COVID-19 fog, to ensure no cross-contamination occurs. Healthcare workers are aware of the risks, and scrub-off and scrub-on between the hospital and the accommodation.

If you are a healthcare worker needing an accommodation, a hospitality business interested in offering your rooms and services, or you want to donate, please visit https://www.ubuntubeds.org/. You can also call 0861999308 or get in touch via Whatsapp on 0713001672.

Also visit and follow Ubuntu Beds on social media

- Instagram - https://www.instagram.com/ubuntubeds/
- Twitter - https://twitter.com/ubuntubeds
- Facebook - https://www.facebook.com/ubuntubeds/
- LinkedIn: linkedin.com/company/ubuntubeds

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[1] This number is correct as of 9 July 2020 and is subject to change.
[2] This number is correct as of 9 July 2020 and is subject to change.
[3] This number is correct as of 9 July 2020 and is subject to change.

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This press release was distributed on behalf of Ubuntu Beds. For interviews contact media@ubuntubeds.org or call Gwen Sparks on 083 443 0019

About rainmaker digital

rainmaker digital creates competitive advantages for Hospitality and Tourism businesses and Destinations in Africa and ensures that more tourism spend is contributing to the destination and its people. Our customers enjoy the perfect combination of a stunning digital presence with significantly extended exposure, seamlessly converting into more bookings and an improved reputation. As a result, our customers gain more occupancy, revenue and profit. By becoming a member of the VISTA Destination Network and implementing the unique and Award Winning 5 Stages of Success they always stay way ahead of the crowd - https://rainmaker.travel/

Other partners

The digital platform was made possible by some key pro bono partnerships, most notably:
- Nicework – A design studio that helps companies to grow using Purpose. Nicework designed our brand and website, and continues to assist us in creating content, managing social media, and designing anything else we need.
- ESRI South Africa – The map functionality that enables the map functionality to see the proximity of hospitals to accommodations
  FirstRand SPIRE Fund - The South African Pandemic Intervention and Relief Effort (SPIRE) is a public benefit fund managed by the FirstRand group, and aims to make a sustainable difference with respect to dealing with the health and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in South Africa and key markets in the rest of Africa.