

**Speech: My name is Riaaz Davids, founding member of Empowering Eats, this organization started 5 years ago in my garage, and still operating from my garage!**

**Today I will be speaking about 3 key points as I know today, we are here to celebrate our children's success on the rugby field and we don't want to keep them waiting for too long.**

1. What kind of future are we shaping for our children as coaches and parents?"
2. While our kids line up for pies and Samosas by Auntie Gayad's tuck shop, others line up for food to survive."
3. Together, we can empower the future—because every child deserves someone who cares."

Good morning, Primroses players, coaches, parents, and everyone gathered here today.

You know, there's one thing we can all agree on—our kids have us running around more than our bosses do!

Between rugby practice, soccer, as I am a soccer coach also, parties, school holidays, and tournaments like the AWKAF tournament this weekend pass, sometimes I feel like I should clock in and out just like I do at work!

But here's the thing—every single minute we spend with them, whether on the field or off, is an investment in their future.

**(Humorous touch):**

I see some of you nodding your heads, thinking, "Yup, I just spent R150 on pies and samosas at auntie Gayad's tuck shop because my child couldn't decide if he was feeding the whole team or just himself!"

Believe me, I've seen it as I like to sit at the tuck shop—kids running up to the shop after practice with their parents' bank cards in hand or a R100 and not bring change, and the parent would just shaking their heads with a smile that says, "Well, there goes tonight's supper budget,

But when they get into the car and reach Rosemead Avenue, they would ask, what's for supper!

We would say "but you just eat and they would say that was just a snack!!

But this little scene? It's more than just snacks after practice.

It's a reminder of how much we, as parents and coaches, are part of their growth.

We are shaping not just players—but people, future leaders, springboks and so much more. And that's what this is all about!!

## **Middle - Building Empathy:**

Now, I want to switch gears for a second.,

While some of our kids line up for pies and samosas by aunty Gayadt tuck shop,

there are others—just a few km's from here—who line up for food because they don't know where their next meal will come from,

In the communities where Empowering Eats works, Parkwood, Lotus River, New Horizons, Schaapkraal, Ottery, Mitchells Plan

I've seen children as young as 4 years old stand in line for food,

Imagine that. A 4-year-old. And it's not just them. Their brothers, their sisters, their parents—they all come because they need help,

and they have no other options but to stand in a line for food,

do you know how much dignity that takes?

How do you think those people feel?

After all they are human and have feelings to!!

This is where Empowering Eats steps in. We're 100% volunteer-based—people like you and me, who work our day jobs and spend our nights and weekends trying to make sure no child goes to bed hungry.

We've fed over 87,000 people this year alone, that's almost 8500 people a month and we're not stopping anytime soon.

We have big dreams with no funding. But here's the thing—we need you.

### **(A touch of humour)**

I know, I know—this is where you're expecting me to pull out the donation bowl and send it around and expecting everyone to throw a R100 in

But seriously, I'm not asking for much. Well, okay, maybe I am!

But it's not just about money.

We need you to help us grow our organization. Whether it's funding (yes this is directed at all the big corporate bosses and people with influence sitting here listening to me speaking,)

spreading the word of what work we do, or even just a follow-on social media—

everything helps.

We're a small organization right now but soon we going to be big, and with your support, we can reach even more people and help even more communities and even employee people to better their lives,

We are not called Empowering Eats for nothing.

Ramadan 2025 planning has started 2 months ago, yes we still have 5 months to go but we intend on feeding 100 000 people and we need support, hence the planning as started already.

## **In Closing.**

I want to leave you with this thought:

As parents and coaches, the greatest gift we can give our children is not just success in sports, not money, is not a good car but good character and good manners!!!

not all of them are going to be Springboks or Proteas, but good manners and good character will carry them through the lives, that's a skill/ art they will always have!

When we teach them discipline, empathy, and generosity, we are setting them up for a future where doors will open for them—both on and off the field and that's all I want as a parent and as a coach that they grow up to have good character!!

But what about the children who don't have parents or coaches in their corner like we do,

this hall is full of parents, grandparents, family who supports their children, and I thank you for that, please don't ever lose interest in your children's sports even if they 25 years old!!

But What about the children who don't have parents or coaches, who looks out for them?

That's where we come in. Empowering Eats is about more than just food. It's about giving kids a chance by Empowering!

A chance to grow up knowing that someone cares.

A chance to build a future they can be proud of by Empowering them, and that's why I'm asking you today—help us. Help us make a small difference, help us stop that child from standing in a line for food!!

They are only doing it because they see their parents do it! We need to stop this!!

Together, we can feed more families and empower them to better there circumstances!

it doesn't always have to be food, or money a smile is a form of sadaka/charity, so smile with those who don't have, they have feelings too!!

Together, we can empower the future. Please follow us on our social media platforms or see our website for ways to donate.

Thank you Achmat and Thabiet for affording me this opportunity.

**#servicetooths!!**