

THE FOSCHINI GROUP DONATES R500 000 TO CHILD WELFARE, SOUTH AFRICA



The Foschini Group has chosen to support Child Welfare, South Africa by donating R500 000 for its Isolabantwana (Eye of the Children) Child Protection Programme.

The Isolabantwana programme is a good-practice, community-based child protection model, which was developed by the Cape Town Child Welfare Society in 1997 and piloted nationally four years ago through the assistance and support of the Child Welfare infrastructure, and supported financially by the National Department of Social Development. This programme has been successful in empowering previously un-served communities to address the issues around child abuse. Emphasis is given to the protection of children through awareness programmes aimed at prevention, as well as providing intervention and alternative care for children who have been the unfortunate victims of abuse.

"We are grateful for the recognition afforded us by the Foschini Group and value their support and commitment to such a worthy cause", commented Ashley Theron, the National Executive Director for Child Welfare South Africa. "We have over 1440 community members in the Western and Eastern Cape and Gauteng who have already been trained as 'eyes' and who are assisting social workers in detecting child abuse and monitoring children at risk, and we have plans already in place to roll-out to the rest of the country as resources become available".

Volunteers were trained and deployed in 15 communities by local Child Welfare, South Africa member organisations. These screened volunteers are trained as: Educators to create awareness in the local communities on child protection and the prevention of child abuse; Counsellors to assist a child who has been a victim of abuse until a social worker can intervene; and Authorised Officers of the Children's Court, where approved by the local Commissioner of Child Welfare, and mandated to

intervene where child abuse has been reported and to remove the child from danger. These volunteers have become the symbol of hope in their communities, educating local people and children on children's rights and promoting child protection. Safe houses have also been set up in the local communities to afford children safety from potential danger.



Left to right: Denis Polak - CEO Foschini Group; Nigel Pierce - Good Hope FM; Prof Sulina Green - Vice President of CWSA; Deputy Minister Nomatyala Hangana - Provincial and Local Government and Conveynor of the WRC Campaign 2006; Ashley Theron - National Executive Director of CWSA

The Foschini Group has supported Child Welfare South Africa on a provincial basis over the past couple of years, but this is the biggest donation to date. "We are proud to align ourselves again to such a worthy organisation and in particular to such a notable programme", said Shani Naidoo, Foschini Group HR Director. "Children have the right to be protected and it is everyone's responsibility to ensure that this is honoured. The children are the future of this nation and need to be given the opportunity to live normal, safe and carefree lives". The funds raised were as a result of the Foschini Group's participation in the White Ribbon Campaign - 16 Days of Activism, which was an initiative driven by the office of the Deputy Minister of Social Development for Provincial and Local Government, Ms Nomatyala Hangana.

Currently Isolabantwana is being implemented in 74 communities nationally, and statistics in 2006 show that the deployment of more than 1440 trained community volunteers resulted in a minimum of 8300 children at risk being assisted.

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