

Indaba Education Fund hosts fundraising dinner in NYC

The Indaba Education Fund held its first fundraising dinner in New York City earlier this month. Its goal is to help provide quality early childhood education for farm workers children in the Cape Winelands via accredited teacher training.



Andre Shearer, founder and chairman of the Indaba Education Fund

“Including generous donations received at the dinner, commitments secured since our very young non-profit's creation now total \$680,000 (approximately R9m)!” said Andre Shearer, founder and chairman of the Indaba Education Fund (IEF). “It was an incredible night on so many levels, and our first-ever IEF event will go down as a legendary one.”

A fully accredited 501(c)(3) nonp-rofit organisation, the IEF was established by New York-based wine importer Cape Classics, to dramatically improve educational opportunities for children living in the South African Winelands by training teachers and care givers in Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) accredited courses at the Indaba Montessori Institute (IMI) outside Stellenbosch.

Escaping the poverty trap

“By focusing on improving the level of education for young children in the Cape Winelands, the IEF aims to provide these children with a much better chance of using their education to escape the poverty trap and realise their life dreams,” said Shearer.

The fundraising dinner took place at the newly reopened Eleven Madison Park, 2017's World's #1 Best Restaurant (from the World's 50 Best list), in the heart of New York City. The 44 guests were an eclectic mix of attendees, ranging from actors to philanthropists, Cape Classics and IEF board members, bankers, lawyers, filmmakers, producers, and general friends of the company including Halil Dundar of the World Bank, Lauren Buzzeo, managing editor at <>Wine Enthusiast Magazine and actor Boris Kodjoe.

Guest speakers at the dinner were Lynne Lawrence, the executive director of AMI in Amsterdam, and Professor Takao Hensch, professor of neurology at Harvard Medical School's Boston Children's Hospital and the 2017 recipient of the Mortimer D. Sackler, MD Prize for Distinguished Achievement in Developmental Psychobiology.

Hensch spoke on his research into critical periods of brain development, and how so much of brain function development happens in the 0-6 years – the age groups targeted by the IEF. Lawrence provided an insightful and inspirational presentation on early childhood education and the specific benefits of Montessori teachings.

Cape Classics support

The IEF is supported by a portion of all global sales of Cape Classics' own Indaba Wines brand, as well as through fundraising and private donations. The fund helped establish the Indaba Montessori Institute (IMI) at the Sustainability Institute in Lynedoch, off the R310 outside Stellenbosch, where teachers and care-givers receive training in Early Childhood Education.

It also provides bursaries to deserving students, including a group who are currently enrolled in South Africa's first ever Association Montessori Internationale Assistants to Infancy 0-3 Years Diploma training course. The 18-week course runs across three modules with the first being completed this September, and the next running in January 2018.

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