

# Girl's shelter benefits from Chevrolet CSR team

Chevrolet Ute Force has helped renovate Ons Plek, the residential child and youth care centre in Cape Town that provides developmental and therapeutic services for girls who have lived, worked or begged on the streets.



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"The team supports South Africans who are helping themselves and we are making a long-lasting impact that will continue to bear fruit," says Tim Hendon, Chevrolet brand manager at General Motors South Africa. "Ons Plek provides an environment for girls in Cape Town who need help to adjust to a more structured life."

## Graffiti artist creates mural

"The shelter requires ongoing assistance to remain viable, in addition to essential renovations to its building. To do so they need to be more prominent in the public eye which is one of the reasons why we had an internationally renowned graffiti artist create a mural artwork for them."

Ons Plek, established in 1988, is situated at 4 Albertus Street in the historic District 6, a popular tourist destination, and lies on the route of the famous topless, double-decker bus that takes tourists on viewing tours. Adam Whitehouse, creative director at advertising agency, Native Cape Town, secured the services of graffiti artist Faith47 who has a bent for social activism, to create a striking mural that will continue to draw attention to Ons Plek long after Ute Force has left.

"We were doing so much good inside the building and in the courtyard, yet that didn't highlight the building as an amazing place," says Whitehouse. "We wanted to do something extraordinary to the outside of the building to bring attention to it. I've followed Faith47's work for years although I didn't know her personally, when I dropped her a mail and we began to chat, she said the cause resonated with her immediately."

## Week's project creates order

Ute Force participant and designer, TV personality and actor Aidan Bennetts of Top Billing fame led the weeklong project. The team rerouted a gutter to clear the courtyard for recreation purposes, tiled the courtyard from bare concrete, scraped down and re-waterproofed the walls, bared, rust-proofed and painted the balcony wrought iron filigree, built and installed a shelter for the wheelie bins, built and installed a bench and installed secure planters to add greenery to the courtyard.

Bennetts says: "The project went fairly smoothly, following my first contact with Carmen Schaeffer, a graphic designer and educator who was previously involved with Ons Plek. Builders Warehouse, a long-time partner of Ute Force on many of our other projects throughout the year, supplied the materials we needed at reduced cost, we used local contractors to fulfil the work as we do on all of our projects and again to supply and erect a scaffold at short notice to support Faith47's work.

"The short time-frame in which we delivered this project was a minor challenge as was ensuring that all the work we performed was safe. Some of the girls who enter Ons Plek, because of drug abuse, can express themselves quite actively when they first arrive and so all the fittings had to be secure. One of the pleasures was working with the resident social workers who were all very enthusiastic about the support."

The social workers helped the team by selecting appropriate paint colours for the building's walls, based on their influence over mood and on therapy - vital considerations when creating a nurturing environment for troubled youngsters.

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