Eastern Cape malls donate shoes

'Lupi' Ngcayisa's Railway to Life Campaign has received a donation of 780 pairs of school shoes for disadvantaged learners from Hemingways Mall and Mdantsane City in East London, both owned by the Billion Group.

Excited learners get school shoes at Nobhotwe Lower Primary School in Mdantsane.

The shoes will be distributed at three schools in the Eastern Cape, including Nokwanda Lower Primary Ndevana and Tyutyu Lower Primary in Bisho. An official handover of school shoes took place at Nobhotwe Lower Primary School in Mdantsane on Monday 17 May 2010.

Says Sisa Ngebulana, CEO of Billion Group, "Through this donation, we are actively supporting the campaign's objectives, which are to promote the importance of education and to keep children in school."

Ngebulana explains that many children abandon their education because they simply do not have a pair of school shoes, especially in winter. "Not only do they suffer from the cold and discomfort, but often, without shoes, they feel their poverty shows," says Ngebulana. "Without shoes, bright futures are simply snuffed out."

Perfect timing

Philanthropist, motivational speaker and radio personality Luphumlo 'Lupi' Ngcayisa inspired the campaign when he asked for shoes in lieu of birthday gifts and since then this campaign has been widely supported by many corporates across South Africa. Metro FM's partners in this initiative include SABC 1, Chevrolet, Opel, Isuzu and City Press

"The Billion Group's donation on behalf of Hemingways Mall and Mdantsane City is the largest single contribution from the Eastern Cape, and we're delighted with the support, which will see many hundreds of children with a brand new pair of shoes," says Ngcayisa. "With winter almost upon us, the timing is perfect."

The campaign has been widely supported by corporates across all sectors in South Africa, with over 23 000 pairs of shoes already distributed to date. In 2009 alone, 16 000 pairs of shoes were collected.