

The Thursday Club celebrates ten years of FUN-raising

The Thursday Club (TTC) is a social drinks networking fundraiser created in 2003 by a group of Johannesburg-based friends to raise funds to secure the future of South African children orphaned or affected by HIV/Aids. TTC was co-founded by Josef Talotta, Josephine Buys (nee Swainbank), Trevor Latimer, Danielle Weakley (nee Nasser) who were later joined by Gennaro Pisapia.



The concept is simple - connect and collect for after-work drinks, with the "cover charge" (usually R100) being donated to selected charities. 2013 marks ten years of FUN-raising, raising an estimated amount R2-million through its attendees, angel donors and other various ways.

TTC has had many incarnations - sometimes attracting a dozen people, other times attracting more than 350 people. It spread to the East Rand with the establishment of the Benoni Vista Thursday Club, before spreading to Cape Town when Josephine Buys relocated and kept the TTC flame burning.

The recipe is simple and consists of three key factors: the like-minded hearts who attend, the amazing venues that host the guests and the carefully selected charities. Its organisers are asked to invite at least ten friends at each event. An existing charity is selected to administer the funds raised.

In the past, The Thursday Club Johannesburg supported Starfish Greathearts Foundation, which achieved the much needed brand recognition, both nationally and globally. The Thursday Club Cape Town chose a small, local charity in 2011 nominating Mamelani Projects, followed by its current charity Light From Africa Foundation in 2013.

Never turn anyone away

Johannesburg's beautiful people usually meet on the last Thursday of every month while Cape Town's beau monde usually meet on the first Thursday from 6pm (after-work meet up) until about 8pm. At the door, business cards are collected and R100 cash. "R100 is our target amount; we never turn anyone away, if someone wants to give whatever they can afford, they are more than welcome," says Josephine Buys. Ultimately, every bit helps, she says before adding, "If you can change the world through the eyes of a single child, you can change the world."

Business cards are later drawn for a chance to win from a selection of fantastic thank you prizes and auction items donated by generous sponsors. These prizes are sourced by the core group - and are sometimes even provided by guests - and include anything from fine liquors, cosmetics, weekends away, beauty treatments, hotel stays, music, jewellery, fashion, garden accessories, homeware, art and books. Some of the most desirable global and South African brands have generously supported The Thursday Club, which gives their consumers a wonderful social experience that they will forever associate with the brand.

The Thursday Club occasionally conducts an auction to raise the highest possible bid for high value luxury brands and/or weekends away. The details from the business cards are captured to build a powerful database, with the assurance that details will never be released to any third parties. Guests are invited back by email, SMS / Facebook / Twitter campaigns prior to each event and new guests are welcome by word of mouth.

By hosting The Thursday Club, the host establishment is guaranteed to be exposed to the 'right' target market: young, professional, socially active guests with high disposable income who will admire, acknowledge and support the contributing brands that are associated with The Thursday Club. The venue is asked to provide a welcome drink (often sponsored by the host venue's key liquor supplier or sometimes The Thursday Club will approach a wine estate that is willing to donate to the cause for a 'liquid on lips' sampling opportunity) and some snacks (a great way to showcase the menu).

Since both The Thursday Club in Johannesburg and Club Cape Town hit the "pause button" during the recession, many loyal angel hearts requested that it start it up again so The Thursday Club Cape Town reactivated in March 2011 with an overwhelming response, even during the traditionally slow winter months.

Looking ahead, The Thursday Club Cape Town is asking you for valued support to this worthy cause and there are many ways you could get involved, including:

1. Bring ten friends with you to the next The Thursday Club Cape Town
2. Sponsor your venue or a prize for giveaway/ auction
3. Refer ten people to The Thursday Club Cape Town mailing list or like the Facebook page - www.facebook.com/TheThursdayClub
4. Come to ten of The Thursday Club Cape Town events this year
5. Tell ten friends about The Thursday Club Cape Town
6. Donate R10 to LFAF through their website - www.lightfromafricafoundation.co.za

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- Find us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/TheThursdayClub
- For more information about Light From Africa Foundation please logon to: www.lightfromafricafoundation.co.za

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