

Naartjie Love Foundation clothes children for Christmas

The Symphony Way Temporary Relocation Area in Delft, Cape Town, better known by its nickname, Blikkiesdorp, received a truckload of clothing on 8 December 2012 from Naartjie Kids to brighten the lives of the 8000 children in the community.



The garments were collected during a Naartjie Love Foundation clothing drive, which was driven through the 27 stores nationwide. The public was encouraged to donate its unwanted children's garments (any brand) in return for a reward of a 5% discount voucher for each item donated.

Headed by marketing manager and chairperson of the Naartjie Love Foundation, Esperanza Nortje, the company team arrived in convoy with the UTI truck to assist in the offloading of 18560 and in the initial handout of the clothing. Esperanza declared to SABC news reporters who arrived to film the event, that the company was overwhelmed by the generosity of its customers, with some customers even refusing the discount vouchers and declaring that they were happy to donate to such a worthy cause.

The community leaders were all present to accept the donation, which they have known about since the inception of the clothing drive 10 weeks ago. The final amount of clothing collected was "beyond their wildest imagination," as Blikkiesdorp community leader, Jerome Daniels, declared in a heartfelt thank you to the team.

Lee Warren, philanthropist and self-appointed ambassador for the community and the person responsible for bringing the plight of Blikkiesdorp to the attention of Naartjie Kids, outlined that the community leaders had very strict processes in place to make sure that each home within the community was given their share of the clothing.

Establishing a community centre



"After working with the community for the past two years, we have developed a deep understanding of the challenges people face here on a daily basis, living with no basic resources or services. To this end, the community and I have undertaken a journey to establish the 'Blikkiesdorp Hub', which will consist of converted containers transformed into a multi-purpose community centre," explains Warren.

"Once the hub is in place, non-profit organizations will work with the community. In the past, this kind of development work has been non-existent as there have been no facilities for holding workshops, skills training and counselling services. Most importantly, the hub will provide a safe environment for its 8000 children, whose futures are looking very bleak indeed should we not intervene on their behalf.

"As the stakeholders of this project, residents expressed an urgent need for a community centre to encourage education and self-sustainability. The Hub was designed in collaboration with residents and will facilitate active community participation. The entire project will be not-for-profit, with all funds generated reinvested back into community social upliftment projects. The idea of the hub was born when we were discussing how much the children need a proper playground and a safe place and this is probably the most special part of the project. The project is about five months away from being launched."

The Hub project is a rapid-build kit of parts that provide basic services such as life skills training, recreation areas, small shops, internet and learning resources such as police services, a crèche and a much needed secure playground.

The kit of parts is designed to be speedily assembled from intermodal containers with insulated finishes and electrical and plumbing points. This mobile architecture will adapt to the community's anticipated move and will be capable of expanding to

needs as they arise - ultimately being disassembled and re-used in temporary settlements elsewhere.

Hope still blossoms

Blikkiesdorp is regarded as an informal settlement by the City of Cape Town, which built it in 2007, and contains approximately 1,600 18 m² one-room structures. It was originally intended to house 4000 people and according to government officials, cost over R30 million to build. It is home to 12 000 Black, Coloured and White adults and 8000 children from all over the Western Cape, including Mitchell's Plain and the city centre's surrounding areas. It is regarded as a dumping ground for unwanted and homeless people from all over Cape Town.

Commenting on Naartjie Kids' involvement with the project, Warren said, "In the long road we have walked, we have learned that all people needed was a little hope to make their mind-sets shift to a more positive approach. Apart from the critically needed clothing that we hope will come from this initiative, we are grateful to Naartjie Kids for helping to concretise our common vision that nothing is too impossible to achieve".

This is in line with the Naartjie Love Foundation philosophy, which is dedicated to improving the quality of life of disadvantaged children throughout South Africa.

"The mission of the foundation is to bring lasting and positive change to disadvantaged children with the emphasis on both their primary needs, including their safety, education and loving care. We hope that the children of Blikkiesdorp touched by the foundation's efforts will regain a sense of self-worth and in turn enjoy a brighter future," concluded Nortje.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>