

## **SARU and Blue Groove Africa partner for "Boks for Books initiative"**

"Boks for Books" is a new CSI initiative of the South African Rugby Union (SARU), which will provide previously disadvantaged schools with mobile or refurbished libraries.



The announcement was made by Jurie Roux, CEO of SARU, in conjunction with SARU president, Oregon Hoskins, Springbok captain Jean de Villiers and squad members as well as members of the Springbok Sevens, Under-20 and Springbok Women's squad. Non-profit organisation Blue Groove Africa was named as the installation partner.

### **Building blocks for education**

Elise Fish, founding member of Blue Groove Africa, stated, "Blue Groove Africa's vision is to provide the building blocks for education, through bridged and sustainable learning, environmental and feeding facilities with skills transfer into communities throughout South Africa. Our flagship campaign, 'Right to Read' aims to populate 600 new libraries serving 500,000 children by 2020."

Fish has been active in the humanitarian arena for the past eight years. She has spent the majority of her career in the service industry including public relations, marketing and philanthropic causes.

Her life passion has been the protection of those less fortunate, and her involvement in this field has spanned more than three decades. Apart from being a life member of Childline, she has also received the coveted Rotary International Paul Harris award for her selfless work in giving to others.

"My greatest pleasure is actually getting my hands dirty, by digging gardens, packing library shelves, laying bricks and being on site to see the projects spring into life. Watching the faces of the children who are recipients of our various projects fills me with a feeling that is irreplaceable. This is my life's passion and if I can change the life of one child in this world, my dream will be accomplished. It is the old 'starfish' concept which I live by each day. Every day I try to perform one selfless act of kindness, paying it forward is an adage I live by and one that I have thankfully passed on to my own children," says Fish.

### **A solid team**

Fish says she was delighted to meet up with her current business partner Ross Caswell, who she first met more than twenty years ago, when she was a presenter and marketing manager for Port Elizabeth based radio station AlgoaFM. She says, "At the time I was doing a fundraising project, where I was locked in a tower for seven days and nights (24 hours a day), living and broadcasting for 12 hours a day, in order to raise funds for Childline. Ross at the time was working for Childline and became my right hand during that

period. We remained 'soul buddies' ever since. Our meeting in October 2012 was serendipity as our vision for Non Profit work was totally simpatico and out of that chance meeting, our new NPO Blue Groove Africa was borne."

Caswell has spent his career in the corporate Telecoms industry working himself up through project management and operations to directorship. Previously he spent the last few years gathering international exposure and experience in project management and company operations in the Middle East, covering all countries from Australia across the globe through to London managing global projects for "east world". He created roles for himself in this industry travelling Africa extensively. Caswell's international standard of knowledge in risk analysis and crisis management has set him above average in the project management field and he is a welcomed team member to Blue Groove Africa.

Caswell's recent move back to South Africa was initiated by him wanting to go back to his love of charity. In his early years Caswell was a keen and successful member of Childline Port Elizabeth, in this capacity he was well known within the Childline arena as key to the success of the organisation, spending most of his spare weekend time conducting supervised visits for abused children and counselling them back into the family as designated by social workers. Caswell worked side by side with the director of Childline in forging the direction of volunteers training and scheduling of the crisis line.

Caswell's experience in the corporate field of company operations and also his keen background in charity work, has aided the initiation of Blue Groove Africa. His keen interest in delivering projects on time and on budget on a global scale along with his love for children and education makes him integral to the Blue Groove Africa organisation.

Mike Wiblin has recently been appointed as project manager. He has been involved in education for 15 years having held teaching positions at Rhodes University, The First Physical Theatre Company & St Anne Diocesan College, and has led residencies and workshops all over the country. He did duty in the Schools Festivals and Eisteddfod Offices at the Grahamstown Foundation, and served on the Board of Governors for Arthur Blaxall School for the Blind. Wiblin commented, "I believe that to educate is to empower and teaching people to understand their potential is critical for our nation to grow."

For more information, go to [www.bluegrooveafrica.com](http://www.bluegrooveafrica.com).