

SOS adds light to the Hope School



René Becker from the Hope School

DWR Distribution recently received an SOS message for help. Twelve bedside lamps were needed at The Hope School situated in Westcliff, Johannesburg. What sets the Hope School apart is that the 197 students who attend the school, numerous of whom are weekly boarders, are also physically disabled, mostly from disadvantaged backgrounds. The SOS Charity Fund was glad to step in.

“Driving along the winding road in Westcliff, Johannesburg, I was mesmerized by the beauty of the trees and the view of Johannesburg below,” said Sherryn Riley of DWR. “I could see the old stone buildings, and as the road turned... reality check. As I looked for a place to park my car, I saw groups of kids who had wheels for legs and they were chatting and laughing and just being children. My heart was sore.”

The main house was built in 1905, was then put in a trust and became a home for physically disabled children in 1916. “It was not a school back in those days, but rather a place where sick children, initially those who had polio, could recuperate,” explained acting headmistress, René Becker. “To have children on site one needed schooling, and so the school was established in 1929.”

Today the Hope School facilitates children from the age of three to those in grade 12, and a great percentage come from families of previously disadvantaged backgrounds.

Recently a company approached the Hope School to assist them with the refurbishment of the hostel bathrooms. They then took it a step further and generously decided to upgrade the girls’ dormitory with new furniture, bedding and curtains. All that was needed was mattresses and lamps.



Sherryn Riley (DWR & SOS) with Val Rogers (Hope School)

The receptionist at the school, Val Rogers, who assists with fundraising, was set to task and sent out e-mails to various companies. "Our school tries as best we can and we do have a programme, which enables families with a need. On Fridays, the identified children get food parcels to take home with them," Val wrote. "We have a lot of wonderful hardworking therapists at our school who assist the children and the results speak for themselves. That said, our school is nearly a hundred years old and due to this, we have some areas that need assistance. There is a project in progress in our girls' hostel and I am asking if you could help by sponsoring our school with the possibility of twelve bed lamps."

It seemed such a small request and the SOS were glad to help. As additional dormitories are revamped, the SOS has pledged to supply additional lamp fixtures.

In the greater scheme, there is a gap between for school leavers entering the big world. The Hope School host a Career Day where they invite at least 12 other schools from Gauteng (also with physically challenged children) to attend and where they are exposed to corporates, universities and technical colleges. "We also receive many learnerships, there are companies who assist with bursaries, and others who help the children prepare their CVs so that they know where they can go to from here," said René. "

DWR has put out an invitation to the pupils from the Hope School to visit our office and if there is anyone interested, to receive console training and exposure to the industry. Who knows, we may just find an upcoming lighting designer or audio engineer!

Sometimes in life, we receive a nudge and realize how grateful we should be for all things and for the people in our lives. Thank you to the Hope School for being different and for being a light to the children you take care of.