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 Tuesday 03 February 2015    



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[News](#) / Leaders buddy with school principals



LEADERS BUDDY WITH SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

By Cilene Bekker

Photo : CILENE BEKKER

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Nkosilungile Lolwana, Thomas Volkwyn, Dawie Theron, Dr Lourens Ferreira, Julius Swart and Johan Augustyn. Photos: CILENE BEKKER

Combine a school principal with a business leader and you have the beginnings of a recipe called “quality education”.

This, more or less, is the premise on which the Partnerships for Possibility (PfP) programme is based. This leadership programme is run by Symphonia for South Africa, a non-profit organisation based in Bellville aiming to mobilise business, government and society to work together to ensure quality education for all children in South Africa by 2022.

The Friends of the Schools in Hermanus, similar to the well-established Friends of the Hospital and Friends of the Library, initiated a working relationship with Symphonia a few months ago.

What started as informal discussions over coffee about the state of education in South Africa led to a number of Hermanus residents forming The Friends of the Schools to tackle the educational needs in the greater Hermanus area. This group was unanimous on the need to get involved in offering support to schools, school governing bodies and parent associations to improve the learning environment of pupils.

Cllr Ben Solomon and retired business man Pieter de Jager spearheaded the Friends of the Schools in 2011. They then set about gathering information on the state of local education from tertiary education to kindergarten.

They became aware of the PfP programme that creates an opportunity for a person from the business community to partner with a school principal in a co-learning partnership for a year.

The Friends then identified schools, principals and business leaders and went about securing sponsorships. “Raising an amount of R38000 per school for the PfP programme was not easy going, but we’ve managed to secure R172000 of the required R180000,” says Solomon.

And it was close enough to the target to officially launch the programme on 12 March, in the municipal auditorium, and announce the five schools/principals and their business partners.

They are:

- . Okkie Smuts Primary: Chris Delpont (principal) and Pierre de Villiers (Coastal Trusses);
- . Qhayiya Secondary: Nkosilungile Lolwana (principal) and Lou-Anne Lubbe (HR manager at Abagold);
- . Zwelihle Primary: Khayaletu Msebenzi (principal) and Santie Reyneke (senior manager: expenditure and asset management at Overstrand Municipality);
- . Hawston Primary: Julius Swart (principal) and Johan Augustyn (president: Rotary Club of Hermanus);
- . Gansbaai Primary: Thomas Volkwyn (principal) and Dawie Theron (PSG Portfolio Management and Stockbroking, Hermanus).

The launch preceded the partners’ induction course, led by local resident Dr Lourens Ferreira.

He is a qualified psychologist with more than 37 years in education and training, and was appointed as the learning process facilitator.

“By giving 10 days a year to a local school, a business leader’s partnership and the PfP4SA training provides the principal with fresh leadership insights to transform a school and hence an entire community. In return, the business leader gets to develop their leadership ability by getting hands-on experience in a different environment from their day-to-day life,” says Veronica Wantenaar, project leader from Symphonia. To date, they have 113 school partnerships involved in this process nationwide.

After the launch, the “buddies” attended their induction course. “We have no idea what is waiting for us,” said Julius Swart, from Hawston Primary, “but we are keen to work together. Anything that is done for the sake of better education is a good thing.”

Now that the PfP programme is out of the starting blocks, the Friends will look at other aspects of education in Hermanus and try to launch further projects. One of their successes was convincing Boland College to establish two courses in Sandbaai, where 150 students are currently enrolled. Said Solomon: “We will now try to convince them to start a campus in Hermanus.”

. Solomon thanks the following sponsors:

PSG Portfolio Management and Stockbroking, Hermanus and The Rotary Club Hermanus (for a full sponsorship of R38000 each); Coastal Trusses, Great White Shark Tours, Ulwazi Consulting Engineers and ten individuals from around Hermanus.



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