

Back to School with FABI



The group of FABIANS who delivered the schoolbags

FABI staff and students have over the years contributed and participated in welfare projects as part of the institute's social responsibility programme. At the end of last year the team decided to contribute to the education of underprivileged children instead of a Christmas party. FABI and the NEA Foundation donated 80 fully kitted school bags to learners from underprivileged communities. A total of R18 000 was raised – R8000 by FABI staff and students and R10000 was donated by FABI research partner the Hans Merensky Foundation. The schoolbags were distributed by a team of FABI staff and students led by Prof Noelani van den Berg. The recipients were learners from the Bambino Crèche in Danville, the Thando West Fort Community Crèche in West Fort and the Sunrise Community Crèche in Melusi. The bags contained stationery and all the material necessary to allow the Grade 1 learners to start at school. The team also took along some sweets, crisps, cold drinks and cupcakes for the kids to enjoy the day before schools re-opened.

The NEA Foundation was established three years ago by Marlie van Vuuren and Lelanie Steyn. The pair had previously been involved in a Danville-based community outreach programme but decided to focus their attention on Early Childhood Development Centre development and support. Nea is a Swahili word meaning “purpose, to prepare the way, to

set in motion, to be a starting block”. *“We want to be able to move and be in places where the need as well as the potential for change is really big. We want to get involved with the people in the community to start projects required in their specific community and then equip them to take responsibility for their own projects and lives. Our aim, as a non-profit organisation, is to prove to them they don’t have to depend on us to do everything. Our role is to support them in their dream and purpose, and to encourage them to be what they were meant to be,”* explained Marlie.

Sunrise Community Crèche in Melusi was established in 2011 by Principal Francina Mashita. The school has 56 children in its care, 19 of started Grade 1 in 2015. The Bambino Crèche in Danville is a community crèche with 38 children who started Grade 1 in 2015. Principal Sylvia Buthelezi said the crèche had 120 children between three and six years old. Located on the premises of the former West Fort Leprosy Hospital, the Thando West Fort Community Crèche was opened seven years ago. Thando also provides after school care for learners aged 6-18 years of age where they are assisted with homework and provided with a meal when food is available.



FABIANs enjoying the day with the children