

ROTARY INTERNATIONAL WORLD PRESIDENT OPENS CHILD DEVELOPMENT CARE CENTRE



Dawn Leppan is a visionary! Many years ago she had a dream about a centre to serve the community, and she let nothing get in the way of this dream! Dawn has had many people support her in her vision, yet every dream and goal needs a leader and Dawn has filled that role admirably through her love for the community. On 26 May a part of her dream was realized when a group of dignitaries, Rotarians and guests witnessed the official opening of the Child Development Centre.

Rotary International World President Mr Wildfrid J Wilkinson, flew in from Canada to open the Child Development Care Centre for 1000 Hills Community Helpers on Monday 26th May 2008. Built and equipped by Rotary and Soul Of Africa (a non-profit charity organisation that raises money through the sale of moccasin shoes and soccer balls which are hand made by previously unemployed women in rural KwaZulu Natal, to assist orphans and vulnerable children), the Child Development Care Centre will provide education for up to 60 pre-school children with qualified teachers, as well as food, healthcare from professionals and much needed love. In addition there is a clinic, craft shop, training

centre and kitchen to feed the community. The 1000 Hills Community Helpers organisation was established by Dawn Leppan in 1995 and exists to alleviate the suffering of children in distress. As society has evolved and new horrors confront children, 1000 Hills Community Helpers have adapted their services to the needs of the community and focus particularly on children and communities affected by HIV/AIDS, chronic illness and poverty.

1000 Hills Community Helpers are based in Inchanga and from the centre they provide meals for approx. 300 people, primary healthcare facilities, a baby clinic for approx. 150 babies and mothers as well as distributing baby formula, food and clothing. 1000 Hills Community Helpers provide a 24/7 emergency call-out service and transport patients for medical treatment from rural areas inaccessible to normal transport. Rotary and Soul Of Africa started Child Development Care Centres (CDCC) to help orphans and vulnerable children within their communities. The necessity for this program has been brought about because of the large

increase in Orphans and Vulnerable Children resulting from the AIDS pandemic. Soul Of Africa has partnered with Rotary because part of Rotary's mission is to identify humanitarian projects in the communities needing help and are able to assist the communities in implementing them using their large local and international membership base.

UNAIDS Statistics show that in the 20-49 years age group, four times as many people die annually in South Africa now, compared with 1985. This is undoubtedly the result of AIDS. AIDS infection is more prevalent in KwaZulu-Natal than the other provinces of South Africa. This is the age group of those who would normally be caring for their families. Statistics also show that female infection is considerably higher than male resulting in children without mothers.

More than R10million has been raised for orphans and International, attended the opening ceremony.

vulnerable children in KwaZulu Natal since 2004. Soul Of Africa is a unique partnership between industry, a humanitarian organisation and local communities affected by the AIDS pandemic. This project is self sustaining and will endure provided Soul Of Africa can design new styles and the world continues to care for the less fortunate.

One of the soccer balls that help to fund projects such as this one.

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Dawn Leppan with some of her charges



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Wildfrid J Wilkinson, world president of Rotary International, attended the opening ceremony.