

MEDIA RELEASE

May 2010

***780 pairs of school shoes are donated to disadvantaged learners
thanks to Hemingways Mall and Mdantsane City***

Hemingways Mall and Mdantsane City in East London, both owned by the Billion Group, have donated 780 pairs of school shoes for disadvantaged learners in support of Lupi Ngcayisa 's *Railway to Life Campaign*.

The school shoes will be distributed at three schools in the Eastern Cape, including Nokwanda Lower Primary Ndevana and Tyutyu Lower Primary in Bisho. An official handover of school shoes took place at Nobhotwe Lower Primary School in Mdantsane on Monday 17 May 2010.

Says Sisa Ngebulana, CEO of Billion Group, "Through this donation, we are actively supporting the campaign's objectives, which are to promote the importance of education and to keep children in school."

Businessman Ngebulana has a great passion for the Eastern Cape region, originally hailing from East London and later growing up in Mthatha and studying at Fort Hare University. He has, through his investment in major property developments in East London, strived to further economic and social development in the area, and continues to do so through the support of this campaign.

Ngebulana explains that many children abandon their education because they simply do not have a pair of school shoes, especially in winter. "Not only do they suffer from the cold and discomfort, but often, without shoes, they feel their poverty shows," says Ngebulana. "Without shoes, bright futures are simply snuffed out".

Philanthropist, motivational speaker and radio personality Luphumlo 'Lupi' Ngcayisa inspired the campaign when he asked for shoes in lieu of birthday gifts, and since then this campaign has been widely supported by many corporates across South Africa. METRO FM partners in this initiative include SABC 1, METRO FM, Chevrolet, Opel and Isuzu and City Press

Having grown up in Walmer Township in Port Elizabeth, Lupi's passion for the Eastern Cape community matches Ngebulana's. He reports that he was overjoyed when this large donation was made, benefitting school children in the Eastern Cape.

"The Billion Group's donation on behalf of Hemingways Mall and Mdantsane City is the largest single contribution from the Eastern Cape, and we're delighted with the support, which will see many hundreds of children with a brand new pair of shoes," says 'Lupi' Ngcayisa. "With winter almost upon us, the timing is perfect."

Rachel Klaasen, General Manager of Hemingways Mall notes, "As a newcomer to the East London community - our centre is the largest in the region - we are committed to the many communities that we serve. This is a wonderful opportunity to show that

we care and to help youngsters on their way to a brighter future." Hemingway Mall's exciting selection of over 200 shops offers unsurpassed variety and choice under a single roof with ample, secure parking and easy access from the N2 highway.

Mdantasane City is a well-established shopping centre in the area, and is also fully supportive of the campaign. Says Dean Deary, General Manager of Mdantsane City, "It's a heart warming initiative that seeks to encourage children to get an education; something this is crucial, particularly in the Eastern Cape region."

The *Railway to Life* campaign has been widely supported by corporates across all sectors in South Africa, with over 23,000 pairs of shoes already distributed to date. In 2009 alone, 16 000 pairs of shoes were collected.

~ Ends ~

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