

Capespan/Safmarine partnership establishes pre-school centre

Local commercial export fruit producer Willa Gibson of Sterkwater Boerdery's appeal to the Capespan Foundation resulted in the 27 March 2013 inauguration of a secure, age-appropriate hall accommodating about 40 pre-school children in the Witzenberg Valley. In a partnership, Capespan and Safmarine granted the necessary funds and Prince Alfred Hamlet's United Reformed Church of Southern Africa kindly granted land next to the Agter-Witzenberg Primary School and Sterkwater Boerdery.

Silver Loerie award winner, industrial designer and architect Tsai Design Studios designed the conversion of two 12-meter fruit cooling containers into classrooms, while Cool Maintenance handled the container alterations and erected the steel construction.

The Agter-Witzenberg Primary School uses the one room as a Grade R classroom. According to headmaster Mr Davids, the facility will be extremely useful for the school's literacy and numeracy development programme. Western Cape Education Department (WCED) circuit managers Mr Brown and Ms Siddle, who are inter alia responsible for developing the region's Foundation Phase Education, feel that this facility enables the Department to serve the community's educational service needs even better and that especially children will benefit.

Dirk Hoffmann, Safmarine Southern Africa group manager, confirmed, "Because of their passion for developing the community, Safmarine, the community and WCED share in children's education with this investment. It's an honour and privilege to contribute to a facility promoting young children's cognitive development. Furthermore, education is without a doubt one of the best means in alleviating poverty and unemployment, enabling social and economic equality in South Africa. Safmarine encourages the community to remain bound to educating our youth."

Capespan Foundation manager Ansonette van der Merwe added, "Capespan is committed to investing in social development which, on the one hand, addresses social problems and alleviates poverty and on the other hand, provides solutions for the social development needs of all parties in the fruit export industry."

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ABOUT SAFMARINE'S CONTAINERS-IN-THE-COMMUNITY PROGRAMME

- In 1992, Safmarine pioneered the 'Containers in the Community' corporate social responsibility (CSR) programme involving the re-use of sea freight containers 'retired from ocean-going service, into permanent, land-based structures. More than 8 000 containers have been converted since the project began two decades ago. The majority of projects have focused on education and skills development.

- For this initiative Safmarine has received a number of awards, among them the Lloyd's List Award 'for creativity in using containers' and Education Africa's 'Presidential and Premier Education Award'. Tsai Design Studio recently won a Silver Loerie Award for the multi-functional Grade R classroom facility at Vissershok Primary School near Durbanville, South Africa. This project is a partnership between Safmarine and its retail customer Woolworths.

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