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FACET FOUNDATION EXPANDS THE FLEET OF MOBILE GRAFF LEARNING CENTRES

A NEW WORLD OF OPPORTUNITY FOR THE CAPE WINELANDS



Graff Diamonds' charitable initiative, For Africa's Children Every Time (FACET), is delighted to announce the expansion of the Graff Mobile Learning Centre fleet in the heart of South Africa's Cape winelands.

In partnership with the Pebbles Project, three additional mobile units will be joining the mobile library and computer lab which have been in operation since September 2014. Founder and director of the Pebbles Project, Sophia Warner, explains, "The three new Mobile Learning Centres are literally 'opportunities on wheels'. They've taken our after-school programme to a whole new level and will have an even greater impact within the community."

The centres provide much needed after-school support for scholars between the ages of 6 to 18 years whom attend local public schools throughout the Cape Winelands region from Stellenbosch Valley, home to Delaire Graff Estate, to Citrusdal in the Cederberg Mountains. The FACET Mobile Learning Centres have grown to include 2 computer labs, 2 travelling libraries and a multi-purpose vehicle for more remote areas.

Being able to travel directly to these communities has resulted in the inspiring effects being felt from within the communities themselves. Currently, the units assist 522 students ensuring they attain the best quality educational care and mentorship.

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Through a range of exciting strategies and proactive development initiatives, learners improve basic mathematics, literacy and computer related skills. Experienced educational specialists have been brought on board to safeguard the future of the children in the region.

The creation of a fertile learning environment in which each individual learner may succeed and grow has been central to the project. Using tested methods of assessment, each learner's accomplishments are continuously evaluated and their path to academic achievement is designed and adjusted to ensure their personal success. Facility staff members have monthly training sessions on the different programmes resulting in an ever evolving dynamic support structure.

Fitted with cutting-edge, first-world technology and featuring an abundant collection of multi-lingual literature otherwise unattainable in these regions, the centres are a source of great encouragement for the individuals in the areas they reach. "The van will help us have a better future," enthuses 11-year-old Nowhen Piedt. Cultivating a passion for learning and instilling a love of books from a young age is fostering an appetite for education which carries through the school years and beyond.

The challenges of poverty, alcoholism and increasing school drop-out rates drive the stagnation of education in these areas. The tailor-made FACET Mobile Learning Centres are an effort to turn the wheels of change, fulfilling an acute need among the region's disadvantaged youth and nurturing the community.

In their partnership thus far, the Pebbles Project has received financial support from the FACET Foundation to the amount of R20 million.

Laurence Graff is delighted with the success of the Mobile Learning Centres, and to be part of bringing change to these communities. 'It's a great privilege to be involved in such a wonderful initiative,' he says. 'For many growing up in South Africa's winelands, computers and books are luxuries to which they simply don't have access. Through the valuable work of FACET and the Pebbles Project, this much-needed equipment provides these children with additional education and the opportunity to make positive life choices. Bringing hope and aiding young people in realising their ambitions is what giving back is all about – helping dreams become reality.'

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

Katherine Roach
Head of PR and Marketing Worldwide
T: +44 (0) 207 647 5880 | E: katherine@graffdiamonds.com

Tanja Mackay-Davidson
Marketing & PR Manager, Delaire Graff Estate
T: +27 (0) 21 885 8160 | E: marketing@delaire.co.za

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