

Westin-Unicef Charity Ball raises another R1m in 2017

This year's Westin-Unicef Charity Ball, hosted by The Westin Cape Town on Saturday, 14 October, matched the previous year's donations, raising R1m.



L-R Carine Munting, UNICEF partnership manager; Leon Meyer, GM at The Westin; Marilize van Niekerk, executive secretary to the GM; Sandra Bisin, UNICEF chief of communication and partnerships; and Jeremy Harris, radio personality and event MC

The funds will go towards supporting various educational programmes promoting early childhood development in South Africa. As part of this amount, on the same night, the Ernest Stempel Foundation handed over a cheque of R200,000 to Unicef.

A total of 27 prizes sponsored by various industry partners, including an autographed T-shirt by professional tennis player Roger Federer, were raffled at the event. Event sponsor Toy Kingdom South Africa donated toys to the value of R270,000.

"We feel honoured to be a part of this extraordinary cause. In the world we live in, the 'your child is my child' approach has become extremely important. We have a responsibility to protect and nurture our children and place their needs and development at the top of our list – it's absolutely crucial," said Henri van Wijk, MD, Toy Kingdom South Africa.

Unicef Hero Award for 2016/17

Leon Meyer, GM at the Westin Cape Town agrees. He says hosting the Unicef Charity Ball was a proud moment for him and his staff, and the Marriott International Inc. He said he was especially proud of event organiser Marilize van Niekerk of the Westin, who has been awarded the Unicef Hero Award for 2016/17. He also thanked Ibrahim Barghout, area vice president of Marriott sub-Saharan Africa for attending the event and demonstrating his commitment to Unicef's cause and the organisation's child-sensitive, child-driven programmes.

"It's a privilege to be associated with a global organisation like Unicef. The work they do in our country and around the world for the most-vulnerable is admirable," Meyer said.

"Thousands of children in South Africa are still denied protection, love, good food and play that will support their growth and development. But I'm hopeful because of this gathering tonight and I am grateful to those of you I've met who are committed to fight for a more equal world, to fight for a greater world, for every child," said Sandra Bisin, Unicef South Africa chief of communication and partnerships.

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