

# Casual Day raises R23.5m for disabled

Casual Day, the fundraising project for people with disabilities, has raised R23.5m nationally last year. This year Casual Day celebrates its 20th anniversary and will be pulling out all the stops with its Bring out the Bling theme, which was announced at the project's annual awards ceremony in Stellenbosch.



Marlene le Roux, Casual Day keynote speaker and disability activist, in action at the Casual Day awards ceremony.

Casual Day is the flagship project of the National Council for Persons with Physical Disabilities in South Africa (NCPDSA), which this year celebrates 75 years of service to the community of persons with disabilities. Over past two decades Casual Day has helped the NCPDSA fulfil its mandate of creating a barrier-free, fully accessible and inclusive society for all, raising almost R195m.

The organisations that raised the most donations in the Western Cape are Paarl School in Brackenfell with R175,460, Filia School in Goodwood with R134,106, Cher'e Botha School in Belville with R113,384, Sunfield Wellington with R100,000 and Western Cape APD in Milnerton with R83,940.

## Dignity and humanity

The highlight of the morning was a talk by disability activist Marlene le Roux, director at Artscape for Audience Development and the Education Artistic Programme. "Disability is not glamorous. The biggest thing in life is to be loved, to be touched. Don't lump all people with disabilities together; we are human beings." Her plea was for persons with disabilities to be treated with dignity and humanity, and she also called for persons with disabilities to be employed.

Long-time Casual Day ambassador and award-winning star of stage and screen, Terence Bridgett, was the master of ceremonies. He had been involved with Casual Day for two decades and said that Casual Day is not just a commitment for

a decade or two - it is a lifetime commitment.

Casual Day chairman and executive committee member of the National Council for Persons with Physical Disabilities in South Africa, Mac Mia, said Casual Day was not built by one individual, it is a collective effort of which all can be proud. Casual Day was built, one sticker at a time, by everyone who participated over the last 19 years.

## **Positive changes**

"Last year saw many positive changes, and we can already see and feel the effects. Very importantly, we have ensured that the project remains in good hands and continues to serve its stakeholders in a sustainable and transparent way. The changes we have implemented are the first of a series of transformational ideas to create efficiencies and to better communicate with you, our most valuable partners," Mia said.

"The competition in this space has become crowded with social agencies and fundraisers, each with a strong purpose and all chasing the same pots of gold. If we are to remain relevant and successful we need to strengthen the Casual Day brand and we need to target our audience as a trustworthy, transparent, accountable and focused campaign."

Principal financial sponsor Edcon, was represented by Mercia Maserumule, the Edcon Group CSI manager of Transformation and Corporate Affairs. "Edcon understands that full inclusion and integration is important and that able-bodied people need education on issues of disability so that they have information and are sensitised. The Casual Day project is one of the ways that Edcon can support the mandate of the NCPPDSA, which is to serve the needs of persons with disabilities. We want our staff and customers to be included in this education," she said.

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