

Press Release

For Immediate Release

19th August 2005.

Soweto Gospel Choir comes to the rescue...

The Soweto Gospel Choir and Nkosi's Haven have come to the rescue and support of the 63 children of Rosca House, who's home was burnt down in Roodepoort on Wednesday 3rd August. Syabonga Mhlongo, who, on the night of the fire, received the Sowetan's Community Builder of the Year Award, Youth Category, started Rosca in Hillbrow some 5 years ago. Rosca House was established to address the accommodation, emotional, spiritual, educational needs for some 63 street children, who come from exceptionally abusive situations and have no alternatives, were further struck by this tragedy and severely traumatized.

Left homeless and having lost most of what they possess, the children were moved into the Nkosi's Haven Village, Alan Manor, through the co-operation of Gail Johnson, Director of Nkosi's Haven who offered the property in the emergency. With the blessing of Social Services Gauteng and Westrand, the children, with care givers, are being accommodated in 6 cottages on the property.

Since its inception, some 3 years ago, the Soweto Gospel Choir, who have taken the world by storm, have always wanted to support the children in the communities from which they come. When traveling internationally, the choir raises money after every performance through the generous donations of the audiences. 50% Of the money raised goes to Nkosi's Haven, who the choir have adopted and the other 50% goes into a bank account, Nkosi's Haven Vukani, specifically for outreach. This bank account is administered by Nkosi's Haven and has three signatories.

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Soweto Gospel Choir Rescue cont/.....

On hearing about the Rosca House tragedy, Bev Bryer, (who is in Australia visiting a sick mother) director of the Soweto Gospel Choir, gave permission for funds from the Nkosi's Haven Vukani bank account to be used to assist the children of Rosca House.

To date, through the organization of Gail Johnson, the Vukani bank account has spent just on R 40 000.00 by purchasing:-

14 double bunks with mattresses

6 single beds with mattress (for the care givers)

1 fridge

1 350lt chest freezer

1 Speed Queen

Bath towels, face clothes, toothbrushes, toothpaste, washing powder, plates, soup bowls, washing powder, bath soap, shampoo – for 63 children and their care givers

6 irons and ironing boards

Fresh fruit and vegetables,

and stocked the deep freeze with meat.

Through the generous donation of members of the public, bedding, pillows, groceries, towels, groceries, clothing and cleaning materials have been received.

The Soweto Gospel Choir, who are touring internationally at present, were heart broken when advised of the tragedy, but thrilled that through their talents and efforts they have

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Soweto Gospel Choir Rescue cont./.....

managed to make the lives of 63 children, their care givers and Siyabonga Mhlongo, the founder and director, of Rosca a whole lot easier in this traumatizing time.

In addition to assisting the Rosca House children, the Soweto Gospel Choir have, this month, assisted and supported two organizations caring for children orphaned by AIDS in the townships.

Sizanani Community Development Project based in Orange Farm, supports and feeds 150 children twice a day, were given groceries, meat and vegetables to last for about 3 months and a major shopping spree has been done for Sizanani Home Based Care Givers, based in Meadowlands and run by Elizabeth Rapuleng, who recently won the Health and Social Welfare Category, in the Westgate Woman Achiever Awards. Sizanani Home Based Care Givers are caring for just on 370 children daily by feeding them twice a day.

The members of the Soweto Gospel Choir are to be admired. All young unemployed people they receive standing ovations wherever they perform due to their breath taking talent and energy, and while doing so, they are remembering the children back home and are doing something.

Ends.

For further information:

Dolores Fredericks
Board Member
Rosca House

(011) 760 4660
082 823 3967

Syabonga Mhlongo
Director
Rosca House

083 757 8708

Gail Johnson
Director
Nkosi's Haven

(011) 726 7581
082 593 1999