



An excited Cato manor resident receives his share of groceries from Gibb marketing representative, Vanie Smith.

Gibb changing lives

Aneshree Narsigan

Living up to its motto on changing lives, is engineering company, Gibb who have taken the initiative to help many brave the bitter cold this winter. The organisation, through their continuous corporate social investment campaigns, recently donated blankets and food hampers to the residents and a crèche in the Cato Manor area.

According to media liaison for the multi-disciplinary consulting engineering and science company, Randall September, the company has always been involved in such initiatives with its primary focus being skills development where learnship programmes and bursaries are offered to individuals from previously disadvantaged communities. He said candidates are later placed in a mentorship programme in the company.

September said, "Our team from Gibb reached out to the poverty-stricken community of Cato Manor escorted by two Cato Manor policemen and the Cato Manor liaison, Philisiwe Mavundla and handed out much-needed supplies for the cold weather. We are proud of our staff that rallied together and brought in clothing for both children and adults, including toys. The Gibb marketing department in Sunninghill, Johannesburg sponsored the group, R5,000, of which R2,500 was used to purchase blankets from Makro and the remainder was spent on grocery hampers from Spar."

He said that the company works with NGO's across the country with their prime focus being assisting vulnerable women and children in the community. As part of their social responsibility obligation, their staff is encouraged to donate to a legitimate NGO in their respective areas.

According to marketing representative, Vanie Smith who spear-headed the initiative, the group was saddened by the plight of the residents whose shacks had burnt down in a fire,

leaving them with no option but to take refuge in the temporary accommodation provided until houses are built for them. Vanie said, "We also purchased Ace instant porridge and boxes of crayons which together with waste paper was handed out to children in the area. The group collected money which was used to purchase Ace mealie meal, juice, baked beans, sugar and biscuits. Residents of the area are underprivileged and the excitement on their faces expressed their gratitude for the items they received."

Gibb staff distributed 34 food parcels to impoverished families and blankets were given to those who did not receive groceries. Blankets and groceries were also donated to a local informal crèche which houses over 40 children in one room. "The caregiver at the crèche will use the groceries provided to prepare a hot meal for the children at the crèche. Many of them are dropped off very early in the morning by their parents, who have to work to sustain the household, so they rarely have something to eat. We were overwhelmed by the smiles on the faces of the little ones which showed their appreciation. It is truly rewarding to make someone feel special and to let them know that there are people out there who care," said Smith. She thanked Gibb's Marketing Practitioner, Yolande van Rooyen for assisting with the initiative by sponsoring an amount of R5,000 from the Sunninghill office in Johannesburg.

Cato Manor liaison, Philisiwe Mavundla said the residents were overjoyed with the donation of food, blankets and toys. Mavundla said, "Most of the residents are unemployed and they have been struggling to get through the cold nights. They do not have electricity so they desperately need the blankets. Gibb must be thanked for their generosity and know that their efforts are greatly appreciated."

