

Retiree ploughs back into the community

When Susan Davies retired 16 years ago she knew she wanted to help disadvantaged people in the area, so she established the Catch Community Centre in Gonubie. Now, with Checkers' help, she is reinvigorating the food garden that provides fresh vegetables for 120 families.

On a beautiful 4-hectare property that has many old trees and soccer fields, the Catch Community Centre runs a variety of outreach and holiday programmes as well as foster homes for youth, orphans and vulnerable children.

"I believe in helping all God's children and when I retired, I knew I had to do something to help specifically the disadvantaged people in East London," says Susan (74).

Initially gardens were established at community members' homes, but that programme didn't work very well and a food garden was then established on Catch's property for community members.

"Volunteers use our land to grow vegetables, which they harvest and take home to their families, but the garden wasn't as productive as it could be," explains Susan.

Checkers provides significant support to food gardens all over South Africa as part of a programme to bring hunger relief to the communities it serves. The retailer has invested in more than 87 gardens across South Africa providing meals to over 400 000 individuals.

Subsequently, the garden at Catch Community Centre has benefited from a water tank and infrastructure, fencing, gardening tools, compost, mulch, seedlings, herbs, fruit trees, educational material and training workshops.

"The trainers have been absolutely amazing and the community members are really enjoying learning about permaculture principles and the importance of techniques like mulching. Some of the workshops have been attended by about 70 people from the community," says Susan.

"We have to say a big thank you to Checkers for the equipment and the training. The trainers are so knowledgeable and enthusiastic. They really have made a big difference to the volunteers involved in our garden."

ENDS

CAPTION: Checkers investment in the food garden at Catch Community Centre in Gonubie means garden workers are able to produce enough vegetables to sell to their community.

SOCIAL MEDIA: One woman's vision to help others less fortunate than herself has blossomed into a food garden based at the Catch Community Centre in Gonubie, which feeds more than 120 families.