

Award-winning preschool gets ‘new wind’ with help from Shoprite

Fifteen preschools in and around Kathu recently benefited from an extensive teacher training programme following a partnership with Shoprite.

One of these schools is Mpelege Pre-Primary in Sheshenge, which Shirley Kalaine (56) founded in 1998.

“There was a need in the community. I had training as a teacher, so the three of us started looking after 40 children aged between 3 to 6 years. Since then our numbers have grown to about 126 children cared for by 12 of us,” says Shirley.

Shoprite’s support of Mpelege included the fitting of new toilets and a kitchen as well as new windows and fresh paint inside and outside. “I’d made a list of things we needed and Shoprite delivered on every one of them,” reports an elated Shirley.

In the last financial year the retailer partnered with no fewer than 85 early childhood development (ECD) centres in South Africa. Support for these preschools include education and governance training, meals for more than 300 000 children as well as critical structural upgrades to their school buildings.

“Communities are at the heart of what we do at Shoprite, so not only do we consistently deliver on our low price promise, we also act for change by investing in early childhood development ensuring that children from communities like Sheshenge start their education on the right footing,” says Lunga Schoeman, Shoprite’s CSI Manager.

He adds, “When selecting the schools, we look for those in close proximity to where our employees and their families live so that they could benefit directly from the support we give to these schools.”

“I’m very grateful for the support from Shoprite,” explains Shirley. “Our school makes a difference in the community and we’re trusted because the children we used to teach are now sending their children to be cared for by us.”

Last year her school received awards from the National Development Agency for the best ECD practitioner and best ECD centre in the Northern Cape. Shirley and her team were also recognised for their good work in 2012 when their school won a national prize for the best ECD centre in the Northern Cape.

END

CAPTION: Shirley Kalaine (right) with Rukea Shaik from Shoprite’s implementation partner, the Centre for Early Childhood Development, with some of the learners of Mpelege Pre-Primary in Sheshenge.