

## **Spreading joy among East Rand preschoolers**

“Thank you Checkers for building our school from the inside out.”

This sentiment was expressed by Leigh Hudson-Ingle, founder of Urban Comet, an early childhood development centre (ECDs) in Plantation, Boksburg, which together with Wattville schools, Tholulwazi Preschool, Thamboville Daycare, Humble Little Achievers and Seronhla Daycare, benefitted from the supermarket chain’s extensive support.

The teachers from all five schools received training on the educational and developmental needs of preschool children as well as the administrative roles and responsibilities of ECD practitioners, whilst the 300 children attending these schools are all guaranteed a nutritious daily meal for the next 12 months.

“We are certainly overwhelmed at the varied support we’ve received from Checkers through its implementation partners. From teaching programs and educational resources for our staff by the Early Care Foundation, the feeding program via the Lunchbox Fund to providing new preschool toilets through Newkidz, Checkers has helped us grow and develop in all the necessary areas to become a recognised and high standard ECD facility,” explains Hudson-Ingle.

The toilets at Urban Comet includes a separate facility for disabled learners. “The extra bathroom for children with disabilities creates the perfect inclusionary environment, which is extremely important. Having similar toilet facilities for able-bodied and disabled learners helps them understand that all children must be accommodated.”

“Within a year of its launch, this initiative that seeks to empower the women at the head of ECDs has seen 54 schools and more than 3 700 children across South Africa benefiting from it. Partnerships like these are one of the ways Checkers acts for change in the communities where we trade,” says Lunga Schoeman, CSI spokesperson for the Shoprite Group.

With the retailer’s support, all five schools are now well on their way to being registered with the Department of Social Development, which means that in time they will each receive state subsidies for their learners.

ENDS

CAPTION: Urban Comet learners and staff celebrated its partnership with Checkers which resulted in the school receiving among others a new ablution block, which catered for disabled children.

