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People and the community are first-in-mind, first-in-choice for Atlas Copco

Batho Pele Christian School, nestled in the Vastfontein community North of Pretoria, has been making good use of cash funding received from Atlas Copco South Africa to purchase building equipment and take care of the maintenance and general running costs.

Atlas Copco has been supporting Vastfontein Community Transformation since 2012 and Kgothatso Ntsie, Atlas Copco South Africa and Sub-Sahara Communications Manager, explains how it all started: “When one of the general managers from Secoroc, (short explanation) attended an open day at the school to plant vegetables as part of community engagement, he noticed the plight of Vastfontein and brought their proposal to Atlas Copco. We take our role in being a good corporate citizen by supporting communities very seriously. We believe that by giving back, large organisations like Atlas Copco can make a real difference where it really counts, namely in areas that are struggling to provide vital services such as education, special needs centres, etc. We therefore embraced this opportunity to make funding available in support of all the good work that is being done by Vastfontein Community Transformation as part of our CSI initiative.”

Vastfontein Community Transformation is a non-profit faith-based organisation that started in 1998 with as few as 10 children attending Sunday school in a shed.

2/...Vastfontein community

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2/...Vastfontein community

“Today, we consist of a Pre-Primary and Primary school, a wellness centre, three care homes and a school of ministry,” says a passionate Mathilda Fourie, Chief Executive Officer. In conjunction with AFGRI and a digital hub, the centre also offers training of micro farmers, the first of its kind in Africa.

The meaning of Batho Pele, ‘people first’, adheres to their vision and purpose. Vastfontein Batho Pele Christian School develops, inspires and educates the next generation from age three to grade 7. All teachers are qualified and registered with SACE and follow the basic GDE curriculum.

The schools cover the complete needs of disadvantaged learners - affordable, quality education and discipline in a serene rural area and the school also provides transport to and from school. Education is based on the principle of personal development and not on competition. “We aim to develop and nurture future leaders who will be able to serve with integrity and in turn help guide their learners in making life changing choices,” notes Mathilda.

As the school relies on donations or sponsorships, funding from corporate organisations like Atlas Copco is vital. “Donations have made it possible for us to bring a state-of-the-art online education system to our pre-primary and primary school, exposing learners to technology, thereby releasing more of their potential and arming them with possibilities for their future that was previously not an option,” says Mathilda.

The school also aims to equip every Vastfontein teaching facility with an interactive multi-media platform. Using large touch screen display systems for the teachers and tablets for the learners, they will be able to interactively work through curriculum content. Learning material content will include high quality audio and video obtained from various sources, including online curriculum providers such as Cambridge.

3/...Vastfontein community

3/...Vastfontein community

The content will be managed by a state-of-the-art educational curriculum planning and management system housed on a secure on-site server with a cloud-based back-up facility. “Our ultimate vision is to stream our classes via interactive e-learning channels to neighbouring high schools and so impact more children and teachers in our surrounding communities.”

“We believe in walking the journey with our learners of any race, gender, language group or religious backgrounds, from a very young age through their teenage years into adulthood. We are therefore extremely thrilled that we will soon be commencing with the building of the High School that will accommodate both current learners who will be graduating from the Primary School as well as learners from the community.”

Mathilda adds that the High School offering the same quality of private education currently offered at the Pre-Primary and Primary School. Future plans also include the building of a Technical College and up to 40 homes to care for some 240 orphans,” concludes Mathilda.

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Photo Caption:

Atlas Copco supporting Vastfontein Community Transformation since 2012 FLTR: Kgothatso Ntsie from Atlas Copco with Matilda Fourie CEO, Tharina de Goede Finance and Admin Manager, Johan Grobler , Chairman of the board & Jakoo de Villiers ICT Manager

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