

MEDIA RELEASE FROM GROWTHPOINT PROPERTIES

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Growthpoint invests R1,7 million for early childhood development

Communities in the Eastern Cape celebrated the official opening of two life-changing centres on 12 March 2015 that will help boost early childhood development in the region, and create brighter futures for young and old alike.

Putting corporate social investment into action, Growthpoint Properties has partnered with the Loaves and Fishes Network (LAFN), an East London-based non-profit organisation, to develop the Khanya and Phakamani educare centres. Growthpoint contributed R1,7 million towards the centres' development.

Aiming to create sustainable and holistic childcare training and development in disadvantaged rural communities in the Eastern Cape, LAFN works with local communities to implement effective Early Childhood Development programmes and has already realised positive impacts.

LAFN is involved with over 30 early childhood development centres supporting nearly 1,500 children, and is recognised as having one of the best child-care facilities and programmes in the country.

Norbert Sasse, CEO of Growthpoint Properties, comments: "This mission speaks to what Growthpoint seeks to achieve as part of our social investment initiatives, specifically building social infrastructure and boosting education. We are happy to be in a position to empower communities and help to create more sustainable, and brighter, futures."

The Phakamani and Khanya Educentres are situated in the rural villages of Mathanga and Zikwaba Newlands, East London. The two centres were chosen for the project based on the phenomenal results achieved within their communities. This is consistent with the aim of the organisation.

"On behalf of The Loaves and Fishes Network and on behalf of our primary beneficiaries being the children who attend the early childhood development centres supported by us, I'd like to extend our sincere gratitude to Growthpoint Properties for partnering with us to assist these two deserving centres. We look forward to continued collaboration with Growthpoint in the future," adds Brendan Connellan, chairperson of LAFN.

Shawn Theunissen, head of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) at Growthpoint, says: "This project, for us, is about creating platforms for access to quality education as well as providing spaces for the community to thrive. LAFN's focus on education in early childhood development supports our belief that quality education should be provided from a young age."

And, it isn't only the young children of the community that benefit from the centres.

“The greatest advantage to the LAFN is their approach in community development. Not only do they provide holistic childcare training and development, but also the appropriate facilities,” notes Theunissen.

All of this is done while rallying and supporting parent and community participation. Women from local communities have received the training to put them in a better position to manage child care centres and enjoy the benefits of stable employment.

This project was made possible with the assistance of engineers from Hatch & Goba Consulting and development contractors, Amanz’abantu Services (Pty) Ltd. Growthpoint’s own Beacon Bay Retail Park has also been actively involved in the support of the project by co-ordinating the landscaping and providing additional resources for the centres.

Together, these partners are making precious contributions to the upliftment of rural communities in the Eastern Cape.

Growthpoint is the largest South African REIT and a JSE ALSI Top 40 Index company. In addition to Growthpoint’s social investment being strongly focused on education and social infrastructure, it also places a priority on investing in entrepreneurship, skills development and staff engagement.

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