

Press release

GWK and Wildeklawer open education centre for children on farms

Making foundation phase education more accessible to children living on farms is shaping GWK's dream of making a tangible difference in the Northern Cape and other parts of South Africa.

Today GWK and Wildeklawer took hands to open a brand-new early childhood development (ECD) centre on Wildeklawer's farm, approximately 15 kilometres from Barkly West, Northern Cape.

Going forward children between the ages of two and five years can visit this ECD centre every weekday.

While this is the second time that GWK partners up with a farm from the region to open an ECD centre, "Klawer Kleuters" represents the first centre opened in partnership with Wildeklawer.

To Louis and Cora de Kock, owners of Wildeklawer, investing in the children from their district is of great importance, especially when it comes to improving education. Louis de Kock believes that better education is the key to social change.

"The only way to escape poverty is through education. This is where it starts. And you need to start small," De Kock said at the opening of Klawer Kleuters.

In the mornings an educator and assistant will present activities that contribute to holistic development. Games and entertainment are planned for the afternoons. A qualified dietician has developed an assortment of well-balanced breakfasts, teatime snacks, and lunches that will be given to the children daily.

During the next 18 months Zelda Johnson – GWK coordinator of these projects and an accredited social worker – will mentor the newly appointed educator during regular visits to the school and by assisting with lesson plans. After this period ends, GWK will remain involved with the centre, but Wildeklawer will officially take over the reins. According to Johnson, the centre's learning plan aims at providing a foundation of love, respect, trust, and acknowledgement. "Once the foundation of our children is laid correctly, we can start building towards something better," she explains.

While "Klawer Kleuters" can already accommodate up to 20 children, the goal is to eventually open the centre to 50 children. Currently, only children of Wildeklawer employees are registered. In the future, however, GWK and Wildeklawer will also include children from surrounding farms.

The De Kock family took charge of renovations and improvements of an existing building on the farm. Today, this building meets all the requirements that the department of education holds for ECD centres.

"Wouldn't it be unbelievable if we can implement 100 of these centres alongside various partners? This is a very big dream," says Neil de Klerk (GWK Executive Head: Group Marketing And Communication).

"If each school then has 50 children registered, we will be making a difference to the foundational development of 5 000 children on farms every year," De Klerk elaborates.

The first steps toward making this dream a reality were already taken on 18 February 2020 when GWK and Genade Boerdery near Douglas opened the first ECD centre.

According to De Klerk several suggestions are already on the table as to where the following centres should open, and who the company will partner up with for these upcoming projects. GWK follows a well-structured approach to ensure that the investments in these centres remain sustainable.

“It is an honour to be a part of a company like GWK that truly cares for the community and that does good – not because of a sense of duty but because it is the right thing to do.”

De Klerk also praised Wildeklawer for their contribution.

“We really want to acknowledge Wildeklawer too. South Africa is well-acquainted with Wildeklawer, their people, their kindness towards others, and their involvement in several other projects to make a tangible difference.”

PHOTOS

Photo 1: Louis de Kock addresses the audience at the opening of the ECD centre on Wildeklawer on 22 February 2022.

Photo 2: Louis and Cora de Kock from Wildeklawer, and Llewellyn Brooks (GWK Group Managing Director) at the opening of the Wildeklawer ECD centre on 22 February 2022

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ABOUT GWK

GWK is a public, farmer-owned company, operating from its head office in Douglas in the Northern Cape, with offices also in the Western Cape, Eastern Cape, Northwest, Free State and KwaZulu-Natal. GWK provides farmers with the inputs they need, supporting them with the best solutions on the farm and ensuring the best channels to market for their products, locally and abroad. GWK’s premium branded foods are manufactured with a plough-to-plate philosophy, linking consumers with farmers through sustainably manufactured products from the farm.

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