

MEDIA RELEASE

R470 000 Vehicle Donation Ensures Disabled Children Continue To Benefit From Care Centre Interventions

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The donation of a R470 000 vehicle has significantly eased the plight of a Dimbaza, Durban, care centre dedicated to caring for disabled children, enabling it to effectively transport those in its charge and grow its service offering to include additional disabled youngsters.

With just one ageing vehicle, the Star Uplifting Centre was battling to meet its challenging transport responsibilities, which - if left unchecked - was threatening to compromise its current services, as well as excluding additional disabled rural children from the benefits it offers.

Its incapacitating predicament was brought to the attention of the South African Muslim Charitable Trust (SAMCT), which was quick to step into the breach, providing a brand new and much-needed second vehicle for the centre.

The centre's staff provide day-care facilities, early childhood development activities, skills development interventions, a protective workshop environment and physco-social support for the 256 children in their charge. This number is growing steadily and therein lay the Star Uplifting Centre's problem.

Addressing a recent virtual hand-over of the vehicle, SAMCT representative, Mr Gaf Osman, said: "Working with children with disabilities is a challenging undertaking, given the level of care they require and the need for much greater assistance as regards social development, life skills, numeracy and literacy. The children the centre supports come, largely, from disadvantaged rural backgrounds and by bringing them to the centre, staff are able to ensure their safety and protection."

"Many of these children need to be transported from their village homes to the centre, school, after-school care and health clinics - but the facility had only one operational and elderly vehicle for this purpose. Staff also purchase and deliver groceries for the children in its care, which are delivered to their homes. In addition, the centre's own care workers need to be transported when undertaking home visits. This has placed great strain on the centre staff and, particularly, on its only vehicle."

This non-governmental and not-for-profit organisation was established in 1999 after concerns were identified regarding the exclusion of, and discrimination against, disabled individuals and, especially, children.

Mr Gaf Osman said: "The Star Uplifting Centre has introduced a range of programmes to benefit the disabled. Its interventions include providing learning programmes, support materials and learning methodology, so meeting the needs of affected children in order that they might learn effectively. Hearing about the centre's transport concerns - especially in view of its need to care for increasing numbers of disabled children - and the threat of becoming unable to provide the total care these children require and deserve, the South African Muslim Charitable Trust moved to intervene."

He added that the SAMCT recognised how difficult organisations, such as the Star Uplifting Centre, find funding large capital projects, such as vehicles.

"We were only too pleased to step into the breach and provide the centre with a new vehicle, ensuring that its staff will be able to reach-out to more children in need and to better serve its current participants," Mr Gaf Osman said.

The SAMCT was created in 2008 to provide funding, services and other resources for the improvement of the lives of vulnerable, deprived and disadvantaged. It has successfully delivered sizeable assistance solutions throughout the country, irrespective of race or religion and work to support needy organisations in the fields of health, social development, poverty alleviation and education.

"It is our hope that our donation of a vehicle to the Star Uplifting Centre will make a telling difference to its ability to effectively transport the children in its care and to grow its service offering to those disabled youngsters still to benefit from the centre's incredible outreach programmes and the care and attention of its dedicated members of staff," Mr Gaf Osman concluded.

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For more information about SAMCT or its vehicle donation to the Star Uplifting Centre, please contact:

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