

Barefoot school kids to benefit from shoe project

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Sappi's 'War on Waste' recycling bins are not only good for recyclable paper and cardboard. These days they also make useful containers to collect a luxury item that are either sorely desired or taken for granted - depending on where you're placed on the scale of economic affluence.



Majuba Rotary Club members accepting Sappi's generous donation of waste paper collection bins boxes. From left: Peet Smit, Jaishree Surajlal, Johann Wagner, Nel Vuyk (Waste Salvage – a Sappi waste paper agent), Michael Koppers (Sappi ReFibre) and Janco Coetzee.

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While most of us can't imagine going about our business without shoes, thousands of people go barefoot every day, including impoverished school children in Newcastle, KwaZulu-Natal. Luckily, thanks to the efforts of the local Rotary Club, in association with global pulp and paper manufacturer Sappi, a solution is underway.

The Newcastle Majuba Rotary Club has launched a 'Sole Struck Shoe Project', whereby the community is encouraged to donate their unwanted shoes, in any type or size, by placing them in the Sappi waste paper bins provided for this purpose.

Rotary Club member Janco Coetzee, who proposed the project, explains, "I often drive to work very early in the morning and that's when I see these youngsters walking barefoot to school - sometimes in icy cold or rainy weather, and over terrain littered with shards of glass and other contaminants. I looked at the comfortable shoes on my own feet, and knew we could do something about their plight."

Sappi, which runs a countrywide waste recycling division, Sappi ReFibre, was approached for help. The company donated 50 waste bins, which are now placed at numerous collection points across the Newcastle area. "We might be a global manufacturer, but our involvement in community upliftment is a crucial part of living up to our 'inspired by life' motto," says Sappi ReFibre Procurement Manager, Deon Oosthuizen.

The shoe project started on 1 December 2014, and will run well into the new year. "If the project proves successful in our area, the opportunity exists to roll it out at other Rotary branches," says Janco. "Some people always have unwanted shoes in their cupboards, while others are always in dire need of shoes."

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