

# **PHILANI CHILD HEALTH & NUTRITION PROJECT**

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## **PRESS RELEASE – Date: 11 December 2007**

### **Archbishop Tutu to open new development at pioneering child health project in Khayelitsha**

Philani Child Health & Nutrition Project is delighted to be able to welcome its Patron, Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu to its Development Centre in Site C, Khayelitsha at 11h00 on 13 December 2007. Archbishop Tutu will open the completed first stage of new building work at the Development Centre and meet Philani staff, mothers and supporters.

Philani is a community-based child health and nutrition organization, based in Khayelitsha and operating in many of the poorest informal settlements outside Cape Town. Founded in Crossroads in 1979, in the last 28 years Philani has assisted thousands of children and their mothers, through a network of 5 Nutrition Centres and 70 community outreach workers. Philani's initial focus on malnourished children has developed into a comprehensive project integrating many programmes, as a response to needs expressed by communities and in recognition of the multiple factors contributing to child malnutrition and ill health – social and educational, as well as health problems.

Since opening its Development Centre in 1995, Philani has grown and developed, now operating a Nutrition Programme, Outreach programme, Mothers-to-be programme, HIV/AIDS support programme, Skills training and employment programme (incorporating weaving, beading, silk-screen and linoleum printing) and Educare programme for pre-school children. In recent years it became clear that extra areas would be needed to develop the existing programmes further as well to initiate new projects.

Thanks to the significant support of key donors, including Daimler Chrysler staff , and Orgryte Rotary Club in Gothenburg, Sweden, Philani was able to embark on the first stage of building work in June 2007. This includes an expanded pre-school building, housing three classes for children aged 2 ½ to 6, two new consulting rooms for the Outreach team, a new dispensary and two dental clinics, for Philani's new dental project, supported by Rotary Clubs in Sweden and South Africa and Rotary International, as well as the Swedish-based Foundation for Philani Oral Health.

In November 2007, work started on the second stage of Philani's building programme, expected to be completed in early 2008. This includes a new silk-screen printing workshop, a training workshop for printing, an expanded retail area, new offices and garages.

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The Archbishop has been a committed Patron and dear friend to Philani since **2002**. In recognition of his 75<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2006, Philani became the beneficiary of funds which enabled it to initiate the Philani Desmond Tutu Scholarship Fund, so called because it responds to positive action, rather than being a relief fund. The fund benefits mothers on Philani's Outreach programme who, despite their poverty, have shown great dedication in working with Outreach workers to rehabilitate their malnourished children. Each family (2+ members) receives R 300 a month for six months or one year. This enables mothers to gain some independence and improve the lives of their children. It also puts them in a position to kickstart a healthy family life, less vulnerable to such problems as HIV/AIDS, with the prospect of long-term sustainability. Currently 72 families are enrolled, but the more money Philani is able to raise for this purpose, the more families will benefit.

Archbishop Tutu is expected to bless the finished areas of building work, as well as visiting those areas in progress. He will meet Philani staff, mothers and supporters, including mothers benefiting from the Philani Desmond Tutu Scholarship Fund.

ENDS

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**Notes to Editors:**

1. Press photographers and journalists planning to cover the event are asked to contact Fiona Burt (as above) before 13 December.
2. Philani is a community-based child health and nutrition organization, operating in many of the poorest informal settlements outside Cape Town. Since 1979, thousands of mothers and malnourished children have been identified and assisted, through a network of community outreach workers and nutrition centres. Philani's employment project is a vital part of the organisation's work, offering destitute mothers education, empowerment and skills training, allowing them to earn an income and become self-reliant. Educare programmes are also provided for their pre-school children.
3. Visitors are welcome at Philani's Development Centre in Phaphani Street, Khayelitsha Site C, Cape Town. The craft shop, selling the project's weavings, printed and beaded products, is open 09h00 to 16h00 Monday to Friday, 09h00 to 13h00 Saturday (closed on public holidays).
4. If you would like to support any aspect of Philani's work, please contact Fiona Burt on [philani@telkomsa.net](mailto:philani@telkomsa.net), 021 387 5124 or 083 486 5945. Philani's website is at [www.philani.org.za](http://www.philani.org.za).