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Healthy Children, Bright Futures



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OCTOBER 19

Life Brings Good Things to South African School

GE volunteers plant school garden; GE Foundation follows with grant to train and build needed kitchen for 1,600 students

Ashburn, Virginia (October 19, 2009) — INMED Partnerships for Children is expanding its partnership with the GE Foundation and launching a partnership with GE South Africa to help to bring nutritious lunches to children in need in by bringing a mobile kitchen and training to one particularly needy school.

And in the nick of time, too, for this South African school is getting ready with its first harvests from a newly established garden planted with the help of GE volunteers.



The garden was established earlier this year to serve both as a source of nutritional foods for the school's 1,600 students and as a living classroom for students to learn about nutrition.

Although students, most of them poor, of the Bonwelong Primary School in the Ivory Park community of Johannesburg are entitled to receive a daily meal through the government school feeding program, menus do not often follow standardized guidelines for nutritional content or portion sizes.

It doesn't help that the school lacks a sufficient kitchen to prepare and store foods for its students, relying on a nearby church kitchen and a single stove. The new kitchen, slated to open by mid-October, will include a double sink, working and storage surfaces, a hot water tap, a three-burner gas stove, refrigerator, electric plugs and mounted drying racks.

"Through this project, Bonwelong school's vulnerable students will receive nutritionally enhanced lunches utilizing produce from the school garden, helping to improve their educational outcomes by reducing hunger, improving their nutritional status, and providing an incentive for regular attendance," said Ethel Zulu, INMED's South Africa director.

The GE Foundation grant will also incorporate INMED's nutrition curriculum under its Healthy Futures

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South Africa program in the school to educate students, teachers and school food workers in the areas of nutrition, cooking, food safety, hygiene and gardening.

Although Bonwelong school had established its own garden through a separate project with the GE Trust, GE representatives in South Africa approached INMED to help with the kitchen and the curriculum because of its previous success, said Thami Mbele, GE's Regional Executive for Southern Africa.

"We are pleased to be part of this initiative which will help many children at Bonwelong perform even better in their education," said Mbele.

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