

KIDS FOR FUTURE VISION PROJECT

The Rotary Club Stellenbosch started this Community Project in 2019 with the Financial Assistance of the Rotary Clubs Claremont and Stellenbosch.

We had a very successful year in 2019 with 2 schools, Cloetesville Primary school and Rietenbosch Primary school. Both these schools are situated in a very socially disadvantaged community, Cloetesville in Stellenbosch. A community that are challenged with drug abuse, gang violence, poverty and unemployment to name a few. It also serves the children of surrounding farms and Khayamandi, an informal settlement in Stellenbosch.



We have asked the teachers of the schools to identify the children that are struggling in class and that might have a problem with their eyes, whether it be with their vision or vision related or even things like itchy eyes or children that rubs their eyes all the time.

There are different stages in a child's vision and it starts very early in a child's life and needs stimuli like toys, games and playtime activities. Lots of children, especially in socio economic areas, lack some of these very important activities. With the increase of drug or alcohol abuse pregnancies, there is an increase of eye diseases or vision problems in children too. All children should have an eye test before they start school, so one can identify if there are an eye problem to reduce the risk of learning problems in school. Also if an eye disease can be identified at an early stage, blindness or vision loss can be prevented in children.

Most of the children in these schools that we identified, does not have the opportunity of proper eye care and assistance because of socio economic challenges or due to other challenges.



We have identified the following three Primary schools, Cloetesville Primary School, Rietenbosch Primary School and Pieter Langeveldt Primary School and one Secondary School, Cloetesville Secondary School. We have managed to finish the screening process at 2 primary schools in 2019, Cloetesville and Rietenbosch Primary Schools. We have screened **127** children at Cloetesville Primary school and **151** children at Rietenbosch Primary school. So in total we screened **278 children** between the ages of 6 years and 13 years old. From the screening process, we have identified children that needed eye tests and a total of **98** eye tests were done at Van Neel Optometrist. Usiko, a NPO in Stellenbosch, assisted us with transporting the children from school to the

practise and back to the school. After the eye tests, **76** children received spectacles and other children received eye care, like binocular vision training, referrals to occupational therapist and referrals to local clinics or ophthalmologist.

Zeiss Vision helped in 2019 with free lenses for the children and a Rotary club member Marlene, donated spectacle frames. With the assistance of the Rotary Club Project funds, we could make **76** spectacles for children that desperately needed help with their vision.



Then in 2020 we could only manage to do screening at one school, Pieter Langeveldt School in the same area. We did not have enough time due to the Global Pandemic to screen all the grades, so we concentrated on the Grades 6 and 7 students that will leave the school soon and go to secondary schools that are more challenging. Cloeteville Secondary school contacted us to enquire about 2 matric students that had problems with their vision. We screened **52** children and identified about **30** children that needed eye tests, of whom **20** came for their eye tests and we made **18** spectacles in total.

Some, had very poor eye sight and I'm just so glad that we could assist in the future youth of our country. We could not get a Lens lab to sponsor the spectacle lenses this year because it was so late in the year and had to rely

fully on the Rotary Club for financial assistance, so a **Big Thank you** to the **Claremont Rotary Club** that partnered with the **Stellenbosch Rotary Club** for this **Project** in sowing into the **Future of our Kids!**

Myrtle van Neel

Optometrist at Van Neel Optometrist

Rotary Stellenbosch Member