



MEDIA RELEASE

Vision for the future: Eye test for youngsters in Stellenbosch

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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[Caption] Good eyesight helps children at school to read better and learn faster. Van Neel Optometrist, in partnership with the Rotary Club of Stellenbosch, screened 84 pupils from Cloeteville Primary School for eyesight problems this year as part of their outreach project. The Rotary Club of Claremont assisted by providing funding for the project. Pictured above is Myrtle van Neel, registered optometrist at Van Neel Optometris, taking one of the children through her paces.

Learners from Grades 1 to 7 who had trouble with their sight received near-vision testing, visual screening, and eye health examinations in an interactive and fun way. Van Neel has been involved with various projects to test school children and provide spectacles at no charge since 2013. She understands the importance of eyesight for young children: "Lots of children sit in classes and they cannot see. They cannot always communicate well enough with their teachers and parents to explain what they cannot see or not see well enough, so they struggle at school. We focus on children in the lower income group that don't have the opportunity to see an optometrist to test their eyes."

Van Neel and a team of volunteers from the Rotary Club of Stellenbosch conducted the tests. "The children can't wait to do the activities, like showing with their little hands which side of the 'E' is open on the Snellen E-chart," smiles Van Neel. The funding from the Rotary Club of Claremont assists with transport for children who require further examination after the screenings were done, and to provide the frames for glasses to the children who need it. Van Neel doesn't stop there: children with further

vision problems were referred to an ophthalmologist or clinic for proper care. A child with albinism, for example, may have very poor vision and struggle in the mainstream schooling system, and Van Neel Optometrist would assist with applying for a special school with the aid of a teacher or social worker.

“This is the first time we get to do the project on this scale and we know that it will make a difference to them on the long run,” concludes Van Neel.

For more information about Rotary Club of Stellenbosch, visit <http://stellenboschrotary.org.za/>. For more information about Van Neel Optometrist, visit the website on <https://vanneel.co.za/>. For more information on Rotary Club of Claremont and the various community projects and initiatives they are involved with, please visit <https://www.facebook.com/RotaryClubofClaremont/>.

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