## >> Four thieves still on the run School hostel registration ends in robbery

From now on, no cash will be accepted. Learners' guardians must deposit registration fees into the hostel's bank account.

### **MICHELLINE NAWATISES**

n Monday, 6 January, around 17:30, Ella du Plessis Secondary School was robbed of N\$65 000 hostel registration fees. The chief hostel matron, Zulerine Majiedt, narrated how the robbery unfolded. The hostel registration and stocktaking were taking place in the dining hall when four robbers entered the hostel premises.

Three of them entered the hall and one remained to keep watch and to prevent anyone from attempting to escape the hall. All three of them had firearms. There were three female teachers and one male hostel driver involved in the incident. One of the robbers fired a shot and the other two thieves pinned down the hostel driver to the floor while the one that fired the shot grabbed a bag of money containing N\$65 000, leaving about N\$9 000 behind. "Before the remain-

ing two thieves left the hall, one of them took three phones and demanded money saving 'where's the money?' and punched one of the female teachers in the face, leaving her lip bleeding and swollen," Majiedt said. The thieves then fled in a vehicle.

### Traumatised

"I did not check the make of the car they were in as my main concern was the well-being of the teachers and Tate Daniel as one of them were pregnant. I am traumatised, I can't sleep properly at night. As soon as I close my eyes, the event keeps on replaying," Majiedt said.

Hostel superintendent Tjindo Maluvelo, who was at the office attending to parents when the robbery took place, said no cash will be accepted any more and added that all hostel fees should be deposited into the hostel's bank account.

"I was not there but I heard the gunshot from my office," he said.

### **Pleading for assistance**

School principal Jakavaza Kavari pleaded with the community and private sector for financial assistance as the school has suffered a huge setback.

"The school will be grateful if we are to be assisted for financial material in any manner," he said. The school hostel consists of four blocks and is in a satisfactory state as one of the school blocks was renovated last August by the government.

Kavari said renovations to the other two blocks are set to kick off in February and March; however, the last block still needs fi-

nancial assistance for renovation.

"I humbly call upon the good Samaritans and private sector to please assist," he said. The public can make donations via: Ella du Plessis hostel

Nedbank main branch 11000066534 Branch code: 461609

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The school and community are grateful towards Footsteps For Africa and the donors for this valuable addition to their school.

# Leaving footprints in education

### **MARISELLE STOFBERG**

American non-profit organisation Footsteps for Africa officially handed over a new library and community learning centre to the Michelle McLean Primary School in Otjomuise on Friday, 29 January.

This was done in collaboration with the Read Namibia Coalition, Glowdom, Yambeka Children Media (Namibia Book Fair) and Fitcity Namihia

The new library and community centre, which will be known as the Salzman Library, is the first of many that will serve as an open-access library centre for children in the Otjomuise and 7de Laan areas. The initiative will have a particular focus on serving orphans and vulnerable children who may not otherwise have the resources or means to attend e-learning school activities during the Covid-19 pandemic.

"Given the challenges we are facing as a nation due to the impact of Covid-19, the Michelle McLean Primary School is now best placed to deal with online learning because of the donation of books and computers," Paulus Lewin, the Khomas education director, said.

"This project will enable Namibian youth to help themselves out of poverty and will contribute to a more equal and just society where we can collectively develop our country for the common good of humanity," he added.

The library and community centre are 100% funded by two American philanthropists, Alan and Tiara Salzman

### **Power of partnership**

Moved by the hands-on approach implemented by Footsteps For Africa, the Salzmans partnered to create the library and community centre to help children and teachers to access a range of education resources and to foster a



The learners of the school entertained guests during the ceremony with cultural dances. PHOTOS MARISELLE STOFBERG

reading culture.

"We and our donors, Alan and Tiara Salzman, have established this library simply because we believe Nelson Mandela when he said that education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world. I'd like to add to that quote by saying that we know it can enable a child to also change his or her individual life if they want to.

"Life has a way of launching surprise attacks on each of us, creating wounds, disadvantages, and tremendous struggles," said Austin Cameron, the founder and CEO of Footsteps For Africa.

He added that you can fight your way through these battles that come to you without invitation. He also believes it is possible to "arm ourselves to fight back, to take control of our lives, to absorb the blows and press forward, aggressively pursuing the lives that we want for ourselves, our families, our nations."

"We hope that these educational weapons in this new Salzman Library will help to support what this school and this community is already doing, which is to inspire children to take control, to take on this fight," he added.

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### **Investing in education**

After starting in 2000 with only 200 learners, six teachers and a principal, Michelle McLean Primary School has grown to accommodate 1 157 learners, 34 teachers, four institutional workers and two administrative staff.

'We were delighted when Footsteps For Africa recognised the continuous efforts of the school to upgrade and equip our library and learning centre to assist our learners. With their generous contribution, a dream we had - which would have taken us three years - has now been realised in mere months, and we will remain ever grateful," principal Nadia Lizazi said.

'This sponsorship has provided our learners with the foundation to be introduced to a world outside their own where their reading skills are developed. Libraries conserve the heritage of the past, but they also hold the promise of the future, and will bring opportunities to all," she said.

