



Press Release – Tsogo Sun – 17/11/2017

Tsogo Sun Joins the Mellon Educate Building Blitz in Cape Town

“Whatever good things we build, end up building us.” Jim Rohn, US businessman

Over 140 Tsogo Sun volunteers from eight of the group’s Cape Town hotels (<https://www.tsogosun.com/destinations/south-africa/cape-town>) and regional office donned hard hats and joined a Building Blitz to help complete three schools in Khayelitsha.

The Building Blitz is an annual week-long event organised by Mellon Educate, an Irish-based African development charity founded by developer and philanthropist Niall Mellon in 2002. With the collective efforts of more than 25,000 volunteers over the years, the organisation has built houses for more than 125,000 people in South Africa’s poorest townships. Four years ago, Mellon Educate pledged a 10-year education development programme to benefit more than 100,000 disadvantaged learners. This year’s Building Blitz week focused on schools in Khayelitsha.

The Tsogo Sun volunteers spent the day with 300 international volunteers, predominantly from Ireland and the UK, as well as volunteers from USA, Australia, Belgium France and Germany, making this a truly international effort. The visiting volunteers were accommodated at Tsogo Sun’s Southern Sun Cape Sun hotel for the duration of their visit, to complete the construction of three schools in Khayelitsha – Sosebenza Primary School, Usasazo High School, and Sobambisana Primary School – improving the learning and teaching experience for a total of 3,650 learners and 100 teachers.

In total, the volunteers were involved in building or completing construction on 14 classrooms, two kitchens, playgrounds in all three schools, two outdoor sheltered areas, a sports field, an outdoor gym, and a science laboratory.

Tsogo Sun, primarily through Southern Sun Cape Sun (<https://www.tsogosun.com/southern-sun-cape-sun>), has been partnering with Mellon Educate for 12 years, accommodating international volunteers, and hosting business meetings through the year, and has involved staff in the Building Blitzes for five years. Darren Hailstones, Deputy GM of Southern Sun Cape Sun and champion of the Tsogo Sun Building Blitz initiative, says, “It’s a privilege to be the Cape Town home of the Mellon Educate volunteers and their visit is a highlight in the hotel’s calendar; their contribution to our communities is inspirational.”

Tsogo Sun Director of Operations – Western and Eastern Cape John van Rooyen, who proved his skill as a painter on the Building Blitz site on 15 November, says, “Sustainability is key to Tsogo Sun’s

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growth – and that includes the sustainability of communities within our areas of operation, communities that we're a part of. It's a privilege to be able to put in a few hours of labour alongside fellow Tsogo Sun people, and know that you have in some small way, impacted a vulnerable child's future. The Building Blitz is an incredibly philanthropic initiative that is making a real difference in disadvantaged areas through careful planning, excellent organisation, and extremely generous giving of time, effort, resources, and funds. We are proud to be one of their partners as they continue their good work."

Says Niall Mellon, Founder and CEO of Mellon Educate, ""We're absolutely delighted to welcome Tsogo Sun's staff volunteers onto site for this year's Khayelitsha building blitz. Our charity has enjoyed a 12-yr long relationship with the Group who give us incredible all-year round support - accommodating charity staff as well as volunteers. For the last 5 years our partnership has flourished and its very special to have local Tsogo Sun staff working alongside our overseas volunteers - making it a truly collective contribution."

Shanda Paine, Tsogo Sun group CSI Manager, says, "Education is key to Tsogo Sun's CSI programmes as it is the linchpin for successful futures for our children, especially in disadvantaged areas. This is where we place most of our focus, from primary school through to career guidance and job readiness initiatives for high school students. Mellon Educate's Building Blitz philosophy is closely aligned to ours', and is in fact, founded on Nelson Mandela's statement that: 'Education is the most powerful weapon we can use to change the world.' It also states, 'We want to give children in Africa the gift of education to help them create sustainable futures for themselves.'"

Hailstones comments on the volunteering, "It's hours of hot and hard work, but the camaraderie and spirit working alongside the Mellon Educate volunteers is uplifting. Our staff love participating; they get to know our guests better, learning more about them and where they come from. Quite often, staff from Cape Sun live in the communities where the work takes place and it gives them a sense of pride to be contributing in their own way."

He says the impact that Mellon Educate has on the disadvantaged communities is significant. "It's humbling to think that 300 people from over 10,000 kilometres away spend months fundraising a significant sum of money to take a week's leave to work and make a difference to disadvantaged people. The impact in the communities doesn't only entail building schools. In 2016 a Teaching Blitz was held in conjunction with the Building Blitz where 50 teachers from Ireland and Britain came over

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to share teaching methods with the teachers in the schools, which is continuing with even more teachers coming over – theirs is a progressive contribution, with long-term upliftment for the communities where they work.”

Tsogo Sun has a portfolio of over 100 hotels and 14 casino and entertainment destinations throughout South Africa, Africa and the Seychelles. For more details, visit

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