

MEDIA RELEASE

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Drive out poverty with Christel House

Over the last four weeks, the nationwide bus strike has left thousands of South Africans stranded and forced to find alternative transport. The strike has had a particularly debilitating effect on attendance records at many schools across the country. Despite the recent apprehension within the transport industry, Christel House South Africa, a non-profit school serving impoverished communities in Cape Town, continued to provide safe and uninterrupted transportation services to its 755 students who come from communities such as Langa, Delft and Philippi. The school is currently appealing to the public to help raise funds to purchase an additional school bus to serve new communities in the Cape Flats.

Christel House is a global charity that operates eight learning centers around the world with a single mission: to break the cycle of poverty. The school in Ottery (Cape Town) is the only centre in Africa and offers free scholarships to children from the 20 impoverished areas in Cape Town that it serves. The school has a holistic R-12 education model and, unlike many other schools of its kind, one of the main criteria for entry into the school is a maximum monthly income of R1 500 per household member. The school provides quality education, health care, daily meals, guidance counselling, college and careers support, and daily transportation to all of its students.

Students are picked up every morning between 06h30 and 07h00 from a centrally-located area in their neighbourhood, safely transported to the Christel House school in Ottery and then transported back home in the afternoon at 16h00.

Mr. Christiaan Adams oversees the transport operations at the school and has been a Christel House bus driver for seven years. He says, "Transporting the students to and from school is a big pleasure. I literally get to see the children grow up. Providing safe transport to them each and every day helps them become successful students and I'm very happy to be a part of their success."

The school currently has 18 busses and each bus travels up to 800 km per month on average. With the aim of giving more children the opportunity to attend Christel House, the school has launched a 'Drive out Poverty' fundraising drive to raise funds for an additional school bus. Thus far, the school has managed to raise R50 000 and still need to raise another R500 000 in order to purchase a bus.

For many of its students, Christel House is a safe haven away from home and a chance to break free from a life of poverty. In 2017, the school achieved a 98% percent matric pass rate – well above the national average for the 10th consecutive year - and 91% of its graduates are either gainfully employed, studying or doing both.

Jesse Stellemacher, who is a grade 11 student at the school, says, 'Without the Christel House transport, I would not be able to attend school and my parents would need to cover the cost of my transport. During times like the bus strike, I would not feel safe travelling with public transport. Every day, for the last 11 years, the school bus picked me up on time and safely dropped me at home after school.'

Non-Discriminatory Clause

Christel House admits students of any race, colour, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programmes and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, colour, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, scholarships and loan programmes, and athletic and other school-administered programmes.

Donations can be made online through Christel House South Africa's website at <http://southafrica.christelhouse.org/> or by contacting Kristen Matthews on 021 704 9417/ k_matthews@sa.christelhouse.org.

A 100% of all donations benefit Christel House's projects and programs and South African donors are eligible to receive a tax-deductible 18A tax certificate for the value of their contributions. As an accredited level 4 B-BBEE contributor, businesses can receive BEE points for their donations.

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