



# LET'S PUT A LIBRARY IN EVERY SCHOOL



LESLEY BYRAM

Coordinator, Cape Times's Library in Every School project

The *Cape Times* started its *Library in Every School* project in April 2009 in support of Equal Education's *1 school, 1 library, 1 librarian* campaign after learning that only eight percent of South African schools have functional libraries.

Since joining forces with Equal Education (EE), the *Cape Times* has contributed to the opening of 14 school libraries which means that thousands of children who didn't have access to books can now take books home to read every day.

*Cape Times* editor Alide Dasnois says: 'As journalists, our work is all about words. We wanted to help others to read and write. Thanks to Equal Education we've been able to identify schools where libraries are welcome, and we hope that, by making books more accessible, our readers will not only help pupils in their school work but also open up for them a whole world of words and reading.'

The aim of the book launches we organise with authors for *Cape Times* readers is to raise awareness and generate funds for the project. We tag R10 on to the cost of each event which is then spent on non-fiction books for the libraries. It is through these events that we receive the biggest response from our readers. Many people are touched by the opportunity to give a child a brighter future and they donate books, make a monetary donation or offer to volunteer at The Bookery. Once they see for themselves how rewarding it is to be involved and how much their contribution is needed and appreciated, it becomes easy to spread the word. That's how the volunteer base has grown.

The Bookery\* at 20 Roeland Street, Cape Town is the depot for all donated books. Coordinator Cosmas Mabeya oversees all the donations that are received, ensuring that all the books are both

suitable and of good quality. He also liaises with school principals, building the relationships necessary to begin the process of getting a library into a school.

Mabeya says: 'The Bookery is a proud partner and the recipient of the *Cape Times*'s *Library in Every School* initiative. Many donors see The Bookery and the *Library in Every School* initiative as one. Whatever the *Library in Every School* collects, The Bookery distributes to the recipient schools.'

'Spreading the word has resulted in cash donations which go towards buying books, such as non-fiction, reference material in all languages and home language fiction books. Book donations on its own is not enough to provide in the need.

'We are very grateful for the support of the *Cape Times* and we challenge other media houses to follow their example of instilling a culture of reading among pupils. We'd like to encourage more people to join us in making a difference in our schools.'

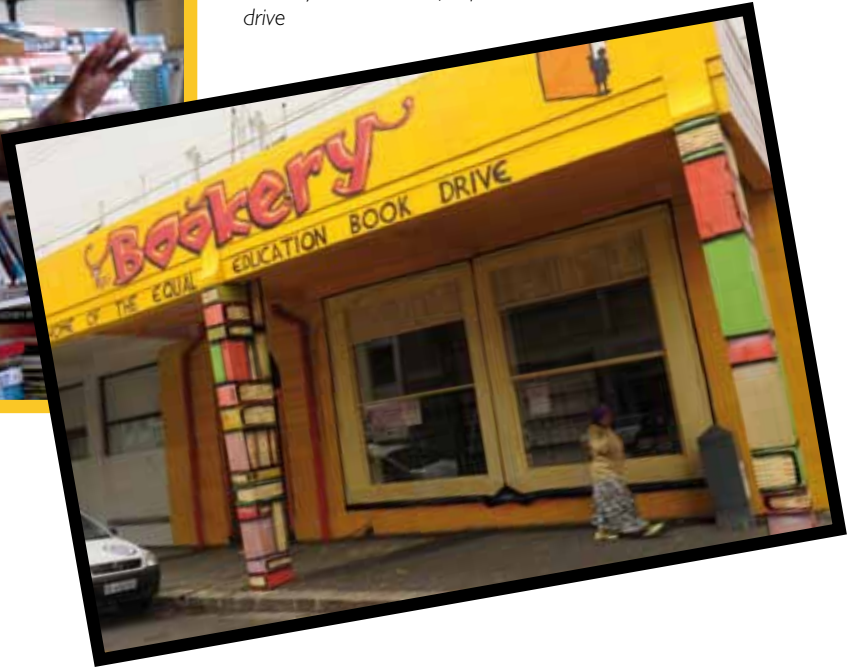
Volunteer Claire Biesman-Simons says: 'Since I first stumbled upon The Bookery in March 2010, I have never ceased to be amazed at the energy that so many people put into the project. Watching a library come together is an incredible experience. Seeing piles of books being covered, categorised and catalogued and finally shelved, is a joy for any booklover. The Bookery staff and hundreds of volunteers have contributed thousands of hours to its success and it is this energy that sets it apart from so many other literacy initiatives. Hearing a teacher librarian's positive feedback months after a library was opened is a reminder

\*The Bookery at 20 Roeland Street, Cape Town, is open to volunteers six days a week: 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday and 10am to 2pm on Saturdays. If you have an hour or two to spare and would like to help, call Cosmas Mabeya on 021 461-4189 or <cosmas@equaleducation.org.za>. To find out more about the pledge project email Lesley Byram at the *Cape Times* at <lesley.byram@jnl.co.za> or call 021 488-4738.



◀ Cosmas Mabeya is the coordinator for The Bookery - the home of Equal Education's book drive

▶ The Bookery in Roeland Street, at the old Charly's Bakery premises, is the depot for all donated books in Cape Town



that there are far too many pupils across Cape Town (and South Africa) who are desperate for the chance to read but lack the access to books. Exposing learners and teachers to libraries has to go beyond the opening celebrations. Schools, educators, EE and its volunteers need to work together to ensure pupils continue to value these precious books. This is a goal that needs the involvement of so many and success in this will complete the phenomenal progress that EE has made.'

It's hard to convince people that community work can be fun but once they have experienced it first-hand they will often meet friends at The Bookery and catch up over a cup of tea while they cover books.

There are still 23,164 schools in South Africa in need of libraries and with an average of three books per child being donated to each library there is a constant need for donations and there is always a lot of sorting, covering and cataloguing to be done.

On Friday 17 February 2012 the Rotary Club in Claremont, through the Cape Times Big Walk Trust, donated nine photocopiers worth over R100,000 to the first nine schools that received libraries.

'This donation is a direct result of the *Cape Times's* project', says Mabeya, 'coming on top of the *Cape Times's* help in the actual setting up of the libraries.'

### Donate your favourite book

We are calling on Capetonians to consider donating their favourite book to our pledge project because we'd like these libraries to be packed with memorable, inspiring and fun reads rather than only with books people no longer want. We'd like the children in these schools to realise that reading can not only help you with your school work. It can change your life and it can be fun.

### How can you help

- Donate fiction or non-fiction books suitable for 6-to-18-year-olds to The Bookery – Home of Equal Education's Book Drive at 20 Roeland Street, Cape Town. Contact Cosmas on 021 461-4189.
- Spend an hour or two sorting, labeling, covering or cataloguing books destined for school libraries at The Bookery. The Bookery is also in need of computers for the cataloguing of books.
- Which is your favourite book? Would you consider pledging a copy? By doing so you will ensure that the school libraries will be filled with only quality, compelling or entertaining reads to foster a love of reading. To do so contact Lesley Byram at the *Cape Times* at <lesley.byram@inl.co.za> or call 021 488-4738.
- Make a cash donation to help buy relevant books for school libraries.

#### Bank details:

Bank: Standard Bank

Account name: Equal Education

Account number: 270027882

Branch: Khayelitsha

Branch code: 05091100.

Please e-mail a copy of the deposit or EFT to Michelle Adler at <michelle.adler@equaleducation.org.za>

