



# WILLIAM LLOYD PS CLASSROOM LIBRARIES LAUNCH

A Milestone in Literacy Development



## **William Lloyd Primary School Classroom Library Launch: A Milestone in Literacy Development**

On October 7, 2024, William Lloyd Primary School in Paarl launched its new Classroom Libraries, a project that has been in the works since 2023. The project, funded by the Retief family, long-time supporters of educational initiatives in Paarl and surrounding areas, aims to foster a love for reading and enhance literacy among learners. While the funding made the project possible, the Principals Academy Trust's (PAT) Teacher Support Programme (TSP) librarians took the lead in training and implementation.

The project was spearheaded by Janet Venter, with Melinda van der Molen bringing it to the point of completion. Both are members of PAT's TSP team, and they have been instrumental in working on the Classroom Libraries initiative in six schools across the Western Cape. Their efforts focus on ensuring that teachers are equipped to manage these libraries and that learners have access to age-appropriate, engaging books.

The PAT Classroom Libraries project spans three years and is designed to transform classrooms into spaces where books are readily accessible. In the first year, libraries are set up with books tailored to the learners' needs, and teachers are trained in effective library management. The second year involves ongoing support to ensure the libraries are being used to their full potential, while the third year aims for teachers to take full ownership of the project, ensuring its long-term sustainability. This model empowers schools to independently manage and expand their resources after the project concludes.

The launch event opened with a welcome from MC Gregg King, followed by a message from Keith Richardson and an introduction to the Classroom Libraries by Bruce Probyn. A poetry performance by learners beautifully highlighted the joy of reading that the initiative seeks to inspire. Carol Retief, representing the Retief family, then spoke about their dedication to education and the transformative impact of providing access to books.

A highlight of the event was a tour of several classrooms now equipped with libraries, led by William Lloyd Primary's principal, Ms. Amanda Adams. Each of the 31 Grade R–7 classrooms now has its library in a vibrant and inviting Reading Corner where the learners can experience the joy of reading, and the impact is already evident. Teachers report a noticeable increase in students' enthusiasm for reading, noting that the presence of books has fostered a calm, engaged atmosphere, with students eagerly picking up books during breaks and showing responsibility in caring for them.

Teachers have also observed increased focus during lessons and excitement around weekly read-aloud sessions, which have become a favourite activity among learners. Those who previously struggled with reading are now motivated by having books at their level, and non-fiction books have sparked curiosity, enriching students' general knowledge. The project has further supported improvements in language skills and inspired creativity in writing.

The event concluded with a vote of thanks from the principal and the PAT team, followed by a joyful musical performance by the William Lloyd Primary School Choir.

The success of the Classroom Libraries initiative at William Lloyd Primary School is a testament to the collaborative efforts of dedicated educators, the support of PAT's TSP team, and the generous funding from the Retief family. Their contribution has opened doors to brighter futures for countless children, not only by bringing books into classrooms but by building a sustainable foundation for literacy development across the Western Cape.