

## NGOs get innovative

Innovation and collaboration are the key words for five registered NGOs as they focus on this year's 16 Days of Activism campaign.



**M**aking an effort to raise awareness around the international 16 Days of Activism for No Violence Against Women and Children Campaign, as well as raise funds for five NGOs fighting for this cause, founder members of the Return to Roots Foundation have opted to focus on 'innovation' and 'collaboration'. Addi Lang and Aubrey Pieterse are co-founders of the Return to Roots Foundation, which focuses on the elimination of violence and abuse especially among women and children. They've teamed up with the following organisations to make a difference: Hughs Haven, Edenvale Community Care Centre, Sebokeng Aids Orphans Centre and Race Against Extinction, and they believe their novel idea to fundraising is a winner for all those involved.

Pieterse says: "We constantly observe that both the public and corporate sector response to charity and fundraising is generally one of overload so we have come up with a way to create a win-win situation where cause-related marketing performs at its best. We've opted for a three-pronged approach that benefits business, the consumer/public and worthy causes. With our current **'ENTER A LUCKY DRAW FOR R30 AND RECEIVE A GIFT VOUCHER VALUED AT R500'** project, the consumer acquires something of value and doesn't just give a hand out, plus there's the feel-good factor as they contribute to the efforts of five registered NGOs."

"It is really very simple," adds Lang. "The company which provides the gift vouchers contribute to the cause, and have an added marketing edge to reach the consumer. The various organisations all have an opportunity to be recognised both through awareness and financially."

Lang says one of her major concerns is that South Africa is listed in

the Guinness Book of World Records as the country with the highest rape statistics in the world. "Clearly, if the rape statistics became lower, we would slow down the HIV and AIDS infection rate," she says. She adds: "The annual 16 Days of Activism Campaign (25 November – 16 December) is in its 20th year, and when South Africa joined the campaign we also added 'no violence to children'. Unfortunately we have a society of men who not only rape women, but also babies and children! We are contributing to a society where the abused becomes the abuser, and the age of perpetrators becomes younger and younger. This is a sure sign that we are not meeting the emotional and psychological needs of our children in their effort to become healthy integrated adults."

Chaya Fenwick of Hughs Haven believes if everyone pulls together with fundraising efforts, they can make a big difference to the beneficiaries. Hughs Haven provides day-care services to 113 children. Sharon Salomon from Race Against Extinction focuses on conservation education, awareness and change for endangered wildlife. She says: "It makes obvious sense that when we learn to treat each other with care and respect, we automatically teach our children to have respect for animals and our planet." Spokesperson for the Edenvale Community Care Centre and Sebokeng Aids Orphans Centre, Rosemary Royepen is overwhelmed with the public response to the fundraiser.

Lang concludes: "We have chosen to incorporate different fields of interest through the five different organisations, but the main objective is exposing our society to the fact that we are all at risk, as one in four women, across the board, are in abusive relationships in South Africa."

Those who would like to take part in the fundraiser can call Addi Lang on 082 559 6702 for further information. The fundraising campaign ends on 25 November 2008. **NU**