

Pick n Pay asap! delivers festive joy to kids in Cape Town

Pick n Pay asap! delivered a burst of holiday joy to over 23 unsuspecting children and their dedicated teacher, Alletta Frans at I Can Academy in Parkwood, Cape Town. The surprise came in the form of "Father Freshmas," who, atop his trusty delivery steed, delivered gifts and a R50,000 donation to upgrade the educare facilities.



Image supplied

The festive celebration was cleverly disguised as an educational delivery, with Pick n Pay using the guise of providing a box of educational materials, books, and stationery from the Pick n Pay School Club.

The I Can Academy, spearheaded by Frans and other volunteers, caters to around 60 children a day within her modest home and with limited funds. Despite limited resources, she also ensures that every child receives a daily meal, sometimes two if food is available.

The unsuspecting children, lured outside by the cheerful tooting of Pick n Pay asap! drivers' bikes, expressed smiles and cheers of happiness as "Father Freshmas" distributed gifts. They were then ushered to a field across the road for a Christmas party. The festive affair was filled with decorations, food and, of course, the excitement of unwrapping presents. The children also received a food hamper valued at R450 to take home to their families for the festive season.

Frans, overwhelmed by the surprise, expressed her gratitude saying the children really enjoyed the surprise, “we (are) going to hear about this every day”.

“Father Freshmas” embodies the spirit of generosity and the joy of giving, says Vincent Viviers, retail executive: omnichannel at Pick n Pay. “We believe in making a difference not only in the lives of our customers but also in the broader community. While our app currently offers up to R30m in presents through discount codes and cash this festive season, we recognise the importance of reaching all communities. That’s why we approached I Can Academy, which deserves this surprise for its impactful community contributions.”

“We are delighted to have brought a magical day to these deserving children, and we hope this experience will be an unforgettable memory for years to come,” adds Viviers.

Community upliftment

Frans, a former teacher at a local primary school, founded I Can Academy in 2015 with a passion for reading and a commitment to improving her community’s future. “Parents would ask me to help their children read as they struggled. I knew something more had to be done as kids went to high school and couldn’t read. Kids laugh at them, so they run outside and bunk class, eventually dropping out. Gangsters are waiting for these kids and draw them in with clothes and money, and soon they have a gun in their hand,” shares Frans.

The school was initially conducted on the grass in the field of the Christmas party for three years before she built a structure off her home on the pavement. “This is not only my home, it is a school. I only have a small room with a mattress.” There is also a small library on the property for the 60-plus children who come to the educate.

“The place is very small. We are not complaining, though. We are grateful we can make a difference for the children and their families in our community.”

Despite limited space, Frans, who also provides a daily feeding scheme and life skills programme for the community, remains focused on making a positive impact. “We don’t ask for anything in return”, she says, and those who know her say she is always giving whatever she has to her community.

I Can Academy is open from 7am until 7pm and she doesn’t ask for money, only juice and toilet paper. “Their parents don’t have work or are on drugs. Some aren’t even staying in their houses, and most live with their grandparents. We don’t worry about money, we want to help the children to better their community. Whatever we have, we give them to help them.”

She adds, “I don’t have a life... they come to me on a Saturday and Sunday. I love it, because if they are not there, I am worried.”

Frans says the R50,000 donation will be used for feeding the community and education. “This is a very big help. We need many things, like a printer for our academy to do our work for the children.” Her next wish is to bring more sport activities to the children, saying it will make a big difference in the community.