

Sumitomo Rubber gives learners a back-to-school boost

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More than 2,900 learners have been given a back-to-school boost after receiving a donation of stationery packs and backpacks from leading tyre manufacturer, Sumitomo Rubber South Africa (SRSA).



Joanne de Freitas, CSI manager of SRSA, said the company secured 2,300 stationery packs and backpacks – one per employee – and invited employees to give these to any child in need.

Additionally, 600 stationery packs and back packs were donated to learners at Limit Hill Combined School and Nikela Primary School in Ladysmith.

Lubin Ozoux, CEO of SRSA, said, “Sumitomo Rubber South Africa has a soft spot for the community of Ladysmith – it’s where we produce one of South Africa’s most loved tyre brands, Dunlop, and work side by side with the communities around our local tyre manufacturing plant. We’re honoured to run a number of projects in Ladysmith, anchored by education as a key pillar of our corporate social investment programme, and aligned with the Sumitomo purpose of creating a future of joy and well-being through innovation.”

Nikela Primary School principal Christine Mabaso said the donated stationery was an unexpected lifesaver.

“Our school, and the community at large, wants to thank Sumitomo for the overwhelming donation of stationery items. They will be distributed among all 913 pupils at our school and arrived at the right time. We were on the verge of asking parents, most of whom are unemployed, to purchase stationery items such as notebooks, for their children. However, when we saw the amount of goods donated, we realised our parents were saved from these costs. We are so thankful, and so pleased at the good quality of the items received. It will help our children learn,” she said.

In 2023, SRSA celebrates the 50th anniversary of its Ladysmith plant, which first opened in 1973. De Freitas said the company had various projects lined up to mark the occasion alongside the local community.

Other recent Education focused initiatives spearheaded by SRSA in Ladysmith have included:

- partnering with menstrual health and education NGO Elle International in 2021 to donate South-African manufactured menstrual cups to 1150 girls at Bhekinthutuko and Steadville high schools in Ladysmith
- partnering with Gift of the Givers to provide running water to Amancamakazana Primary School, where there had been no running water for five years
- donating a classroom and installing new toilets at Bhekinthutuko High School
- donating school shoes to 1670 children in and around Ladysmith for the 2020 school year
- providing tutoring to grade 11 and 12 learners in mathematics and science
- hosting career guidance days, and
- bringing in teams of staff from across the country to share their education and career journeys and encourage learners to stay in school and strive for success.

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