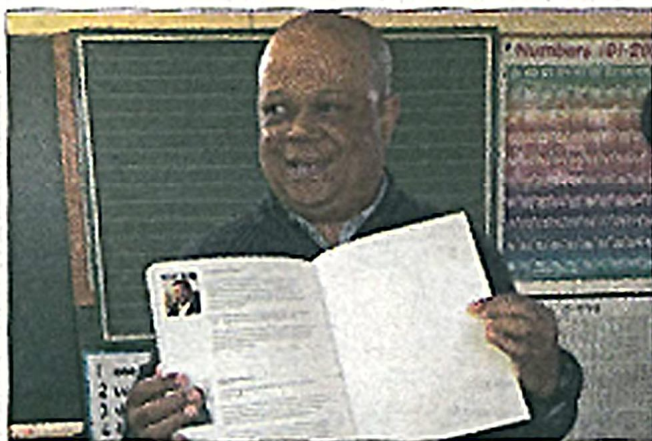


■ Kevin Wildschut, from Athlone, a volunteer reader from Taurus School Solutions, a team of experienced, highly-skilled education specialists.



■ Right: Read to Rise volunteers Roscoe Williams, programme manager; Junita Williams, Nicholas Williams, readers; Taryn Lock, programme director; and Aaron Tejada, marketing assistant.



From previous page

He heads Doing Great Things, a community organisation which celebrates and supports organisations and individuals doing great things for others in their communities; and is the founder of Taurus School Solutions, a team of experienced, highly-skilled education specialists, who support this programme.

Mr Williams, who knows first-hand the dangers of being young without purpose or opportunity in gang-controlled communities, made the break by going abroad – to Boston and London – as a partner in a global financial services strategy practice and returned to South Africa to set up Taurus School Solutions, to help improve the schools in the Cape Flats, especially Mitchell's Plain, where he grew up.

"As the name (Read to Rise) indicates, we firmly believe that we have to read in order to rise in our personal development and contribution to society," he said.

The Plainsman met with Read to Rise programme manager Roscoe Williams; readers Junita and

Nicholas Williams; programme director Taryn Lock; marketing assistant Aaron Tejada; and Kevin Wildschut, a volunteer reader from Taurus School Solutions, who read to pupils at Mitchell's Plain Primary School, in Westridge.

Qualified adult volunteers visit the school, read to pupils and have group discussions about the book.

The book is teacher-approved for this age group and was illustrated by Ms Lock, who is Mr Williams' wife.

It is brightly illustrated and conveys a simple message about finding one's purpose.

It explains Oaky's development from an acorn to an oak tree.

Grade 3 pupil Jude Leukes, from Mitchell's Plain Primary School, said it was just like a person growing from being a baby to being an adult.

"It is about growing up to be big and strong," he said.

Mr Wildschut said children need love, attention, a good education, and great teachers and should attend church and mosque to develop good values and morals.

"Reach for those dreams and strive towards the sun," he said.

Ms Lock said it is a message which children and adults alike, can benefit from.

The pupils were surprised to realise that members of the Read to Rise team had attended the school, former and current Mitchell's Plain residents.

Ms Lock said their short-term goal was to give 2 000 pupils a high quality book by the end of

the year. Ms Williams said it was amazing to see pupils' faces light up when they are read to.

"It is gives a personal touch, and speaks to the figment of their imagination," she said.

Nicholas Williams said it was important to tell pupils that they are from Mitchell's Plain and that books open doors to everything.

"We are hoping that the read-

ing has a ripple effect on friends and family, one school at a time," he said.

This is a pilot project and Read to Rise hopes to reach more Mitchell's Plain pupils next year.

Anyone keen on sponsoring books, volunteering to read or who would like more information can send an email to taryn@doinggreatthings.co.za