

EDUCATION

Getting lost in pages of a book

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Literacy should start at home. This is why a local organisation has targeted primary schools in Mitchell's Plain.

Their mission: to get children literate from the foundation phase.

Starting with the Grade 2 pupils Read to Rise plans to visit all 42 schools in the area to promote reading.

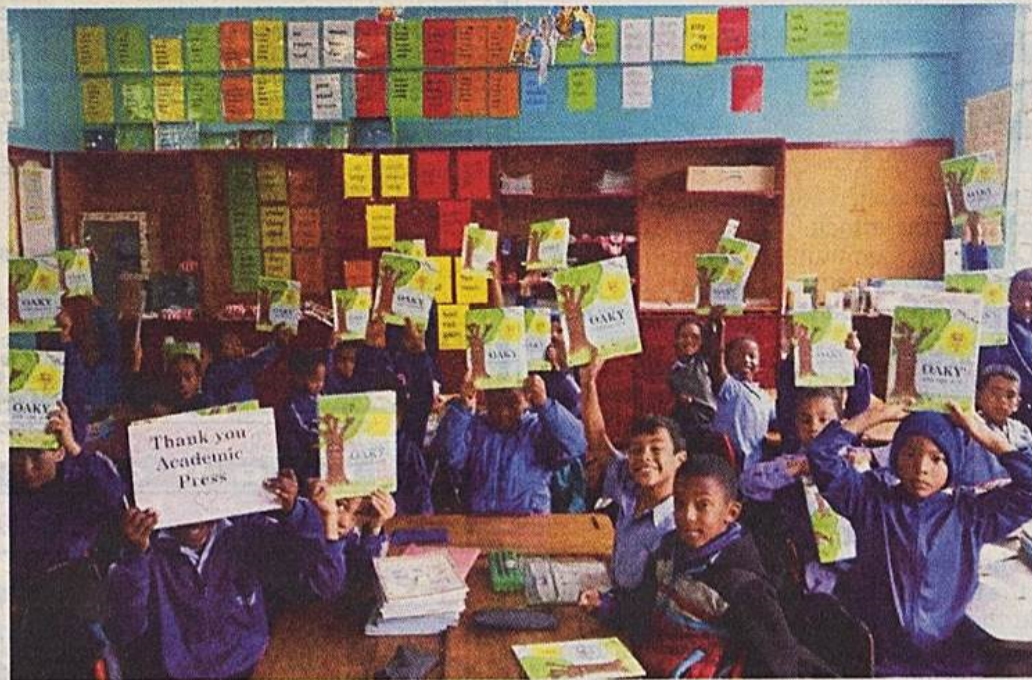
Armed with *Oaky and the Sun* by Mitchell's Plain author Athol Williams, the team venture to schools to relay a hidden message.

Business manager Roscoe Williams says the project is still in the early stages but has already grown.

"We started Read to Rise only a year ago and initially we funded the books on our own. Since then corporates have seen our work and asked to get involved. We aim to inspire and motivate the children from a young age and that will pave the way forward," he says.

Each book is sold for R45, but through the initiative every pupil receives a copy to take home.

"It is humbling when we see the children's faces light up. Many children have never owned a book or have access to good



LESSON: As part of the literacy programme Read to Rise, in association with Academic Press, gave each Grade 2 pupil a copy of *Oaky and the Sun*.

PHOTO: SUPPLIED

quality, age-appropriate books and this is what we are trying to tackle," he says.

To date the organisation has visited 80 classrooms and sponsored a total of 4 055

books. Williams says the organisation doesn't just drop off the books.

"We arrange for volunteer readers to visit the classes and spend about 30 minutes

interacting with the children using the book which inspires children to read. We also make the group read together and by this we can assess the level of need," he says.

Joan Phillips, a parent, says she didn't understand the value of a book until now.

"The day my child came home with one of these books I was curious about it because he was so excited. He asked me to read to him, which was something new," she says.

"What came as the biggest shock was when I finished the story he asked me questions and then explained the story to me in detail. I didn't realise a book could bring so much joy to a child."

A future project will include a mix of English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa books.

Already support from former Mitchell's Plain residents have been pouring in.

"Many residents who have become successful have moved out of the area and we see many of them wanting to give back but don't know how. By donating books and volunteering we are providing residents with the platform to do so," he says.

If you would like to become a volunteer, make a donation or learn more email programme director Taryn Lock at taryn@readtorise.co.za or visit their website on www.readtorise.co.za.