

Connections

Planner + Supplier Success Story

WHO:
Stephanie Harris,
World Events



Dan Ntsala, Sun
City Resorts
Hilton Hotels

EVENT:
2006 Centenary
Conference for Norgine
Pharmaceuticals
Sun City, South Africa
September 2006

When Stephanie Harris of World Events suggested that her attendees visit village Mabele-A-Podi, South Africa, and make and lay bricks, dig trenches and mix cement as part of a program to build homes for HIV-affected families, Dan Ntsala of Sun City hotels thought she was off her rocker.

"Honestly? I didn't think she knew what she was talking about," Ntsala conceded. He also admits how wrong he was.

Harris planned the 2006 centenary conference for U.K.-based Norgine Pharmaceuticals, which has offices in Europe, Australia and South Africa. Looking for a central location that offers extensive social responsibility opportunities, World Events chose the Sun City resort community—which has a substantive internal CSR program. The resort provides access to doctors, builds schools and gives houses to those nearby affected by HIV.

During the site inspection, Ntsala suggested that the 350 attendees fundraise for the resort's housing program. Each home costs approximately £6,000. But Harris—urged on by Norgine leaders—wanted more. Her attendees would not provide passive assistance. Each of Norgine's four business units would fi-


nance a Mabele-A-Podi house and then help build it. (The U.K. office raised enough for two homes.)

Harris divided conference attendees into two groups, each spending a day on-site at the village "mucking in." There were people, she said, who could not do enough, working to exhaustion and beyond.

"It was extremely emotional," Harris recalled. "At the end of the conference there was this massive vibe of positive energy and a desire to continue helping. We knew there was more we could do to have a truly lasting effect."

As part of the closing session, Norgine's chairman announced that he would accept any currency type and donate it to the village housing program. Spontaneous giving amounted to another £8,000. Upon checkout attendees left T-shirts, hats, cosmetics and shoes. All went through hotel



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laundry and then to the residents of Mabele-A-Podi. Post-conference, the company's regional offices opted to keep the charity going.

"Norgine left a legacy of encouragement for other corporate groups," said Ntsala, who acts as the corporate affairs manager for Sun City. "It was amazing.

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Following the conference, more than 50 sacks of clothes, toiletries and stationery were distributed to the township, and the village has now become Norgine's official charity. Earlier this year, the centenary conference earned the IMEX Commitment to the Community Award. Meanwhile, Sun City has organized and financed 27 houses for HIV-affected families. In July, a corporate group signed up for an additional four. —JESSIE STATES

Plus Point

The Mokondoleles died several years ago of HIV-AIDS, leaving five children with grandmother Salome Mokondolele, who cares for the whole family on £70 of government funds per month. They have a new house thanks to Norgine.