

## NEWS FROM:

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**10 May 2010**

## **UCT architecture students put cheer into chairs for homeless kids**

**Specially designed furniture to be donated to The Homestead Project for Street Children:**

**The Bridge at Elukhuselweni, E613, Silunko Street, Khayelitsha, on Monday, 10 May 2010 at 15h00**

UCT second-year architecture students will be handing in their assignments to a special team of examiners on Monday: the boys who live at The Bridge at Elukhuselweni, a children's home run by The Homestead Project for Street Children, will be trying out the 15 chairs that were designed for their TV lounge as part of the UCT School of Architecture programme.

Second-year students are normally required to design and manufacture a piece of furniture as part of their Studiowork design course. "Last year the class decided to bring an element of reality to the project as well as create an opportunity to give back to the community," said project co-ordinator Anya van der Merwe Miszewski, who is a part-time architecture professor at UCT. Social development is one of the values UCT seeks to instil in all its students, and faculties are encouraged to design coursework around ways that students can contribute to a community's welfare.

Jenny Sorrel, a part-time Studiomaster, contacted The Homestead Project for Street Children in Khayelitsha, with an offer to create useful, yet inspiring, furniture items to be donated to the project's hostel for children. Sandra Morreira, the head of The Homestead Project, consulted with Sorrel and together they decided on chairs for the children's TV lounge as a project. The UCT students were given a brief to design chairs that would also have a fun built-in "game" element. "The object must be imaginative and evocative in form while sturdy, safe and stable in use," said their brief. "You are also required to provide the game/useful object that is to be stored in the chair (e.g. if the chair doubles as a place to play chess, you are to provide the chess set and a place to store it within the chair, or magazines/books if it is to also have a reading theme)."

The students made the furniture themselves, in the School of Architecture workshop, under the supervision and guidance of the workshop staff. The budget for each chair, including the game or toys it would contain, was R250. "The TV lounge is quite small so we haven't made a chair for each boy," said Miszewski. "The idea was to create furniture not just for watching TV but for playing and being creative."

The Bridge at Elukhuselweni Children's Home houses about 55 boys aged six to 18 years who have been rescued from a life on the streets of Cape Town. The children have few belongings of their own and part of the brief followed by the UCT students was to create chairs that would enable the boys "to assert their individuality".

**Caption for attached photo:** One of the chairs created for The Homestead Project for Street Children in Khayelitsha, by second-year students in the UCT School of Architecture Studiowork design course. Traditional African instruments are stored under the seat of the chair.

For a map to the venue, please phone The Homestead Project at 021 419 9763.

***ENDS***

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