

Christmas gifts for 1 300 children



SANTA'S HELPERS: Volunteers from Varsity College's VC Cares group (from left) Aftan Bailey and Emma Hartsiefel help Kim Keen collect boxes for the Santa Shoebox Project. Picture: Bobbi Sands

Bobbi Sands
MORE than 1 300 children from different facilities in the city will receive a gift for Christmas thanks to the Santa Shoebox project.

The project was started five years ago in Cape Town and thanks to Kim Keen, the Port Elizabeth project co-ordinator, the project was brought to the Bay this year.

"I am completely bowled over. I never imagined that so many people would respond to the project," said Keen.

With more than 20 volunteers assisting almost all of the boxes were handed in at the Caritas centre in Newton Park.

"We weren't too sure how well the project would be received and thought to start with a small amount of just over 300," said Keen.

"But when we went online at the beginning of September the boxes were all scooped up within the first week."

Keen said she was not sure, with the recession, if people would still open up their

hearts but said they did and she was over the moon.

Each box's contents are very specific and needs to con-

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"People have been great. I always knew Port Elizabethans had big hearts."

Each box will be handed out at the various facilities during November and December.

"We are hoping to get a few PE celebs onboard to help hand out these gifts and make the occasion that much more special for these children. In many cases this will be the only gift they will receive this Christmas."

In addition to the boxes collected in Port Elizabeth, East London collected 60 and Jeffreys Bay 70.

Keen said she is extremely excited about the initiative and the response she received and hopes next year they can provide more joy to the underprivileged children of Port Elizabeth.

tain toothpaste and tooth brush, a bar of soap and face-cloth, an item of clothing, an educational supply, sweets and a toy.

"All the boxes will then be checked manually to ensure each box contains these items and where there is a shortfall we will add with all the wonderful donations that people have given us."

Keen said someone dropped off three boxes of toothpaste and brushes.



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