

Amaoti kitchen is answer to prayer

REPRESENTATIVES from a disparate group of business and educational organisations gathered at Amaoti 3 Combined School to celebrate the opening of a new kitchen facility recently.

This is the culmination of months of co-operation.

In February this year, Jonathan Erskine, a South African who had recently returned home after 20 years in the United Kingdom, was given a tour of Indlela's activities, both in Durban North and Amaoti.

He was deeply moved by the brave determination of a group of 'gogos' who, as part of a department of Education Feeding Scheme, were tasked with providing meals for the 900 children at Amaoti 3 Combined School.

Catering on this scale would be a challenge under the best conditions but these women were arriving at the school at 5am to cook in a 'wendy hut' using a gas

burner with several malfunctioning plates.

When asked what they would like to help they replied: "If we had one more pot we would not have to wait for the chicken to be cooked before boiling the rice."

Jonathan left the school committed to providing these women with a new kitchen. But how? There was neither the space nor the funds to build a new kitchen at Amaoti 3 School.

What followed is an amazing story of how one man's purposeful prayer inspired others to join him and how together they achieved more than he imagined possible.

The school's parking area was a long narrow strip that caused continual inconvenience to the teachers and disruptions to their classes. It was decided the first step must be to cut back the bank and build a retaining wall, thereby making space for a new kitchen and an improved parking area.

One by one the pieces of the puzzle began to fall into place. A young draughtsman who had attended Amaoti 3 School some years before did the drawings and engineers from SIVEST assisted and approved the plans. An amount of R29 000 was donated by Varsity College Golf Day from their Golf Day and Jonathan's team at IPC Coal and Cement provided the supervision, cement and funds to complete the building works.

The final piece of the puzzle was a container, custom-fitted as a kitchen, supplied by Grindrod Corporate.

At the official opening of the new Amaoti 3 kitchen, the choir led the school in a song of gratitude before principal, Gugu Maphamula, presented each of the donors with an award. In a special vote of thanks to Indlela, which has partnered with the school for the past five years, she said: "Together we are making great progress."

