



■ **Left:** Founder of Steps, Karen Moss, left, and Micklefield School pupils Jemima McQueen and Aalia Jawoodeen welcoming Nompikhe Motisi, whose son, Okwam, gets club-foot treatment at Maitland Cottage Children's Orthopaedic Hospital.



■ **Right:** Doctors and physiotherapists performing their weekly club-foot treatment at the hospital while medical students watch.

Girls raise funds for clubfoot NGO

WESLEYFORD

Two girls from Micklefield School in Rondebosch have started a campaign to raise money to help children born with clubfoot deformities.

Grade 6 pupils Jemima McQueen and Aalia Jawoodeen started the drive in February and hope to donate the proceeds to Steps – a non-profit helping children with clubfoot – in October.

The two girls visited Maitland Cottage Children's Orthopaedic Hospital in Newlands last Friday May 31, ahead of World Clubfoot day on June 3, to meet parents who take their children for weekly treatment and the doctors and physiotherapists who help the children.

Clubfoot is when a baby is born with either one or both feet twisted downward and inwards in a firm position.

Jemima, 11, was born with clubfoot. She had treatment as a baby and now walks normally and plays hockey and tennis.

Jemima's mother, Bronwyn Cox, said she had been passionate about helping Steps when Jemima was small and she found it rewarding that her daughter now wanted to give back.

"For Jemima to help raise funds, even if it is R10 000 and give it to a clinic like this through Steps

is fabulous. She will actually be changing a child's life," she said.

Jemima and Aalia have been running bake sales and selling crafts for children to raise funds to help at least two babies.

Aalia said they also wanted to collect clothes for the babies coming for treatment.

Jemima said she wanted to teach people that clubfoot was treatable.

Karen Moss, the founder of Steps, said the two pupils had inspired her.

"Jemima, who has previously undergone clubfoot treatment through the Ponseti method, is a kind and gentle girl. She wants more people to know about clubfoot for her school project and to raise money for other babies who perhaps do not have the same backing that she had," she said.

Steps was founded in 2005 after Ms Moss took her son, Alex, to the American state of Iowa to get clubfoot treatment done by Dr Ignacio Ponseti, from whom the now globally known Ponseti method takes its name. The method uses a manipulative technique to correct clubfoot without invasive surgery.

Since she returned, Ms Moss has made it her mission to ensure that most clinics have staff trained in the Ponseti method.

Her organisation works with 29 clinics and hospitals in South



■ Jemima McQueen and Aalia Jawoodeen meet hospital staff, Zara Marthinus, head of department in physiotherapy, and Dr Stewart Dix-Peek, head of the paediatric orthopaedic unit.

Africa, including two in Cape Town – Maitland Cottage and Tygerberg hospitals.

Among other things, Steps trains health-care workers in the Ponseti method; educates the public about clubfoot and its treatment; and provides clubfoot braces.

According to Zara Marthinus, head of department in physiotherapy at Maitland Cottage Hospital, they treat about 30 children a

week, ranging from five-day-old babies to 16-year-olds.

"Clubfoot resolves very quickly. When we change the plaster cast on the children on a weekly basis, we can see miraculous changes on the feet.

"When the parents see that we are happy with the feet, they trust our feelings, and they always come back for weekly treatment," she said.

Dr Stewart Dix-Peek, head of the paediatric orthopaedic unit for Maitland and Red Cross hospitals performs the Ponseti method when he treats his young patients.

"It's a method we use in order to correct the clubfeet towards a functional foot," he said.

Under the Ponseti method, the patient's foot receives weekly physiotherapy during a "correction phase" to position the foot into the correct position.

"The child undergoes the correction phase for four to eight weeks before the "maintenance phase", where the child wears the clubfoot brace – boots connected to a horizontal bar. The brace holds the children's feet in the correct position and provides stability. They wear it for up to three months.

Nompikhe Motisi, from Gugulethu, takes her four-month-old son, Okwam, to the hospital every Friday for treatment. Okwam wears the clubfoot brace for 23 hours a day to provide stability in his feet.

Visit www.steps.org.za or email karen@steps.org.za to find out more about Steps.



Call Now (010) 271-2389

or SMS US 4538 and we'll call you

With an AVBOB Policy you qualify for a Free basic funeral to the value of R10 000 Plus addition benefits.

LIL1112844



Robert Hall Optometrist
Shop 6, Dean Street Arcade, Newlands
Tel: 0216892938/7987
Email: roberthalloptom@absamail.co.za