

Grand opening for Westlake Primary

KAREN WATKINS

Westlake Primary School may only have opened four months ago but much has been achieved since then ("Westlake school finally opens its doors", Bulletin, April 11). The grand opening ceremony was held in the hall, its walls richly decorated with artworks, on Friday August 26.

The school choir sang the national anthem and presented the school creed and song after which Arthur Kithiele welcomed everyone. He said the opening was the realisation of a dream after the community formed the task team 10 years ago. He thanked the Ackerman Family Trust for providing the seed funds and Education MEC Donald Grant for speeding up the process. "You delivered on your first promise of providing a bus, and now this," he said to loud

applause.

In attendance were Mr Grant, his wife Cheryl, ward councillor Denis Joseph, the Western Cape Education Department's director for Metropole South Eugene Daniels, representatives from the American Consulate, principals from surrounding schools, members of the Westlake community and various members of the Ackerman Family Trust including Raymond and Wendy Ackerman.

MC for the event was David Millar, principal of Norman Henshilwood School who has had a close association with the acting principal of Westlake Primary School, Landie Diamond.

Jonathan Ackerman spoke on behalf of Suzanne Ackerman, who has been a physical presence in Westlake Village and a driving force in making the dream of a primary school a reality. "After driving to Reddam every day

knowing there was no school, we couldn't live with that," said Mr Ackerman.

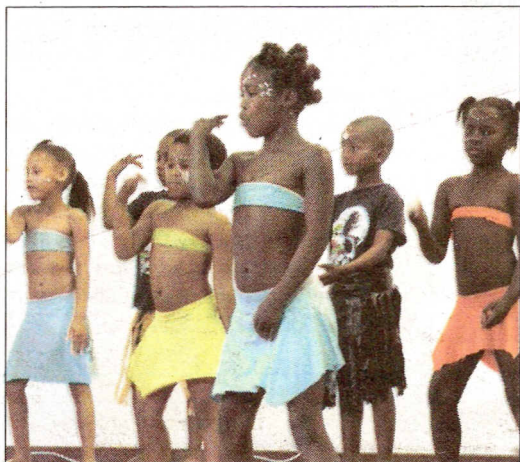
He gave special thanks to Mr "Delivery" Grant and to the chairman of Westlake United Church Trust (WUCT) James McGregor for his guidance in the beginning. He also thanked Reddam Schools who have twinned with Westlake Primary.

Patrick Heyns, chairman of Westlake Residents' Association, appealed to the community to give 20 minutes of their time to reach out and help the teachers. He also appealed to them to watch over the school, which is presently being done by Kirstenhof police. Colonel June Cilliers, who attended the ceremony, later said that she plans to re-instate the Westlake Crime Watch.

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■ Samantha Ackerman with, from left, back Thanda Goqo, Patricia Mohamed, Precious Ngamlana, Taylor Ngcaku, Sandiswa Nogamtsho and Anathi Dlula. Yonela Mdaka and Chunia Mayambela are in front.



■ Some of the dancers include Whitney Isaacs, Lihleli Silevu partially obscured, Sisipho Vanta, Michaela Tamgo, Gift Sikoti, and Michelle Madedo.

“The school is not just about bricks and mortar”

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Mr Heyns also appealed to pupils to “dream big” – the school motto – and work hard and complete their education.

After the ceremony and ribbon cutting, Samantha Ackerman explained the symbolism of the school badge to the Bulletin. It was created by her friend Susan Stewart and painted by another friend, Tiziana Giardini.

The adult and baby elephant are seen under the Elephant’s Eye on the Constantiaberg. They express the family bonds of these creatures in the animal kingdom and how the adults nurture and protect their young. Also how the big, powerful adults represent the teachers while the young elephants are taught to dream big. The outer circle represents the sun and being under the blue African sky. Also in the badge is the Western leopard toad, because it occurs in the area.

In his speech Mr Grant said a school is not just about bricks and mortar. He said on entering the school his wife had commented on the touches of colour – the green doors and windows with splashes of yellow. “The care that has gone into the building creating a safe and secure learning environment for the children of Westlake,” said Mr Grant.

He thanked the Ackerman family, Mr Joseph, WUCT and the task team for their teamwork and determination in making the school happen. “This is an example of how the private sector and the community can work with the government,” said Mr Grant.

“I’m looking forward to coming back early next year and interested to see how the school performs.”

Mr Grant said there is a need for more maths and science graduates and this is where it starts, in the first phase.