

My Walk initiative turns recycled medical waste into school shoes

Developed in partnership with Netcare and Adcock Ingram Critical Care, and supported by various South African corporate investors, the My Walk initiative provides learners with brand new, 100% recycled and recyclable school shoes.



Non-hazardous medical waste, including drip bags and tubing that were safely collected and sanitised from participating Netcare hospitals in Gauteng, is used to manufacture the shoes, creating a positive environmental and social impact.

“At the end of the day, if we get these shoes into more schools and on to the feet of more deserving learners across the country, we are not only making a difference by giving the gift of dignity to young people who deserve it, but also because it is a human need and right for them to have school shoes. No child should go to school without school shoes. We are also cutting down on landfill waste and carbon emissions resulting from unethical use of resources in the manufacturing process,” says Delanie Bezuidenhout, general manager at My Walk.

In the short time it has been in existence, the initiative has reduced healthcare waste to landfill by over 59,427kgs. For each ton of PVC material recycled and re-purposed to make these school shoes, some 1.5 tonnes of greenhouse gasses are prevented from entering the atmosphere.

Vuma helps expand reach

Over 80,000 pairs of shoes have been donated to date – just under two years since it was started. My Walk has also recently joined forces with fibre provider, Vuma, to expand its efforts and get even more school shoes to learners in need.

“It’s a privilege to be able to partner with the My Walk initiative to provide children in need with free school shoes. In line



with our overarching goal of uplifting the education sector through connectivity access, we are passionate about assisting and supporting our youth through our other social initiatives, in ways that move the needle and meet their needs in a sustainable way too,” says Taylor Kwong, marketing and CSI manager at Vuma.

With Vuma’s assistance, My Walk will be able to provide 1,200 learners from 12 different schools across South Africa with a pair of extremely durable, waterproof and recyclable pair of school shoes.

Vuma teams have been on the ground from 18 April in the Northern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape and Tshwane regions and will be delivering shoes to schools, including Sasolburg High School, Potchefstroom Central School, Margaret Gwele Primary School, Bovet Primary School and Bellville Primary School, among others.

“Many of the children will have probably never owned a new pair of school shoes that’s just theirs. It’s both heart-warming and heart-breaking to watch them receive this brand new and beautiful pair of shoes, and to see them even treasure the box the shoes comes in,” says Bezuidenhout.



Job creation

She adds that the initiative has also created 16 new job opportunities since inception. “Our factory is run by various entrepreneurs who we support. The organisation that collects the medical waste items to be recycled from the hospitals, for example, is a 100% black female-owned enterprise, and they have been able to able to expand their business in the process.”

My Walk currently has large volumes of school shoes in stock, waiting for generous donors such as Vuma, to buy, collect and distribute to learners who need them. For more information, those interested can contact Delanie Bezuidenhout directly at delanie.bezuidenhout@adcock.com.

My Walk is a registered public benefit organisation (PBO) and can provide sponsors with an 18A certificate.