

Visit Oliver's House

Melissa Hart

Oliver's House was established in May 2001 by a few like-minded individuals to cater to the needs of the less privileged in Benoni and its surrounding areas.

The organisation has many projects to help the needy, the most impressive of which will be its education centre and vegetable tunnel farming.

The Education Centre will be situated at 48 Elston Avenue and it is hoped it will open in January, next year.

"Its aim is to provide extra tuition for matric pupils whose families cannot afford extra school fees," said Mike Williams, public relations officer for Oliver's House.

The students will be drawn from four less privileged schools in the Benoni CBD area and the schools themselves will nominate students.

All education and facilities at the centre will be provided at no cost to the students, the only criteria being the mandatory attendance of all students to Aids awareness classes.

A computer centre is to be established where children will be taught basic computer skills, as well as using it during normal school hours as a training centre for adults requiring basic computer skills needed in the job market.

The vegetable tunnel farming is by far the most ambitious of Oliver's House's projects.

"This project will not only enable us to supply produce for our soup kitchen and care centre but it will also provide some much needed employment and enable us to be more self-sufficient with regards to raising funds for current and future projects," Williams said.

At the moment Oliver's House is running a soup kitchen at 7 Rothsay Street where they feed over 100 people a day.

The soup kitchen employs three people full-time and they serve food between 2pm and 3.30pm Mondays to Fridays.

Over and above the serving of soup, Oliver's House also distributes food hampers, clothing and medicines to the underprivileged.

The organisation is also involved with the Nomthandazo Children's Care Centre based on the grounds of the Mina Nawe Housing Development Project in Putfontein.

This centre is temporarily housed in part of a disused warehouse and sadly lacking even the basic necessities.

Some 23 pre-school children and 16 disabled children aged between two and 16 years are cared for by the staff.

Oliver's House supports the centre by paying rents, salaries for staff and by donating food and clothing for the children.

"In the short time that Oliver's House has been in existence we have had a tremendous response from the private sector at large regarding our aims and objectives," Williams said.



Irene Lekgula hands out soup and bread to hungry people at the soup kitchen in Rothsay Street, one of the projects run by Oliver's House.