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StreetSmart South Africa wins Skål EcoTourism award

STREETSMART SA, a Cape Town-based non-profit organisation, has won the international 2010 Skål EcoTourism Award for uplifting the lives of street children by raising funds in support of social integration and educational programmes through a network of city and winelands restaurants.

The 2010 Skål EcoTourism Award was presented to Margi Biggs, chairperson of StreetSmart SA, at an awards ceremony in Sydney, Australia, as part of the 71st Skål World Congress. Founded in 1934, with more than 25 000 members in 90 countries, Skål is one of the largest organisations of travel and tourism professionals in the world, embracing all sectors of the tourism industry, including hoteliers, travel agents and airlines. Committed to the development of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism, Skål is actively involved in the protection of children from sexual exploitation in

tourism and supports a global initiative to eliminate poverty through sustainable tourism.

StreetSmart SA was launched in Cape Town in 2005 under the patronage of Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu and has since raised more than R3 million towards alleviating the plight of street children. There are currently 76 participating restaurants in this initiative in Cape Town, Franschhoek, Stellenbosch, Paarl and Somerset West. The current StreetSmart beneficiaries are Learn to Live, Ons Plek and The Homestead in Cape Town, YEA-Youth Empowerment Action in Franschhoek, and Home from Home in Stellenbosch.

"I am thrilled for us to have received this recognition for StreetSmart SA. This helps us to get our message to so many more around the world. Please do not give children money or food on the streets as this keeps them where they are. Rather give to organisations such as

StreetSmart SA, which makes sure agencies are able to help these children in a real way," said Biggs after receiving the award prize.

Participating StreetSmart restaurants raise funds by adding a R5 donation to each table's bill. This donation is voluntary and diners have the option to donate more if they wish. All funds raised through restaurants go to the StreetSmart beneficiaries, who use the funds for education, skills training and family reunification programmes, helping street children to live a viable life in society.

This year funds donated in Cape Town and the winelands have increased by 60 percent.

Restaurants wishing to participate can see www.streetssmartsa.org.za. For more information or to make a donation, contact StreetSmart on 021 418 0621, e-mail streetssmart@eqweb.co.za or visit www.streetssmartsa.org.za



RECOGNITION: Margi Biggs (StreetSmart) and Nik Racic (Skål International).