



facilities

New organic jungle gym

For the Grade R learners of Christel House, an independent school for disadvantaged children in Ottery Cape Town, playtime has just become a lot more interesting. The school recently received a brand new jungle gym, unlike any other and its fascinating architecture combines both fun and essential learning in a safe way.

A company called Dream Weavers developed the organically built jungle gym, which learners look forward to playing on during every interval. Owner of the company, Jay Dreamweaver, said that his jungle gyms are made to be a magical place for children to climb, play and daydream, free of harsh poisons.

"Jungle gyms, particularly in South Africa, make use of CCA treated timber. The CCA stands for Chromium, Copper chloride plus Arsenic – these are all quite toxic chemicals," said Dreamweaver. He added that his jungle gyms are built using organic wood and is coated using only natural oils, making it a much safer alternative.

But what makes Dream Weaver jungle gyms even more special is the fact that it has a very unconventional design.

Dreamweaver commented that most jungle gyms are built using straight lines, which doesn't require a child to think much about how to get from point A to point B.

"Our jungle gyms are designed more like a huge tree – with branches in all directions. This really gets the child exercising their hand-eye coordination, gets them thinking faster and improves their problem-solving skills," he said.

Dreamweaver said that with this jungle gym children are also able to touch, feel and navigate their way around and this develops their gripping and climbing skills, which in turn develops their fine and gross motor skills.

Teachers of Christel House are just as excited by the jungle gym as the learners, they agree that it is exactly the kind of playing equipment ideally suited for Christel

House since the school is big on unconventional methods of teaching and learning.

They are thus very grateful to Kerry Oelz, daughter of well-known philanthropists Ernest and Bendalyn Stemple, for sponsoring the jungle gym for the school.

The Ernest and Bendalyn Stemple Foundation have for many years been making a significant contribution to charities in South Africa, specifically focusing on children's and education organisations.



According to Oelz, she came across Christel House while on a search to find a school that was doing something different and which operated only on donations. During her visit to the school and learning about the schools unique approach to education, she was convinced that her donations were going to a worthy cause.

"This school does so much for underprivileged children. They provide them with holistic learning, feed and nurture them and at the end of the day make a real difference in improving their lives and futures. I am so happy that I could do my bit for the Grade Rs who are now starting their Christel House journeys," she said.

Oelz plans to be involved with the school for years to come; she said her contribution is small change compared to the real difference Christel House is making for future generations of children. ●