

Press Release

26 March 2009

US Senate legislates support for Niall Mellon Township Trust

Today, Thursday March 26th 2009 The Niall Mellon Township Trust was delighted to welcome the Premier of the Western Cape, Lynne Brown, Dr. Alberta Mayberry, US Consul General of the USA, Mayor of Drakenstein, Charmain Manuel and Irish Ambassador to South Africa, Colin Wrafter. During this the seventh Niall Mellon Township Trust Building Blitz where 500 Irish Volunteers have come to build 75 houses in Mbekweni in Paarl, Niall Mellon Founder of the Niall Mellon Township Trust used the occasion to make a major announcement for the charity. Niall Mellon said: "The US Senate last week passed legislation directing USAID to consider the Niall Mellon Township Trust for funding. In a major coup for the charity, it was singled out in an important Appropriations Bill which was passed by the US Senate. The charity has captured the heart of Capetonians over the last seven years and this legislation will help to further improve the quality of social housing and allow for increased delivery."

USAID was told to "consider" the Niall Mellon Township Trust for grant programs. The legislation states:

USAID should expand efforts, to improve housing opportunities in urban settings. USAID should also consider the work of the Niall Mellon Township Trust.

Department of State, Foreign Operations, And Related Programmes Appropriations Act, 2009.

Speaking on the announcement at a press conference on site at the Charity's latest Building Blitz Niall Mellon said: "I was in Cape Town the evening the news came through that President Obama was elected. I watched Cape Town celebrate that historic moment and I am really proud that legislation has now been passed in the US Senate urging USAID to consider us for funding. This is an important message to all people living in shacks that the USA cares deeply about their plight".

Speaking on the success of the charity's latest Building Blitz, Dominic Loughran, Operations Director of the Niall Mellon Township Trust stated: "This was the seventh annual Building Blitz for Niall Mellon Township Trust but was the first trip for the charity where female volunteers outnumbered male volunteers. 300 of the 500 Volunteers were women and boy did they take to construction, they were painting walls and tiling roofs, working side by side with our native South African artisans. There was great camaraderie and more importantly great productivity. Most South Africans want to see the end of shacks and are beginning to volunteer to help the charity achieve its target. In 2008, 1,200 South Africans volunteered on one day mini blitzes and the charity hopes that this number will increase to 2,000 by the end of the year."

Lynne Brown, Premier of the Western Cape, who was present on site to visit the Volunteers, commented "last December, I met the 2,000 Irish Volunteers who worked so hard in Khayelitsha and I

am delighted now to see the Irish Volunteers return so soon. I am particularly pleased to see the number of women on this trip and let's face it when the going gets tough the women are always called in! I am also delighted to see the number of South Africans who are joining this project. By all of us playing our part we can solve this housing crisis."

Since 2007 two senior delegations from Congress have visited South Africa as part of an ongoing appraisal of the work of the Niall Mellon Township Trust which led to the major announcement last week by the US Senate.

Niall Mellon commented, "America has a deep rooted sense of philanthropy. I have made several trips to the US over the past two years seeking support and I have been hugely impressed by the warmth of leading US Politicians to South Africa. We will be meeting US Aid shortly to try and advance matters in light of the directive of the Senate. "

The Niall Mellon Township Trust would like to thank the Premier Lynne Brown, the Irish Ambassador Colin Wrafter, Mayor of Drakenstein, Charmain Manuel, The Municipality and the Community leaders in making their seventh Building Blitz in Mbekweni such a success.

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