



Hard hats help fund charity building blitz

IRISH people are being asked to buy mini hard hats today to help fund 6,000 homes for poor people in South Africa. The fundraising is being organised by the Niall Mellon Township Trust which has built 11,000 such homes since 2002. They were built by hundreds of Irish builders and other volunteers who travel to South Africa for a week each year to undertake a 'Building Blitz'.

The leader of the project, Niall Mellon, jokingly issues a health warning: "The miniature hard hats go on your jacket and definitely not on your head!"

He continued: "Yes there is a recession and many families are hurting from reduced incomes but days like this give everyone a lift," he said. "Ireland has always had the capacity to think of other people who are less fortunate than ourselves and giving to charity at this difficult time continues the proud reputation that Ireland enjoys as one of the most generous nations on the planet," he added.

Over the last three months the charity has established 34 volunteer club branches throughout Ireland to help grow the organisation at grass roots level in every county in Ireland. "We hope this branch network will make it possible for a lot of people to join our charity who may not be able to come and work in South Africa but nevertheless can help us in many other ways," he said.

The money raised from 'Hard Hat Day — Homes for Children' will provide families living in shacks in South African townships with a proper, decent home. Almost all people living in shacks have no running water, proper sanitation or electricity.

In the largest civic awards ceremony ever hosted by the City of Cape Town, The Niall Mellon Township Trust was recently awarded the Mayor's Medal for exceptional achievement in the category of Social Affairs and Services. The Niall Mellon Township Trust is the first foreign charity to receive this medal.

The charity is actively seeking volunteers for their next 'Building Blitz' in November 2009, when the charity will bring 1,000 volunteers to South Africa. There are 100 places remaining.