

Teamwork rules

In the April 2005 issue of VECTOR, the lead editorial article told the story of Children of Fire, a home for burnt children. This home, recently bought, had a major problem – its electrical installation was in a shocking state. Practically every rule had been broken: the cabling, the sockets, the luminaires, the distribution boards – all were so bad that a disaster was waiting to happen.

VECTOR's advertising executive, Carrol Beattie, heard about the problem from Mark Palmer of the Gauteng Electrical Inspection Authority (GEIA) at an Institute of Electricians function. Carrol was horrified about the plight of the children. She made sure that everyone heard about the situation, and pushed until people agreed to help.

She asked Lisa Sonnekus of the Electrical Contractors Association to help. Lisa got ECA staff on board and coordinated the project and the repairs. ECA people inspected the site and drew up a list of repairs and materials. This was no small task – it took days. Carrol and Lisa phoned all their contacts in the industry and got them to donate money and materials. Carrol even got EE Publishers to donate money and space in its journals. In VECTOR we issued a challenge to all readers to get involved. Of all the people that were asked, not one said "No". See the article on page 10 of this issue for all those who gave their support.

The electrical contracting industry showed how generous and caring it can be – with action, not just words. In a unique display of solidarity, all sectors of the industry came together. The media (EE Publishers, publishers of VECTOR), contractor members of the ECA, the ECA itself, the GEIA, the suppliers, the Department of Labour, not to mention lawyers and architects, all showed what they were worth. Day after day, section by section, the work progressed. Cables, switchgear, fittings, protection was replaced or installed. Piece by piece, the house became safe for the children and the staff to live in, and to work there.

On 9 June 2005, there was a party for all involved. Gunther Häusler, president of the ECA(SA), spoke of what had been

by Peter Adams - editor



Burn victim Dorah enjoying her bicycle.

achieved. He said the significance of what had happened should not be overlooked. The ECA and the GEIA had laid aside their differences and, for the good of the industry and the public, had worked together to achieve a praiseworthy result. He expressed the wish that this would not be the last occasion where this co-operation was seen, but that it would be the first of many.

This is the message that comes out of this heart warming project. People in the electrical contracting industry need to find ways to mend bridges and work together. For the sake of the industry and the public good, egos must be put aside and differences resolved. Then the image of our profession will improve – see the sensitivities that exist by reading the letter published on page 10 of this issue.

The traditional divisions between the regulatory authorities, accredited inspection authorities (AIAs), the ECA and the Institute of Electricians can be overcome. If all the players make this a top priority, effective and efficient co-operation will become the order of the day, and all will benefit. Δ

COMMENT

No-one said "No"

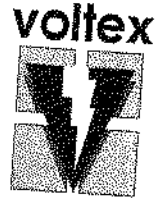
In the April issue of VECTOR, on page 3, we described the plight of a home for burned children called "Children of Fire". Carrol Beattie from EE Publishers and Lisa Sonnekus from the ECA took on the project and made sure it happened. The ECA(SA) and EE Publishers donated cash and issued a challenge to all readers to find a way to help this deserving cause.

What a response! It was overwhelming! Everyone we asked for help said yes. Contractors, suppliers, ECA staff and members, all opened their hearts and gave whatever was needed.



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A big thank you to everyone involved.

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