



25.10.11  
Namibia

Photo: Tanja Bause

### Love at first sight

Marsha Petrus and Indlani Eel are with their teddy bears called Susan and Penny after the women who made them.



Photo: Tanja Bause

MOTHER BEAR ... Amy Berman with some of the teddy bears handed out at the Hevusa Soup Kitchen.

### Huggable teddies comfort children

• TANJA BAUSE

IN 2008 Amy Berman read an article about baby and child rape in South Africa. The article was asking people to donate items of comfort for the victims, and she thought back to her childhood and how a teddy bear had brought her comfort.

She asked her mother to share a knitting pattern which was used in the Second World War to make teddy bears.

"I had to take how to knit but my mother did only showed the pattern with me, she also taught me how to knit," says Berman.

Soon 75 women were gathering at her house to knit teddy bears. Berman's son started calling his Mother Bear and thus the project, which arose after an article was published in

the local newspaper, was called the Mother Bear Project.

"Thousands of women contacted me and asked for the pattern, they then started to knit and send me the finished bears," says Berman.

"Today the project receives thousands of bears from all over the world.

"Last last week we received 150 teddy bears from a woman in Iran."

Each bear has a label with the name of the person who made it, and each has also a big red heart to show that it was made with love.

So far 69 000 teddy bears have been handed out to orphan, vulnerable children and abused children in 19 African countries and in Haiti.

The first label was in Namibia, the Mother Bear Project handed out 40 teddy bears to children at the Hevusa Soup Kitchen.