

Touched by care for children - Paarl Post November 2008

THERE was not a dry eye in the audience when Amado was honoured in a community awards ceremony in Cape Town last week. The emotion was not so much about the first prize, but rather the video made by judges who visited M'Lani Basson's Amado centre where special needs children from Ligstraal School in Paarl do therapeutic horse riding.

When the footage rolled on the big screen at the venue in Cape Town, the audience fell silent. They saw reserved children, hunched in their wheelchairs, carried to a horse's back. And they saw how the same shy children lift their heads, proudly square their little shoulders, laugh with enthusiasm and take the reins in their own, often palsied, hands. That is when the tears started rolling down the cheeks of the audience.

The national Jet Community Awards is hosted annually in recognition to dedication and commitment to communities. Amado took regional honours in the category "We Care", focusing on people with disabilities. The national finals take place on 30 October. "I am always so busy with the children and the horses – talking, playing, exercising – that it was only on the big screen that I actually realised how happy and proud the children are on and around the horses. "I too, could then not fight back the tears," M'Lani said later.