

Lesco in the business of upliftment

By: Busisiwe Dhlamini — staff writer

Lesco is a proudly South African company designing and manufacturing a wide range of electrical products. The company was established 11 years ago by managing director, David Shapiro. "Since the inception of Lesco, a great deal of time has been spent redesigning South African adapters for appliances and cell phones using hollow pin technology. One piece construction switches and sockets with integrated cover and cradle have been introduced, and more recently, the new Pipelli range of switches and sockets," says Shapiro.

The company's switches and sockets are locally produced, making it one of the few companies in the country not importing its manufacturing products, thus earning it the Proudly South African stamp. Lesco is also heavily involved in the upliftment of people with special needs from the Hamlet Foundation, by employing them at the company's two factories, one of which is based in City Deep, and the other in Honey Dew. Lesco supplies raw materials to its factories, and the employees -- whose special needs vary -- assemble the products. The Hamlet Foundation was established in 1954, and the workshops were opened in 1994; before this, the workshop in City Deep was just a home for the individuals with special needs. The company has since received the Hamlet Foundation President's award: "This recognition was a confirmation that our efforts at Lesco were well received and had achieved value for the home and, in particular, for the people staying there." says Shapiro.



The dedicated workers at the City Deep factory are assembling Lesco's products.

placed in a normal environment. Pater and his team also get assistance from the community in ensuring those who live further away arrive at work safely, the rest are transported with private buses. Pater admits it is a complicated workshop, and some of the workers only work when they want to, in which case Pater and his team must practise patience with them. "Nobody is useless here, everybody can do something," says Pater. He also adds, "We don't give them too much sympathy. I won't let them use their disability as a crutch, they can work."