



**GIRLS
& BOYS
TOWN**

Helping youth S.H.I.N.E.® since 1958

Youth TODAY

NOVEMBER 2020

A NEWSLETTER FOR SUPPORTERS OF GIRLS & BOYS TOWN



Creative involvement and performance helps our boys learn that they only really S.H.I.N.E.® when they fully respect girls and women.

Building respect for girls and women



Fittingly, Women's Month this year, August, saw attention focused on fighting against the gender-based violence that is crippling our country... a 'second pandemic'.

So, in line with the spirit of this very topical issue, our staff seized the moment and challenged our youth – girls and boys – to creatively engage in planning and presenting appropriate Women's Day activities. Sensitising our youth now is a powerful way to help change the course of future attitudes towards girls and women. At Girls & Boys Town South Africa, we work at the forefront



The importance of 'self' ...captured in a selfie!

of research aimed at delivering the most effective therapeutic care – but this can be quickly undone if the society into which our youth are ultimately reintroduced remains violent.

We are deeply grateful to all our donors, volunteers, partners, fans, and staff. This collective power allows us to give our girls a chance to see their value and give them tools to make a success for themselves by contributing positively to society. And it helps our boys learn that they only really S.H.I.N.E.® when they fully respect girls and women.



Integrated Biennial Report alert! Got your copy?

Have you received your digital copy of our Biennial Report? This report covers the operations of GBTSA from April 2018 to March 2020. There has been significant change in the scope of information reported in a sincere attempt to communicate our full range of activities to donors, members and stakeholders. Management has prepared and verified the information to ensure an accurate, balanced and comprehensive overview of the organisation. Our independent auditor, BDO, has audited all financial information.

To get your digital copy, please send e-mail mailing@gbtown.org.za and request a copy.



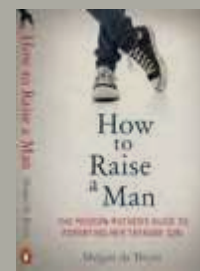
CHRISTMAS AND HOLIDAY OFFER

Author to donate R100 for every book bought

This season, we are genuinely excited to collaborate with Megan de Beyer, author of "How to Raise a Man". Megan is kindly donating R100 to Girls & Boys Town SA for every book bought as her Christmas gift to us. Order her personally signed book directly from her by emailing howtoraiseman@gmail.com. Please include your name and full postal address and it will be posted to you OR order the e-book on amazon.co.uk or amazon.com. Your support will help us to make a difference to a child at Girls & Boys Town SA.

Megan is an author, a psychologist and a modern parent wayfinder. Find her at www.megandebeyer.com

If you are a business, of any magnitude, and would like to consider collaborating your brand with Girls & Boys Town SA in this way, to support the work we do, please feel free to contact us on mailing@gbtown.org.za



Our Vision

Youth, families and communities;
South Africa's strength and future.

Our Mission

Creating opportunities for youth to grow and develop into responsible citizens, able to contribute to family and community life in the spirit of peace, dignity, tolerance, equality and solidarity with others.

Benefits of a bequest to Girls & Boys Town

A bequest in a Will to Girls & Boys Town, a registered 'Public Benefit Organisation' in terms of Section 18A of the Income Tax Act (Act 58 of 1962), is deducted from the value of your estate, which may be subject to estate duty. Your bequest to Girls & Boys Town will consequently be entirely free from estate duty and will reduce the portion of your estate which is subject to estate duty.



**GIRLS
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Helping youth S.H.I.N.E.® since 1958

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(Act 71 of 1997)
Registration No. 009-244 NPO
PBO: 130000379
Registered as a Welfare Organisation
(Act 100 of 1978)



Dear Valued Supporters,

This season has brought the South African public's attention to what President Cyril Ramaphosa called 'the second pandemic': unacceptable and inexcusable violence against women and children. South Africa has some of the most progressive legislation on gender equality, protecting the rights of citizens of all ages and genders. Yet, the war on women and children goes on.

We at Girls & Boys Town stand against gender-based violence and are willing to join hands with organisations and individuals working to stem the onslaught. We celebrate women and girls who are part of our GBT family – our peers across the country and the world.

As our mission is to help heal vulnerable and abused youth, we are also acutely aware of how the 'second pandemic' and the pandemic of COVID-19 intersect.

The coronavirus outbreak has brought myriad changes to our worlds as individuals, families, organisations, societies and nations. It has at the same time entailed both introspection (*what does this mean for me and my safety?*), and unification (*how do we as groups and the globe put a stop to it?*).

Immensely more important than just complying with the Disaster Management Act and various government legislation was to ensure that Girls & Boys Town has an appropriate, holistic youth- and staff-centred response framework that enables us to protect their health and prevent and manage COVID-19 infections within our ten sites.

What has clearly been brought home to us at Girls & Boys Town is that we are a large family of 323 youth and staff – and at the same time we are a workplace that has to abide by all the laws and rules that dictate how organisations, including us NPOs, must function.

For us, the lockdown has been like having to stay with your family and colleagues in your office almost all the time. To manage this while staying safe and healthy and, like the rest of the country, needing to 'tighten our belts' as economic hardship bites deeper, has required extraordinary efforts from the girls and boys in our care, our staff, families, partners and suppliers.

We've made it work – and the resilience built over more than 62 years of the existence of our organisation has helped immensely.

Your strength and commitment to fulfilling our mission – to help vulnerable youth overcome their challenges and shine – has never been more important than at this exceptional time. Thank you for going beyond the call of duty and for contributing to our collective wellbeing.

Please continue to support us in all the ways you are. Stay healthy. Stay connected.

Lee Loynes

LEE LOYNES
Chief Executive Officer



MAKING OUR OWN 'COVID-NORMAL'

We are keeping our chins up by CREATIVELY ADAPTING!

Without doubt, our girls and boys have made incredible efforts – and personal sacrifices – to play their parts in helping everyone at Girls & Boys Town South Africa (GBTSA) stay safe during the current pandemic.

Not seeing their families, not attending school and not socialising with friends has been hard, an anxiety-provoking time for our girls and boys.

Our response has been to focus on retaining as much normality as possible in our daily routines – a quest for continuity that has required staff and youth alike to adapt very creatively. As always, we try to encourage our young people to take ownership by identifying possible solutions for themselves...

- Embracing technology has been key in creating and managing classroom set-ups at all our GBTSA sites. Social distancing requirements often tested our available technologies to their limits, but youth in all of our campuses continued with learning, as we have had to access school learning materials through our learning support centres.

- Apart from school work, we have also used the time to help youth gain more confidence in reading, vocabulary, pronouncing



In spite of natural anxiety, our children's energy and enthusiasm has shone brightly.

words correctly, and learning new languages.

Games like poker and dominoes have been a fun and practical means to augment maths learning – helping them coordinate, work with numbers, and recognise sequencing and patterns.

- The same learning support centres have also been adapted to keeping youth occupied through karaoke, guitar playing and music lessons.
- A key innovation has been the creation of 'safe spaces' on campus where youth can be alone, engage with each other, or with the staff. Continual dialogue helps our counsellors and educators

understand how our youth view the coronavirus as a threat to their own health and wellbeing, and that of others.

- We used flip charts, magazines, drawings, information from the internet and other creative tools to discuss some of the tricky topics – like how to manage relationships during the pandemic, when personal contact is scarce.

Importantly, we have seen how this extraordinary time brings people closer. Ultimately, we are proud of how our children's energy and enthusiasm has shone brightly during this time – and acknowledge that this goes a long way to sustaining many of us adults as well.



Now you can support us through MySchool

You can support Girls & Boys Town through the MySchool programme. If you do not have a MySchool/MyVillage/MyPlanet card yet, simply apply for your free card now and select Girls & Boys Town as your beneficiary. Once you start swiping your card, we will start receiving funds. Every swipe counts! To get your card call the Client Service Centre on 0860 100 445 or email cs@myschool.co.za.

You can find out more at www.myschool.co.za/schools/



Know more about our bequest programme.

In response to enquiries from friends and donors, we have a bequest booklet available on our website, intended to be an easy-to-read guide for anyone who is interested in leaving a bequest to Girls & Boys Town.

By leaving a bequest to Girls & Boys Town, or ceding an endowment or insurance policy to us, you will ensure that we will always be here to keep on helping vulnerable young Girls & Boys for years to come ... empowering them to S.H.I.N.E.*.

For more information on our Bequest programme and/ or to receive a copy of the brochure, please contact Gertrude Wilson on (011) 482 2655 or email her on mailing@gbtown.org.za.



LEARNING THAT **GENEROSITY** IS PRICELESS



Community outreach shows the way...

When children arrive at Girls & Boys Town, they are often intensely and inwardly focused on their own predicament and survival. That's not surprising, given the trauma that many have already experienced in life.

So, learning to value generosity is critical for youth development. We got to work right away to redevelop their sensitivity – showing them how to care not only for themselves but others too. It is why our youth are encouraged to understand that there are always people who are less fortunate than them. This helps them build understanding, empathy and a sense of nurture towards others – part of their path to healing.

This past winter, our Kagiso youth did community outreach, right in the midst of the pandemic, with the help of one of our donors. We were blessed with 150 hot meals which we could share with communities in Krugersdorp, Munzville, and Randfontein.

CULTURAL HeRiTAge

IS WORTH CELEBRATING!

In the build-up to National Heritage Day this year, our Learner Support Centre staff as well as Child and Youth Care Workers got together to encourage the youth to explore why this is important in life. Girls, boys and staff set to work researching their respective cultural histories.

Heritage Day saw the main event unfold with a series of short presentations and creative executions capturing the essence of background, culture, art, and traditions. Youths learned and showed appreciation for aspects of their own cultures that they previously never knew about, sparking interest in part of our weekly programme that deals with arts and culture.

Ultimately, the project was very successful in reinforcing Girls & Boys Town mission:

Striving for all youth to develop and retain their unique cultural heritages so that, upon their disengagement, they will not struggle to fit into their societies of origin.



Human rights and responsibilities in the midst of the COVID-19 Pandemic... that was our challenging theme for our '67 Minutes for Mandela Day' this year. Youth presented various activities from urban dance and poetry, to painting perimeter fencing and parking lines, and gardening. We also invited individuals and organisations nationally to take part through some of our virtual initiatives – helping us bring joy to our youth, keeping them grounded but innovative during these uncertain times.



I was hoping, if possible, can G&BT assist me with my fees in a form of a loan. I will make sure to reimburse the organisation once I get a job – by paying monthly installments.

A LITTLE HELP NOW TO BUILD A BIG FUTURE

One of our alumni, a young lady who was one of our mayors during her time at GBTSA, recently found her study ambitions were about to be put on hold. She had a sudden funding crisis and humbly approached us for help – perhaps as another young adult might look to a parent.

Outstanding academic progress in her Law studies came to a halt with the arrival of Covid-19. She lost the job that was sustaining her ability to pay her fees – no fault of hers. Paying her semester costs would enable her to write the exams and get

her results, but no alternative funding or financial aid from a bursary institution could help.

As we are deeply vested in the futures of our youth after they leave us, we supported and endorsed her request. We are proud to share with you that she has passed two of her four subjects with distinctions. Our counselling team are now also helping her to apply for alternative financial aid. We'll continue to stand beside her, and wish her all the best for her future studies.

Thank you ma'am Lee, Thank you ma'am Karen and Thank you ma'am Koketso. Thank you to the donors and sponsors. Thank you to the GBT Team!

THE GREEN MONSTER

fondly remembered...

HELLO BIG GREEN BUS...

When the big green bus first came to Boys Town, it was a day of great excitement for everyone, including Father Orsmond.

Before the bus was given to the then Boys Town - by Lady Oppenheimer in 1963 - the boys used to stay at the campus during the term and during the holidays. When Lady Oppenheimer gave the land at Munster to Boys

Town, the Green Monster went on its first long journey. When it got to Munster, it was full of boys, and there were no rooms, no kitchen or anything. The boys had to sleep in tents and the famous bus was used as a dining room, kitchen and a recreation room. Boys Town teacher Michael Guittard, who also often drove the famous bus, looks back at some of the fun 'n games provided by The Green Monster...

TROUBLE ON THE ROAD

A trip without a breakdown was a rarity. One of the longest happened early on a cold winter's morning. Some kilometres outside Warden, the whole engine seized up.

We were rescued by the battered old bus of the Warden Laerskool. The whole dorp turned out to inspect the invaders who spread themselves on pavements and lawns in front of the town hall. The local headmaster, a huge man who came striding along to meet us with a tiny delicate chihuahua called Wagter in tow, took the day off school and



Proud still, but faded and battered, The Green Monster was recently towed off to its final resting place. An real 'character' in our history.

SMELLS ON THE BUS

On one trip to Munster, a large number of boiled eggs were accidentally left on the bus after arrival. The bus was left closed up for the entire four-week holiday. When Trevor Wheldon finally opened up to pack for the return journey, he fell out of the bus and vomited. Litres of Jeyes Fluid were used to try and get rid of the smell, but it never quite left. On the long ride home, boys and drivers were nauseous.

entertained our two drivers at the hotel for most of the day. That evening, a hired bus arrived from Durban to take us to Munster where we arrived safely 28 hours after leaving Magaliesburg.

PETS ON THE BUS

Many pets have travelled up and down to Munster on the bus, including Shé who most of the way sprawled himself across the floor under the dashboard with his head on the driver's lap. This made changing the gears extremely difficult. At a night stop, Shé loped off into the veld and it took a search party hours to find him – one boy cutting his foot badly on a broken bottle. Michael Bourletidis took his tamed weaver bird on the bus; during stops, it would fly off into the nearby trees - and fly back when it was time to go.

THE END OF THE ROAD

It was the last of many breakdowns on the trip to and from Munster since 1969. A brake

drum burst in a tremendous explosion at 2am in Volksrust, August 1982, and we careered through a red light in the main street. Flames were licking up the sides of the bus from underneath. When the sun rose, Sean Batemen sat up from his curled position on the floor at the back, and asked if we had arrived at Munster - he had slept through the drama. We had Mischief, the cat, on board and he disappeared; after hours of coaxing and calling, he came out from his hiding in a gutter.

The Green Monster had finally given up the ghost – only saved from complete cremation by Paul Baron who was quick on the draw with a fire extinguisher.



Some of our contemporary boys say goodbye to the old bus, unaware of the thousands of memories that were leaving with it.

THREE-DAY POST-LOCKDOWN ESCAPE

PRESIDENTS AWARDS CEREMONY AT MUNSTER CAMP

Our youth had been locked down on campus for more than five months by the time August arrived this year. So our Presidents Awards was the perfect excuse to finally take them away from the campus environment and 'let go'! Apart from only few of our matriculates who could not go due to school obligations, all youth on campus headed off for three days in mid-August to our Munster Camp on the South Coast. Big thanks to the camp leaders who co-ordinated the break as well as the awards ceremony. (Our Presidents Awards recognise and encourage the youth to S.H.I.N.E.® by developing life skills, public speaking, and leadership.

YOUTH vs STAFF IN TENSE PENALTY SHOOT-OUT



It was Youth vs Staff in a tight game of soccer at Magaliesburg campus recently, ending full-time with a 3-3 scoreline. A penalty shoot-out followed, with our youth getting the better of that at 5-4. Games are aimed at promoting a healthy lifestyle amongst youth and staff, highlighting to the youth that, as grown-ups, we can also have fun and not always be serious at work. Games will be played at least once a month, and we aim to play with other local teams post lock-down as part of re-integrating our youth with the community.

