



**GIRLS  
& BOYS  
TOWN**

Helping youth S.H.I.N.E.® since 1958

# Youth TODAY

MAY 2022

A NEWSLETTER FOR SUPPORTERS OF GIRLS & BOYS TOWN



Third annual **GROWTH BEYOND THE TOWN** research report released

## “HOW ARE YOU DOING?”

Together with our research partners, the University of Johannesburg Department of Social Work and Community Development, we are delighted to present our latest report: ***Resilience and Outcomes of South African Girls & Boys Town Care-Leavers Seven Years On.***

Aimed at understanding the resilience variables that predict better outcomes for young care-leavers, this report presents everything we

have learnt since the project's 2012 inception - and now includes the most recent data collected during the latter part of 2020. The findings are based on responses gathered from 176 Girls & Boys Town alumni who were initially interviewed during their final months with us, and then again regularly over the years since leaving our care.

We hope you find this an interesting, valuable update, and do encourage your questions or comments.

***View the full report:***

***<https://www.girlsandboystown.org.za/portfolio-item/resilience-and-outcomes-of-south-african-girls-and-boys-town-care-leavers-seven-years-on-2021/>***



#### **GROWTH BEYOND THE TOWN SA:**

A longitudinal study on youth leaving care, which tracks resilience and outcomes of South African Girls and Boys Town care-leavers over the first seven years out of care.

Developed by Girls and Boys Town South Africa, in partnership with the Department of Social Work and Community Development, University of Johannesburg



#### **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.



Helping youth S.H.I.N.E.® since 1958

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Registered as a Nonprofit Organisation  
(Act 71 of 1997)

**Registration No. 009-244 NPO**  
PBO: 130000379

Registered as a Welfare Organisation  
(Act 100 of 1978)





## Lee's forward

I hope that you are safe and well.

It is already approaching the middle of the year and somehow it feels like we missed the months in between. But, reassured by the power of your donor partnership, we press on regardless to ensure that our broken hearted youth continue to heal and grow. So it is with delight that I bring to you yet another Youth Today newsletter.

Please read up on the latest results of our longitudinal study on youth leaving care, which we conduct in partnership with the University of Johannesburg. At Girls & Boys Town South Africa we pride ourselves on our evidence-based programmes and over the past seven years this study has really informed our practices and validated our efforts to ensure that our vulnerable youth receive the best care.

We know that skills development helps our youth deal with life's challenges. It allows them to increase their confidence, self-esteem, and determination in new situations. So, when Cobra agreed to teach our youth in Western Cape basic plumbing skills, we were thrilled. Our youth were taught how to repair leaking taps and toilets and how to turn skills into a business.

Also in the Western Cape, we were very pleased recently to again host our Tour & Tea event for local stakeholders... for the first time in two years. It is a valuable face-to-face interaction giving real insight into our youth development systems and what actually happens each day at our campuses.

I am also excited to announce good progress on the refurbishments that have been taking place at our fire damaged Verulam home.

Catching up with our alumni always brings us joy. By sharing their stories we hope to reach and inspire anyone who themselves faces challenges in life. In this issue, we catch up with Belinda as she lives her best life with positivity and strength.

Thank you for all the ways in which you look after our Girls & Boys Town South Africa community, we truly appreciate your support. Remember to socially distance and remain alert for symptoms of Covid in vulnerable youth so they can receive assistance. Please take care of yourselves and your loved ones

*Lee Loynes*  
LEE LOYNES  
Chief Executive Officer



Renewing ties with young folk who were once in our care is always joyful. And in sharing their stories of achievement, which you as a donor helped to shape, we hope to inspire other youths currently struggling through life.

Recently, we caught up with alumna Belinda Phahlane. Now a confident 22 year-old, she's exuberantly outspoken, a lover of life and all things good. But it was not always that way...

Like many teens, Belinda confronted obstacles earlier in life. Seeing her mom turn to alcohol frustrated her and, with a lack of support from her father, things became worse. She used to be a rebellious child, full of anger, never listening to anyone until finally in 2014 her grandmother had her admitted to Girls & Boys Town South Africa via the Children's Court.

Safety, adequate nutrition and regular school attendance gave Belinda the space to gradually reset her course in life. She developed the founding life-skills which she continues to use today – how to ask for help, taking 'no' for an answer, and accepting consequences and criticism.

She made friends easily, had the respect of her peers, and holds the distinction of being the first girl to become a leader at Girls & Boys Town South Africa.

Going home in 2016 was an exciting time for

Belinda. She felt changed and positive, enjoying the respect of her elders and discovering that she could respect them too. She was eager to start the next chapter of her life.

Completion of her secondary education was followed by a diploma in Business Administration specialising in economics at Richfield Graduate Institution of Technology. She then worked at Telkom as a Sales Consultant and is now an Old

**“It's a beautiful journey - don't be afraid to embrace it”**

Mutual Financial Advisor. Her dream is to own her own business so she can comfortably provide for her family and others in need.

Belinda has a message for youth who need external care: “It is not easy to leave your family and friends and go to a completely strange place. But remember that you are doing it for you and your future. Go and better your life.”

She advises those who are leaving a care centre soon to remember what they have been taught: “If you get used to the nice life that a place like Girls & Boys Town provides, then work hard to start your own. Believe in yourself and most importantly pray to God for strength to be able to change. It's a beautiful journey – don't be afraid to embrace it.”

### 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](mailto:cs@myschool.co.za).

You can find out more at  
[www.myschool.co.za/schools/](http://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](mailto:mailing@gbtown.org.za).





Progress in our President's Awards programme is driven by a challenge: be the master of your own independence and shape your future by succeeding in a range of domestic and social skills... now!

Over the years, this has seen our youngsters take on a diversity of activities, like:

- Cleaning up and helping out in places like old age homes, children's homes, crèches, and other urban environments.
- Expanding intellectual skills such as reading, cooking, playing chess, or debating.
- Taking part in new physical activities such as soccer, jogging, swimming, hiking, canoeing and horse riding.

These activities enable young people to understand the ups and downs of life as well as how to overcome obstacles, part of their process of healing.

*A recent challenge combined elements of community service, environmental awareness, and physical development when boys from one of our campuses took part in a major beach clean-up. They did an amazing job, getting high praise from beachgoers.*

Our work is always about creating meaningful defining moments for our youth, while educating and developing them to become responsible adults.

# PRESIDENT'S AWARD

## CHALLENGED TO SHAPE THEIR FUTURES



*Youth graduated from their bronze level to silver at a serious but happy ceremony. We always look forward to youth implementing what they have learnt from the programme.*

## The rich rewards of sharing a little

While we may not have much to spare, we encourage our youth to be involved in community outreach. Research confirms that acts of generosity are healing for children, giving them a sense of well-being as they see that they too can be significant to others – despite their own current pain. Recently, we heard of the challenges facing an elderly lady named Aria who, on her own, has the responsibility of caring for seven of her grand-



*It was a happy occasion when our Family Home staff and youth arrived at Aria's house, and lunch was prepared for everyone. Our youth were hugely uplifted by the experience of sharing what little they have – something they now want to repeat.*

children. She has no pension, and relies on the children's support grants and donations to keep house and home together. Aria desperately needed more mattresses for her grandchildren to sleep on.

Our youth staff mobilised quickly. Fortunately, we had a few spare mattresses on campus, as well as excess vegetables and clothing that they could share.



# Plumbing workshop teaches skills, builds on creative problem solving.



Having recently heard about the Basic Plumbing Workshop, we reached out to Cobra and were so pleased at their eagerness to come out and get involved with the youth at one of our campuses.

Learning new skills and solving problems creatively increases confidence, self-esteem, and determination in children. So, skills development at an early age does not only benefit them temporarily but also throughout their life.

“The Girls & Boys Town workshop started at the beginning of the year and formed part of a two-phased programme designed to empower youth and activate entrepreneurship,” said Igsaan Hugo, a trainer at Cobra.

The Cobra team envision creating an army of water-saving ambassadors who will upskill their communities on the responsible use of this precious resource. Youth were taught the plumbing basics of repairing leaking taps and toilet cisterns, and also how to take steps towards registering a business and developing a business plan. In exposing our youth to meaningful moments like this, we aim to develop an understanding which you as a donor already cherish: there is value in serving others.

The workshop fits well with our commitment to build strong foundations for our youth, establishing behaviours or skills that will equip our youth after they leave our care.

## PROGRESS REPORT:

### Repairs to our fire-damaged Verulam family home

AFTER FIRE



Our new kitchen: it's 'home' again!

AFTER REPAIR



AFTER FIRE



Freshly painted and to be proud of!

AFTER REPAIR



Since our last update in the November '21 edition of this newsletter, most of the work at our Verulam family home has been done. New roofing, electrical wiring, kitchen fittings, interior and exterior painting are all now complete. New fans have been fitted in the lounge area.

Tiling is still in progress and some final finishes need to be done on youth's bedroom cupboards, and to the lamination of the safety glass.

Verulam Home will officially be handed over by the contractors soon. All the safety measures are in place and approved by the Fire Department.

We are happy with the refurbishments and we will be engaging the Department of Social Development in order to begin their required process, so we can resume the admission of girls in their newly furbished home. Big thanks to all our donors who responded to the urgency of returning our girls to their trusted surroundings.

### Stakeholders 'Tea & Tour' again after two-year break



Our Western Cape region recently hosted its annual 'Tea & Tour' stakeholder engagement event again - after a two-year hiatus due to Covid restrictions.

It was a warm and welcome return to a tradition that gives guests a chance to tour the local campuses and get a view of a typical day in the life of a child at Girls & Boys Town South Africa. Our Senior Child and Youth Care worker also talked through our programmes, peer group and score-card systems, and the stages and levels of advancement within these systems.

Cottage tours were conducted by our youth and Certificates of Appreciation were presented to two donors.