



**GIRLS  
& BOYS  
TOWN**

Helping youth S.H.I.N.E.® since 1958

# Youth TODAY

NOVEMBER 2022

A NEWSLETTER FOR SUPPORTERS OF GIRLS & BOYS TOWN



Ten very excited girls! Our new mayor (seated) and her nine councillors at their recent inauguration.

## High emotion in run-up to Mayoral Inauguration

It was a long road for the ten girls who finally stood up in front of family, sponsors, donors and peers on 24 September to take their oaths of office within the Peer Group System of Self Governance Body – nine as councillors, and one as Mayor.

Lots of hard work and emotion had gone into ensuring the youth knew what taking the oath was all about, as well as what it means to lead as a Councillor. Prior to inauguration day, the girls had been involved in many in-depth discussions facilitated by their Youth Care team staff members, debating current campus issues and how to best deal with issues their peers might raise in the months ahead.

A full day's training was also done in finally focussing in on all the aspects of the various

portfolios the girls would be taking on. During this staff monitored session, where the Council Body members allocate portfolios, some conflict arose between the girls, but amazingly they de-escalated a potentially volatile situation using skills they have been taught, without any staff intervention.

On the big day, the girls were all beautiful in their dresses and proudly stood up individually to take their oaths. One of our regional Board Members, Mr Gerrit Scheepers, assisted in the ceremony and signed the oaths, whereafter they were commissioned by Mr Pi Pretorius, a commissioner of oaths and donor.

This group of young ladies can only get stronger together and grow in themselves as they grapple with their newly-accepted responsibilities.

## Wonders do happen

Our Kagiso Social Workers recently pulled off an almost impossible feat, managing to reunite a 17-year old girl with her Mom whom she hadn't seen since the age of 3.

"Oops! I thought I was dreaming when I was called to come and see someone who said she was my biological mother," she told us.

"But knowing your family history is very important for everyone because it tells you about your background and helps you to understand who you are".

Previously withdrawn, isolated and with anger issues, this young girl is now a happy teenager who has discovered a sense of purpose and meaning in life. Reuniting with her family has made her feel that she is significant and really does have a place and family to belong to.

### 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.



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## Our new chapter rises over historic ground

Saying goodbye to the grand old buildings at our Tongaat campus was a very emotional time for us all when the day arrived.

What had stood for so many decades, and served our youth so well, was levelled to the ground within hours!



*Buildings that had stood for over a century, levelled within hours. A great sadness, but inevitable.*

Nuns of the Dominican Order laid the foundations for these structures over a hundred years ago, and they'd proudly given service to their occupants ever since. For 65 of those years they've been our home of hope for many young boys, from all walks of life.

In recent years our old buildings had started to experience structural problems and have become unsafe due to the ageing foundations.

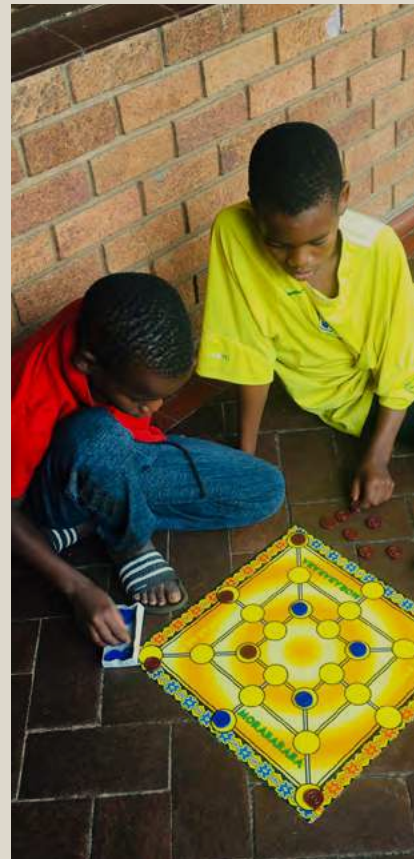
We tried everything to keep these history-laden premises in place, but were eventually forced to demolish due to structural issues that were irreversible. Despite the fact that the Heritage authorisation process took over a year, adjusting to the inevitable loss of these buildings has been hard.

We are however committed to maintaining the history and feel of our Tongaat campus going forward – a healing environment that our youth, donors and staff have all come to value a great deal.

Thank you to all who helped us extend the life and usefulness of these old structures for as long as we did – and for partnering with us as we celebrate the developments and achievements of our 'shared' children's successes.

*Wishing each one of you, as much appreciated and valued donors, a safe, joyous, family centered and blessed festive season.*

*Lee Loynes*  
LEE LOYNES  
Chief Executive Officer



*Youth helping less skilled and newer youth to heal is part of their own self-healing.*

## The magical 'shift' that our Peer Group System unlocks

When youth first join us at Girls and Boys Town SA they tend to be self-orientated, self-focused and struggling with the broken-hearted reasons for their placement - abuse, abandonment, rejection...

As part of the orientation and initial treatment phase on admission, staff allow for a settling-in period, but then begin to raise expectations and the intensity of their therapeutic intervention. This involves teaching the value, significance and healing effect of generosity, sharing, caring for and helping others, caring for the self, and getting along with others.

Within the Peer Group System of Self-Governance, our Youth Council Body and Mayor engage in caring and inclusive behaviours that underpin the value and themes demonstrating *She/He ain't heavy, she's/he's my sister/brother*. Through this, youth develop the ability to shift from self-orientation to sharing. This leads on to demonstrating care, compassion and assistance to others. Moving through the Peer Group System of Self Governance creates levels of greater responsibility and leadership... youth helping less skilled and newer youth to heal is part of their own self-healing.

## Common sense secrets help parents manage their children's anger outbursts

*All parents attending the Common Sense Parenting Workshop were awarded certificates of completion.*

Many of our youngsters were prone to anger outbursts prior to admission at Girls and Boys Town SA, and often initially tend towards similar behaviour when returning home for school holidays. To help folk deal with this, we held a Common Sense Parenting Workshop during late September... with immediately positive results.

One of the moms reported an amazing improvement in her daughter's behaviour during September



school holidays:

"Yoh! Little Princess. She was so surprising this time, it made me so emotional. She is that little girl that I raised. I am so proud of her. She was so helpful and understanding. Yoh! She stole my heart a thousand times".

Thank you to our trainers, staff team and donors who made these wonderful healing transitions possible.

## 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).



# From a boy with many challenges, to Mayor!

*The three year, zero to hero journey of Mandla Ntuli*

**M**andla Ntuli arrived at Girls and Boys Town SA in 2019, a young boy with many challenges.

At first we worked on his orientation, helping him understand our procedures, programme and expectations. He liked to talk, but his word choices were often inappropriate mainly because he was used to speaking street-language.

Following orientation, we introduced Mandla to our learning programmes, teaching him the skills necessary to turn his placement



*Our new Tongaat youth Mayor (right) is congratulated by Mr Jeff Pullen, councillor for Ward 58.*

behavioural and emotional challenges around. He was very slow to learn but willing, and that alone showed him to have courage. Within a few days one could hear him saying please and thank you - a very big step, and he was complimented on his development.

Soon we began to observe leadership qualities during chore times. Mandla was encouraging other youth to do their tasks and they were listening. He was willing to learn and he did not want to make mistakes, a positive outlook that saw him advancing through the Peer Group System of Self-Governance from Trainee Citizen, to Probationary Citizen, and then Citizen where he was elected to become a cottage Leader.

Leaders take on the role of helping other youth, but Mandla had already started to demonstrate this key quality. As a result, even the other Leaders chose him to facilitate during their meetings. Following the implementation of a number of leadership development workshops and therapeutic interventions, he had honed his potential – and he started to really shine. Since 2019 he has not looked back in leadership and personal development. He was advanced to Councillor on Probation - and then Councillor in 2021.

On the 14 August 2022, Mandla was elected as Mayor, took the official Oath and continues to demonstrate and practise the values of caring brotherhood, supporting other less skilled youth. We salute Mandla on his very significant growth – and our donors for partnering with us to help make a difference.

**“Before I was a Youth Forum member, I didn’t know how to express myself”**



*Our Kagiso campus hosted the National Association of Child and Youth Care Work – Gauteng Youth Forum's Fun Day in October. The objectives of the day were to learn communication through playing, motivate youth to work together through activities, and identify, instill, and cultivate leadership skills.*

**B**eing part of the Youth Forum has opened my mind to opportunities,” Lebogang tells us. “Before I was a member, I did not know how to express myself. But now I draw and write to express myself. This is a skill I learned in the forum.”

Lebogang and Lungelo were recently elected from our Girls and Boys Town South Africa youth as committee members on the National Association of Child and Youth Care Work – Gauteng Youth Forum – aimed at developing youth from various Child and Youth Care Centres around the Province. The forum meets monthly and youth members learn and discuss their rights, how to deal with daily challenges, and healthy ways of living a

productive life.

“I used to be a shy person, unable to talk things out with others,” says Lebogang. “I really thought that that was just how I was. Now I

realise that all I needed was to have someone who would teach me those skills. I am talkative now and through the Forum I talk about issues that affect me and others. I have discovered that advocacy is something I am passionate about.”

Lebogang and Lungelo’s acquired skills have had a positive trickle-down effect on our youth community at large. Being part of the committee has brought some growth to the two youths, who are also part of the leadership training for our Peer Group System Council Body.



*Our Kagiso pool was a popular spot on Youth Forum Fun Day!*



*Hours spent on a range of required activities will now be logged and managed by a new online system.*

## Now, our President’s Awards go online

**S**uccessful and ongoing, our President’s Awards Programme is another leadership development opportunity that our youth are exposed to when ready.

With growing participation from all our campuses, the Awards are to be managed online going forward. Participants are required to engage in a variety of activities - physical, skills, and community service - and need to reach a certain number of hours in each. Once they have reached their targeted hours, they graduate from Bronze to

Silver, from Silver to Gold.

Upon completion of the Gold level, youth go to Johannesburg for their graduation and to meet Mr President, who signs their certificates and gives them their badges.

Youth have shown so much dedication and willingness to try new tasks, and next year we will enrol more in the programme. The new online management system will help us log each participant’s hours digitally and track their upward progress.



A shining trophy, medals, and new sets of kit for each member of the team...

# They won... in more ways than one!

Winning their final game of the soccer season at the end of October saw our under-17 boys lift the League Cup. It was a great reward for all the dedicated hours of practise and the tension of playing must-win games every alternate weekend.

All good youthful fun, but the personal growth and self-improvement that goes with it gives these youngsters even more lasting ways to win. Now, Girls and Boys Town is part of organised soccer and netball leagues that offer participation for age groups from under-10 age upwards – with competition against other child and youth care organisations.

Encouraging youth to take part, preparing them through skills development and personal growth, and then watching the positive outcomes is continually gratifying in so many ways...

- The staff team’s focus on the youth’s management of their anger resulting from years of rejection and abuse seems to have been a key benefit: youth who would often display anger now do so less frequently. *Learning the rules of the game and having to obey*

*match officials’ decisions has been very influential. Accept, or you can’t play.*

- Girls and Boys Town South Africa’s Peer Group System of Self Governance gets put to work as team members set their own goals and help each other in maintaining motivation. Interpersonal social skills grow in the process.
- Youngsters, through sport, learn to defuse their frustrations prosocially and appropriately. As an example, during a particular game, the match official seemed to favour the other team in terms of decision-making. Rational acceptance of a situation they couldn’t change was their response – with a focus on playing on and playing harder!

Staff teaching target skills to youth daily significantly impacts their level of skill development and ability to overcome their placement challenges. They grow from each and every interaction we have with them. Sport, we believe, accelerates this because youth express themselves so openly during these activities. Roll on next season!



## Growth for four of our girls at the Rotary Youth Leadership Awards

“Hey, anyone want to come along on an intensive experience where young people can develop their leadership skills while having fun and making connections..?”

Four of our girls were recently offered the opportunity to do exactly that, and grabbed it with all eight hands!

Rotary Club’s Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA) are designed to teach young people to be better leaders. Setting off on their adventures – two of them at the Hartebeespoort venue and two at Magoebaskloof – they were equally nervous and excited, but soon settled in and revelled in the discussions, outdoor activities, mountain climbing, fireside chats, and trust and leadership games.

Now back with us after their experiences, they’re brimming with memories and eager to apply what they’ve learnt...

- “It has helped me be more prepared in dealing with situations on campus. I learnt how to look at a situation and not just react – as our youth normally do – but to think through an event and see how one can learn from what happened. Look at all the angles before making a judgement call.”
- “I learned that I need to look after myself if I am going to lead. So, self-care - one needs to ensure that as an individual you are okay.”
- “At Magoebaskloof we did beautiful, tranquil morning meditation. At first, I found it hard to switch off and just focus on myself and what is in me. But soon I learned to tune out the noise of the world and focus on my inner voice.”

One of our girls who attended RYLA is the Chairperson of the National Association of the Child and Youth Care Work Youth Forum and she has already used her newly-honed leadership abilities at these various related events. Experience gained, productively used.

## ‘Best Fielder’ nomination for our touring cricket star



A rising star at our Macassar campus, Siphamandla Hlope was recently selected for the Hottentots Holland Junior Cricket Club tour to Johannesburg in early October. And a ‘Best Fielder’ nomination in the first tour match was a great way to start!

Returning to Macassar after the tour, Sipha had joy and gratitude written all over his face. Apart from the cricket, he enjoyed loads of recreational exploits while on tour with the team, exploring life outside his home province, visiting places like Golf Reef City and Sun City.

His love of sports and his commitment to personal development has certainly paid off. But Sipha is also a very pro-social youth in all respects – school, campus, and at home. He is a great leader on campus and really deserved his opportunity to tour with his cricket pals.

Recognising the importance of creating opportunities for the development of talent, your donor partnership allowed for Girls and Boys Town South Africa to cover the costs of Sipha’s cricket tour. Well done Sipha!