



**GIRLS
& BOYS
TOWN**

Helping youth S.H.I.N.E.® since 1958

Youth TODAY

MAY 2023

A NEWSLETTER FOR SUPPORTERS OF GIRLS & BOYS TOWN



After the devastating fire that destroyed our Verulam Family Home almost two years ago, the girls are finally home. They are as excited to be there as we are to have them there!

HOME, AT LAST!

We could not have achieved these beautiful home renovations without the enormous understanding, support and assistance of our donors. Thank you!

Fire destroyed our Verulam Family Home for girls in mid-2021. Thankfully nobody was physically harmed by the blaze. But it was traumatic for the girls, already overburdened by the weight of life circumstances such as physical and emotional abuse which led to them being placed in our care in the first place.

Although we were hoping for a speedy 6-month restoration process, insurance, health and safety, and Department of Social Development concerns had to be fully accommodated. A very long and arduous process. So we were very excited to finally welcome our first new girls since the fire into the refurbished family home as of the

13th February 2023.

Our children really need the certainties and securities that go hand in hand with a place called 'home'. It is a need that our girls' temporary accommodation simply could not fully provide.

So naturally the girls are as excited to be back in their family home as we are to have them there. We could not have managed this process – and these beautiful home renovation outcomes - without the understanding, support and assistance of our donors.

Our biggest 'Thank You' to everyone who extended their generous understanding to us and the girls.



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.

Follow us



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



As of 1 March 2023, new tax rules mean we'll need to know more about you...

Every edition of Youth Today is an opportunity to warmly welcome you into the lives of our children. As always, we're proud to share their struggles with you because these are the stepping stones to their successes.

I'm also very conscious of the fact that we can only carry on helping these youngsters to heal through the continuing support and friendship of our donors. And, for that, we remain enormously thankful.

Now, I'm hoping I can lean on your understanding again. As of 1 March 2023, the Section 18A tax certificates we send you acknowledging your donations are required to reflect additional information – which we can only get from you.

As we understand the new rules, section 18A certificates issued on or after 1 March 2023 will need to carry new information not previously required. This new information will include:

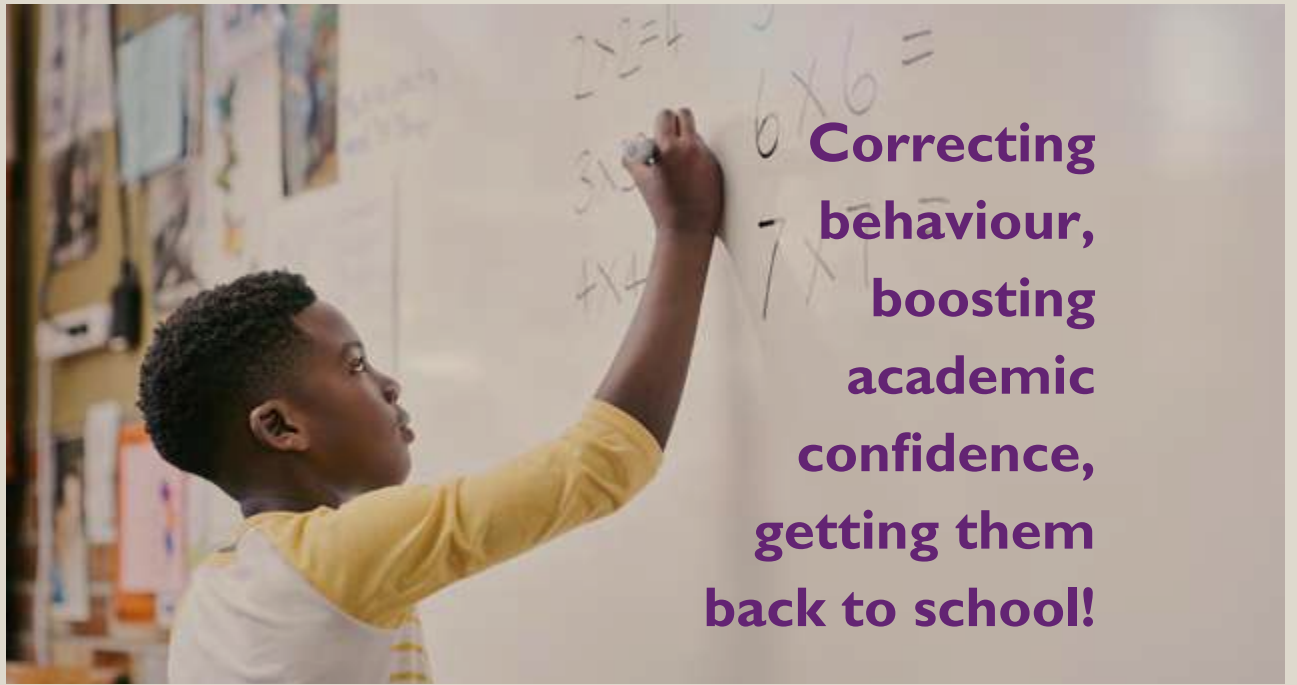
- identification or registration number of the donor
- the income tax number of the donor;
- the donor's contact telephone number;
- the email address of the donor;
- a 'donor nature' definition i.e. a natural person, company, trust, etc;
- natural persons will need to state their identification type and country of issue;
- the trading name of the donor if this differs from the registered name.

Naturally, we do hope you'll understand that Girls and Boys Town SA needs to move as swiftly as possible to ensure that we are compliant with the new requirements, and so that the Section 18A tax certificates we supply you are correct for your tax return purposes.

We will need to be in contact with you to collect a full set of information, but we'd also be very grateful if you were able to voluntarily send us the new information too. If so, please can I ask you to email your details to: mailing@gbtown.org.za.

Again, a sincere thank you for always being there for us and our children.

Lee Lynnes
LEE LOYNES
Chief Executive Officer



Correcting behaviour, boosting academic confidence, getting them back to school!

How our Learning Support Centres guide our children on their paths to success

Our national Learning Support Centres were developed for youngsters struggling at school. This may either be due to educational and remedial difficulties, or challenging classroom behaviours which put them at risk of losing their school placements. The intention is to get these learners back to the school from which they were initially referred as soon as possible following any sort of intervention.

We continue to be rewarded by the way our youth positively respond, and the many success stories our Learning Support Centres deliver.

We share the stories of two recent achievers here...

Bandile

THEN... Last year, disturbing feedback from his Grade 7 teacher suggested that Bandile was on the point of completely giving up on life. He was hardly attending to any study programmes and had a generally negative attitude towards his educational development. It was clear that urgent remedial intervention was needed. One-to-one teaching and discussions with Bandile - where the focus was more on his strengths than weaknesses – have been key to rebuilding his potential.

NOW... We're pleased to report that Bandile is now in Grade 8 and continuing to accept all the help he can get. He has a positive attitude towards his schoolwork, acknowledges his challenges, and asks for advice. Recently, he asked his Learning Support Centre to print positive and inspiring affirmations that he can keep in his room and read every day. Bandile is growing and becoming a really good role model.

Thulani

THEN... When Thulani came into our care last year he was struggling with academic and behavioural issues, had a disregard for his personal hygiene, and an inability to positively interact or communicate with females. Additionally, he refused to go to a school that would accommodate his needs and found it difficult to accept any of his challenges.

NOW... Our Learning Support Centre staff decided it would be best to work with Thulani as a team. Seven months into his guidance we started to see some improvements in how he conducted himself. He has since accepted enrolment in an LSEN school (Learners with Special Education Needs). Thulani's personal hygiene has improved, he now shows an awareness of the need to always use appropriate language, and enjoys positive communication with female educators and staff. Thulani's willingness to eventually work with our team to change has made a huge difference in his life.

Thank you to all of our donors - these and other youth achievements and growth were only possible because of your ongoing and caring support.

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.





OVERCOMING ADVERSITY!

So often we with our donors support must help youngsters triumph over almost unbelievable hurt and find their way towards renewed happiness and success.

The stories of Amelia and Jacob are apt illustrations of the journeys many need to make...

Amelia

Neglected by her biological mother, Amelia's list of problem behaviours were many: serious substance use, a relationship with a dangerous gangster, school attendance issues, and sexualised behaviour.

During therapeutic sessions with Amelia we soon established that her low mood and depression were triggered by the lack of contact with her host family. They had declined to have Amelia visit them during the December holidays, and she felt torn. We visited the host parent who became emotional after she had taken the time to consider how badly her decision had impacted Amelia. A process of phasing in regular contact with the host family was initiated.

Since Amelia arrived with us, our team has focused on maintaining the positive change in her behaviour. We've created the least restrictive environment for her while she remains substance free and starts the process of restoring relationships with the significant people in her life.

Amelia has mastered all the initial basic skills, enthusiastically goes to all her meetings, and attends school daily – a happy change from last year when she only went to school for a single term.

We now enjoy the presence of a young girl who is very caring, able to say no to negative peer influences, and generalises her skills in all areas. She is often found helping her family teacher and housemates with chores. Amelia has an ambition to pursue a career as a private chef and often volunteers to prepare meals over weekends.

Jacob

One day when Jacob was two years old his biological mother told the family that she was going to visit a friend in hospital, but never returned. His biological father is reportedly in prison.

Abandoned, young Jacob and his even younger brother were placed in a foster home.

He grew up in foster care until he started displaying anger and anti-social behaviour – bullying, being disrespectful, and disobeying rules.

He was placed in Girls and Boys Town South Africa early last year. He struggled to adjust at school, but still attended every day and had a lot of support from his teachers.

Then, just a month after arriving with us, the house that Jacob grew up in caught fire. His foster mother and three children died in the fire – everyone except his younger brother.

When Jacob was told about the tragedy, he changed for the worse. He would go to school but would dodge classes and then be spotted in different schools in the neighbourhood. He became disrespectful to his teachers, started bullying again at school and on campus, was experimenting with drugs, and neglecting his personal hygiene.

Grief counselling was put into progress and he was included in a Level 2 substance abuse programme. Gradually, Jacob has responded. He is following the programme, attending therapy sessions without being reminded, participating in activities, playing soccer and taking care of his personal hygiene. Although he has had to repeat a grade he has improved at school and the teachers are happy with his progress.

SUMMER FUN ON THE BEACH

Sunshine, laughter, braais, sport, games, outings, skills development and, of course, the odd mishap. But memories were made at Camp Caroline...



In mid-December last year, a small staff team arrived at Camp Caroline, our retreat at Munster on the KZN south coast to finalise preparations for the imminent arrival of the holidaying youth. Their task was to check on the readiness of the facilities and plan a detailed activity programme for the days ahead. Youth arrived quite late on the 17th of December and the camp was officially opened the following morning.

Good behaviour!

With their eyes on maintaining positive behaviour for the duration of the camp, our youth Peer Group Leadership body immediately got to work. They did an excellent job of establishing clear behavioural boundaries for everybody and can be credited with the happy and cooperative mood that persisted throughout the holiday

Fun at home

In-house entertainment during the camp included an epic soccer tournament, an indoor games tournament, movies, and the 'Great GBTSA cook-off' which involved youth in preparing meals including pizzas, and braais, and the toasted delights of marshmallow s'mores.

Activities and outings

The youth really looked forward to and were very grateful for their outings from Camp Caroline which included visits to various beaches, the Galleria Ice Rink, Ushaka Marine World, the Wild Coast Sun's Games Arcade, and the Wet and Wild Water Park.

Maintaining routines

Although there were loads of fun activities planned, Life Skills Groups were also facilitated twice a week by staff. There was also morning devotion, and daily morning and evening debriefings between our staff and youth leadership teams to reflect and plan for the day ahead.

And the unplanned...

What's fun without its challenges? We had one youth trip and bump his head on the stoep. He was taken to hospital for a quick check-up and thankfully no serious injuries were suffered. Another youth broke out with an allergic reaction, was provided with medical care, and quickly recovered to enthusiastically participate in all activities on offer.

Thanks to our friends and donors

It was the first time that this group of youth had experienced Camp Caroline – and they loved it! This whole experience was only possible due to the warm support of our donors and all that they do for our broken-hearted children. Thank you for affording them this wonderfully happy, joyous, blessed experience and the healing memories that will remain with them.

During our visit at Camp Caroline we were separated into different sleeping areas and it was a good adventure with the Magalies and Maccassar boys. We enjoyed going ice-skating, ushaka, Wild Coast entertainment area, the programmes that the youth care workers planned for us was exciting.

We also had teaching that actually talked to the boys and I feel that they did learn a lot from this holiday in Camp Caroline.

Josh

Dear Mr Moses

Thank you for the holiday. Now I can see what life is about, connecting with other boys that are just like us. Most of them go through the same problems just like us and I never knew that I will miss most of the boys from that place. But one thing I know you and the youth care workers changed my life in a way I never thought it would change. So all I want to say is thank you for all that you and the youth care workers have done for me throughout this December holiday.

Adie

To Everyone who made Camp Caroline possible I would like to say thank you all for making 2022 December holidays memorable for us. There are new things I did that I always dreamt of. You amazing souls made most of our dreams come true. I am very grateful for it. To the staff that was with us, thank you for sacrificing your holidays to be with us. The meals were very outstanding for me. It felt like I was at home while I was far away from home. Thank you.

Kind regards,

Luzo