



# Youth TODAY



MAY 2025

A NEWSLETTER FOR SUPPORTERS OF GIRLS & BOYS TOWN SA

## NATIONAL CHILD PROTECTION WEEK: MAY 29 TO JUNE 5, 2025

*Our new public service video  
highlights the need to  
break the cycle of trauma*



Every year, **National Child Protection Week** reminds us of our collective responsibility to create a safer, more nurturing South Africa for our children. This year, we place a spotlight on a truth we encounter daily at Girls and Boys Town South Africa: **trauma is not just a moment—it's a cycle.** And unless we intervene with compassion and consistency, that cycle continues into the next generation.

Children who arrive in our care often carry more than just their school bags—they carry invisible burdens: fear, neglect, abuse, abandonment. But with the right support, they begin to heal. We don't just provide a safe place; **we work to restore trust, rebuild identity,** and equip children with the tools to reimagine a future beyond pain.

At Girls and Boys Town South Africa, **our mission is to heal heartbroken children and restore hope.** It's not just a slogan. It's the reason we exist. Through family-style homes, therapeutic care, mentorship, education, and community partnerships, we help youth break free from harmful patterns and move forward with resilience.

This **National Child Protection Week**, we invite you to take a few minutes to watch our latest PSA video—a glimpse into the heart of what we do, and why it matters now more than ever. When you understand the trauma, you understand the urgency.

Together, we can rewrite the stories of children

in need. **Together, we can protect. We can heal. We can break the cycle.**

*Watch our new PSA Video here:*  
<https://girlsandboystown.org.za/video-channel/>

This newsletter and other key operational activities at Girls and Boys Town South Africa are made possible through generous support from the National Lotteries Commission (NLC). The NLC's funding plays a vital role in helping us reach and heal vulnerable children and families in Gauteng, South Africa. We are proud to be a recipient of NLC funding for the 2025/2026 period. Visit the [National Lotteries Commission](#) to learn more about their support of projects like ours.

### Our Vision

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

### Our Mission

Our mission is to heal heartbroken children, restore hope and provide a safe environment for the children and youth in our care to heal and thrive.

### Benefits of a bequest to Girls and Boys Town SA

A bequest in a Will to Girls and Boys Town SA, 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 and Boys Town SA 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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**National Hotline** No. 0861 58 58 58  
Private Bag X6, Greenside, 2034 South Africa  
Tel. 011 482 2655 Fax. 011 482 6059 / 0866 131 580  
E-mail [mailing@gbtown.org.za](mailto:mailing@gbtown.org.za)  
Website [www.girlsandboystown.org.za](http://www.girlsandboystown.org.za)  
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## Stellar academic results, despite life’s challenges

As this is my first editorial in Youth Today, I’d like to start off by saying a big hello and welcome to you as a very valued friend and supporter of our work. Without you, the many, many deeply personal triumphs in which our children rejoice daily may not be possible.

Thank you for being with us, and being part of their healing.

As you’ll see from our front page, publication of this edition has been timed to coincide as closely as possible with National Child Protection Week. We, of course, embrace its objectives and warmly welcome this year’s focus on breaking the cycle of trauma.

### A vital platform

We work with both the children and their families to strengthen their life skills and provide necessary resources as effectively, efficiently and comprehensively as possible. The majority of our Girls and Boys Town SA youth – approximately 200 each year – temporarily reside with us and attend the most appropriate nearby schools. Indeed, working closely with these girls and boys throughout their schooling creates a platform on which they can build confidence in their own academic progress.

We’ve not yet had a chance to share with you our academic achievements of last year, and it is with a deep sense of pride in our Girls and Boys Town SA youth that I reflect on that now.

### Celebrate success

Several among them were rewarded with life-changing opportunities in acknowledgement of their resilience and ability to apply themselves to their goals - despite the harshest of circumstances that brought them to us.

Having endured physical and psychological trauma, the wonder of managing to adapt, change, learn and thrive once in a different, nurturing structure is immense.

Thank you again for your friendship.

*K Farred*

Karen Farred  
Chief Executive Officer

# Special support where early age education is lacking

We’re heartened by the recent indications that National Treasury will increase the budget allocation for early childhood development (ECD). This is part of the government’s bigger strategy to fortify education from early age in recognition of the longer term benefits for South Africa’s socioeconomic trajectory.

If increased attention is really afforded to ECD and this results in the government’s estimated 700 000 under-five children benefitting from ECD, it will have a manifold positive impact on millions of South Africans - including the children’s siblings, family and social circles.

### Overcoming obstacles to seize opportunities

At Girls and Boys Town SA, we recognise that each youth’s educational journey is different, although given the experiences of our young residents, the fact that they overwhelmingly come from impoverished neighbourhoods means that they largely did not have access to ECD.

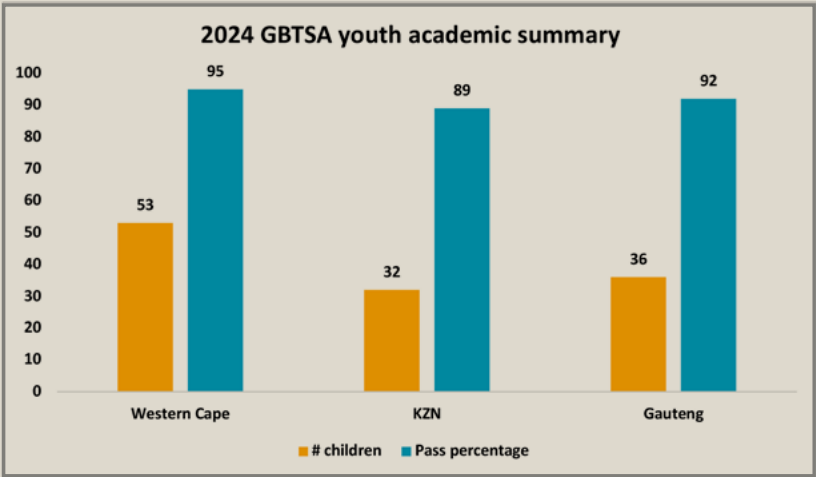
### Learning Support Centres

Once the adolescent youth are allocated by the authorities to one of our centres, most

of them need academic assistance. For that reason, all the Girls and Boys Town SA youth development centres have Learning Support Centres with learning assistance staff trained to offer remedial assistance and support.

### Pride in our 2024 results

Within this context of rising above



Of all our girls and boys who wrote exams in 2024, 88% passed their subjects.

and achieving despite multiple and complex difficulties with which our youth arrived at Girls and Boys Town SA, we are honoured to share their wonderful successes here.

As the results were received and analysed, we were able to celebrate the fact that 88% of our 110 Girls and Boys Town SA residents who wrote exams passed their subjects. Well done all.



### Now you can support us through MySchool

You can support Girls and Boys Town SA 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 and Boys Town SA 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 made our Bequest Booklet available on our website, a simple, easy-to-read guide for anyone interested in leaving a bequest to Girls and Boys Town South Africa.

By leaving a bequest, or ceding an endowment or insurance policy to us, you will help ensure that we can continue to heal heartbroken children and help restore their hope, empowering them to S.H.I.N.E.®.

To view or download the brochure, please visit: <https://girlsandboystown.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Legacy-Bequest-Trifold-Brochure.pdf>

For more information please contact Gertrude Wilson on (011) 482 2655 or email [mailing@gbtown.org.za](mailto:mailing@gbtown.org.za).







class of

2024

congratulations!  
TO OUR 2024 MATRICULANTS!

*Despite the multiple and complex difficulties with which our youth arrive at Girls and Boys Town, they show a remarkable appetite for rising above and achieving under our care. Our 2024 matriculants are another wonderful example of this, and we're honoured to share their wonderful successes...*

- All eight Gauteng-based youth passed Matric in December 2024; one received a Bachelor's Pass, three their Diploma passes and four received National Certificate passes. With assistance from our Learning Centres staff, the youth successfully applied for further studies or employment.

- Four youth from Macassar in the Western Cape received three-year bursaries for leading schools with strong STEM streams.

*Here we also share the personal growth stories of two of our 2024 matriculants – Nofoto and Funeka...*

## NOFOTO

An abusive stepfather and a mother who chose not to believe her, Nofoto was left to deal with the emotional effects of both. Hurt and anger shaping their mother-daughter relationship, Nofoto came to Girls and Boys Town when she was 16. She always participated well, learning skills to manage both the big and small changes that led her path to our care. Here, she came to realise what it means to feel safe, and how to cope with thoughts and emotions brought on by a traumatic past.

It did, as one can expect, all take its toll on her schooling. In her 2024 Matric year, it was clear she was falling behind and wouldn't pass her final exams. Our positive intervention saw her continue through the year, passing with a Higher Certificate.

Her behaviour towards her mother began to improve and once her stepfather moved out, she started visiting home during the holidays. "I forgave my stepfather" – this moment of healing led to a restored relationship with her mother.

Today, she is studying Graphic Design part-time while helping out with children at an aftercare programme through her church. She has been reunited with her biological mother and is content to be back with her family.

## FUNEKA

When Funeka was just 4 months old her mentally ill mother threatened to kill her. Then following her mother's death, she was taken from her older brother and younger sister, and placed in foster care, losing all contact with her siblings. Not even a birth certificate to her name!

She never got the emotional care she needed coming out of such a traumatic and broken home. Following multiple suicide attempts as well as uncontrollable behaviour, she eventually came to Girls and Boys Town. We reached out to her brother, who asked to take care of her, but the reality of a hurt and neglected childhood made any kind of relationship with him impossible. Rejection, fear and low self-esteem was all she knew.

We began working with her, helping her understand how trauma impacts her thinking, feelings and actions. She learnt to control her emotions and behaviour and begin healing.

Funeka is now reunited with her siblings, and together we have applied for an unabridged birth certificate as the first step in getting her Identity Document. From here, her hope is to attend the University of Johannesburg and South African School of Motion Picture Medium and Live Performance.

She finally feels like she belongs, proving that connection and the right support leads to growth and happiness.





***Stop the bullying! In our schools! Our homes! Our communities! Enough is enough! Award-winning actress Nazli George now brings the message of her ground-breaking show Stop The Bully to us on a tour of our youth development centres...***

Nazli George wrote her show Stop the Bully over 34 years ago. Too many educators had been telling her of their encounters with children bullying each other. It was getting out of hand.

“Alas, that’s how the show was born,” says Nazli. “It was devised at the level of children telling their stories, digging deeply into what was making them bully others, and how perhaps those causes could be dealt with.”

During the show the audience discovers that the child is being bullied at home, and that

he is now responding by inflicting the same behaviour on other children at school. We see the disrespect that the bullying child displays towards the teacher, how the child is reprimanded, and

***“I’m passionate about every child being the best that they can be, that every child is special, has the right to be here, and is a gift and a blessing. It takes a village to raise a child, to mould him or her to be the best version of him or herself, to aspire to achieve, to believe in themselves, to be thankful, and to have respect. It begins with you.” – Nazli George***

problem is identified – the child is being bullied by a stepmother, so the child thinks that’s the right thing to do and does the same at school. Help is brought in by the teacher, counselling sessions are set up with the child and the parents. This allows the family to iron out differences and work together to stop the child’s bullying behaviour.

“I have a little piece of advice for children,” says Nazli. “Shake your hands loose and then hold them in front of your face. Imagine your hands

*On stage at our Magaliesburg campus (above), and an outdoor performance at Tongaat (below).*



how the teacher realizes there is a problem and calls in a counsellor. Clearly, this child is crying out for help and that they need to get to the reason why the child is a bully.

Central to the story is that the child is identified as a bully... calling names, fighting, being rude and disrespectful. The root of the

are a mirror. Look into it and ask yourself: Do I like it when someone calls me names? Do I like it when someone fights with me? Do I like it when someone takes my things without asking? Do I like it when someone bullies me? If you don’t like these things, neither does anyone else. Love yourself, respect yourself.”

***NAZLI GEORGE*** is an award-winning South African actress, a graduate of the University of Cape Town and Trinity College, London, and has performed in television, film and stage productions. She has been active as an actor, writer, director, and producer for over 39 years.

