

Girls & Boys Town South Africa: Timeline

1958

The first Boys Town opens in Magaliesburg. The facility opened in a vacant missionary school run by Dominican Sisters.



1968

First liaison office is launched in Johannesburg. Represents a new approach to financial sustainability and sets apart Boys Town's fundraising approach from other charities.

1970

Camp Caroline, a holiday camp, is established at Munster, on the South Coast of Kwa-Zulu Natal, for youth unable to go home for the holidays.



1974

First Boys Town Family Home opens in Rondebosch, Cape Town. More Family Homes opened throughout the country during the late 1970's and 1980's.



1975

Boys Town Magaliesburg burnt down by an old boy who was later institutionalised.



1978

Boys Town Genazzano Tongaat opened in KwaZulu-Natal



1979

Boys Town Duin-en-Dal (Crossroads, Western Cape) established. Relocated in 1986 due to unrest.



1988

Boys Town merges with process – an organisation that caters for street children – and assumes responsibility for two facilities that provide care for 50 homeless children.



1989

Boys Town Macassar, Western Cape (formerly Dun-en-Dal) opens.



1992

Process boys move to new premises in the old Chamber of Mines Training College in Randfontein. Property bought in 1994 and renames Boys Town Kagiso.



1993

Old boy Joe Araujo appointed as Executive Director serving until his retirement in September 2007.



1996

Trainers from Boys Town Nebraska, USA visit to train and introduce the family teaching programmes to staff. This becomes a nationally standardised child-care practice model for all Family Homes.



1999

Boys Town Kagiso opens. Our national hotline service is launched.



2001

GBTSA opened its first Training Centre in Cape Town, launched extensive staff training, and hosted Boys Town USA trainers. It became the first certified site outside the USA to implement the Family Home care model.

2002

Received site certification and international recognition from Boys Town USA for the first time.



2003

Demand for training on a national level leads to the opening of a second Training and Resource Centre in Gauteng.



2004

Name changed to Girls and Boys Town South Africa



2005

First girls admitted to the Kagiso Youth Development Centre Campus and Family Home for girls, Gauteng Girls and Boys Town South Africa. Alumni Vincent Bones wins Idols.



2006

A chemical dependency programme is introduced.



2007

Lee Loynes appointed Chief Executive Officer – the first woman to lead the organisation. Lee was formerly Director: Youth Services and has served Girls & Boys Town since 1993.



2008

Girls and Boys Town South Africa celebrates 50 years, providing services through four divisions: Residential, Training & Education, Family, and Evaluation & Research.



2009

Established Research Ethics Committee and Engaged in formal research activities.



2010

Achieved direct community outreach services to beneficiaries in all nine provinces. Served 25 937 beneficiaries. Opened the Kagiso Learning Support Centre on 22 October 2010.



2011

Served 35 070 beneficiaries. Opened the Magaliesburg Learning Support Centre on 14 April 2011.



2012

GBTSA served 63,242 beneficiaries, was honored by the West Rand Chamber for excellence in education and training, celebrated CEO Lee Loynes as a Women Achiever finalist, and admitted the first girl to the Verulam Family Home in KwaZulu-Natal.

2013

GBTSA opened its first Family Home for boys at Kagiso Campus, won the NLB Chairman's Choice Award for Social Champions Charities, hosted 36 SACE-endorsed training workshops, and was recognized by UPS for its impact in education and transformative initiatives.



2014

First girls are admitted to our Alpha Family Home in Claremont, Cape Town. Wider services to girls (and boys) continue through community outreach programmes, training centres and national hotline service.



2016

Training programmes re-endorsed by SACE. The Girls and Boys Town South Africa's/UJ Research partnerships saw the Youth Ecological Research Scale (YERS) named and validated.



2017

Moving from dormitory style to family style living.



2018

60th anniversary GBTSA rebranding project.



2021

Fire destroyed our Verulam Family Home for girls



2022

The Verulam Family Home underwent refurbishment in 2022 following a fire in 2021.



2023

On 13 February 2023, GBTSA welcomed the first girls into the refurbished family home after the fire and introduced a new tagline: Healing Heartbroken Children.



2024

GBTSA bid farewell to its first female CEO, Ms. Lee Loynes, and welcomed Ms. Karen Farred as the new CEO in November 2024.



2025

On October 4, 2025, GBTSA proudly launched National Hug Day, a heartfelt campaign to spread hope, love, and healing to vulnerable children across South Africa.

