



SINCE 1958

Youth

TODAY

Opportunities are the Stepping Stones to Success

June 2011

A newsletter for friends of Girls and Boys Town

Learning Support Centres: another milestone achieved!

Our first Learning Support Centre was launched in Kagiso last year and following on this success, a second centre was opened at our Magaliesburg campus on 14 April 2011.

The opening ceremony was attended by many dignitaries, sponsors, friends, the project team, staff, girls and boys of Girls and Boys Town. An inspiring message was delivered by Elise Fronemann, the Regional Director of Education and the staff and boys of GBT Magaliesburg shared their talent for entertainment to liven up the proceedings. Br Michael de Klerk of CBC officially declared the centre open, to the cheers and ululations of those present. It was indeed a joyful afternoon.

Visitors were shown the centre and the boys could not wait to sit down and demonstrate the computer-based training programmes.

These facilities are designed primarily to address two critical areas in education numeracy and literacy – the building blocks for learning.

The Learning Support Centres (LSC) offer four linked services – computer-assisted learning, a counselling room, a face-to-face classroom and a library.

Learners referred to the centres are first assessed to determine their current level of achievement and the areas where assistance is needed.

Then they move on to computer-assisted learning which is interactive and user-friendly, two important features that maintain the learner's interest.

Kagiso LSC, launched in 2010 was the first centre and a further two centres will be set up in KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape during 2011. The lucky beneficiaries of this project are the 250 young learners who reside at Girls and Boys Town, and children from the surrounding areas.

CEO Lee Loynes sums it all up: "Our



CEO Lee Loynes and BR Michael unveil the plaque at the Magaliesburg Learning Support Centre.

organisation always tries to be at the forefront of identifying and adopting new techniques to enhance our work and remove the barriers that challenge youth at risk. By supporting learning among the children we care for, we raise educational levels in the broader society and contribute to South Africa's socio-economic development."

All the youth send their thanks to everyone who contributed so generously to the centre project including the Lotto and Media Worx, as well as the project team and staff who worked long hours to ensure the centre was ready on time.

"The accelerator program is really fun. It will benefit me tremendously as I find maths hard. But with this programme I will improve and believe that all the youth will benefit. We all thank the sponsors for their generous support in making this happen at GBT."

A grade 9 youth, Girls and Boys Town, Kagiso, October 2010.



The boys try out the new computers at the centre.



The new centre will provide our young people with the skills they need for school – and for their future careers.

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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.



Supported by the National Lottery.

Lotto is the major sponsor of the Learning Support Centre Project. We're extremely grateful for their support.



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 ds@gbtown.org.za
Website www.girlsandboystown.org.za

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RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

Achievement and success are great occasions to celebrate

These two young achievers from the Dingle family home in Kenilworth, Cape Town recently completed training in writing a CV and applying for employment. With their new found confidence and skills they have both managed to secure jobs, much to our delight, and theirs.

'Matthew' is now working for a building company. He is also a talented sportsman, having taken part in the Argus Cycle Tour in 2010 and 2011 and won a Bronze Medal at the National Muay Thai Champs in 2010. 'Joe' was given a permanent job in a pet shop where he has worked for some time on a casual basis.

Neither of them have family they can return to so they will remain at Dingle family home for a few more months while they settle into their jobs and find suitable accommodation. In the meantime they are excellent role models for the younger boys and girls.



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PEER GROUP SYSTEM

Valuing the importance of leadership skills

Leadership is at the core of the GBT experience and we attribute many of our successes to the practical application of leadership skills on a daily basis. We are always delighted when we see a recalcitrant youth accept the challenge of our system of leadership. Success and happiness are the by-products.

In the words of one of our youth who has become a leader...

"The biggest lesson I had to learn was respect... I thought why not use all the energy I have to be disrespectful and not co-operative and use it into my future and see what kind of life I would have if I respect and listen. Another challenge I faced was self-control. I was short-tempered and couldn't take no for an answer but now leadership has helped me face my challenges and made me a role model to myself and other young people."

Prize-giving Awards at GBT Tongaat

This annual event was attended by our local sponsors, donors, dignitaries, staff and boys at the GBT Youth Development Centre in Genazzano on 6 March 2011. Awards were given for achievements and successes in a variety of areas. Two grade 7 boys were acknowledged for being appointed as prefects at Tongaat Primary School.



RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

Making sure your gifts get to work

This division operates very much "in the wings", but we know quite firmly that we have an important role to play in the operations of Girls and Boys Town. It is absolutely critical that we make sure that as an organisation we stay focused and on track with what we have agreed are the critical success factors of Girls and Boys Town. Primarily we owe it to the children, but equally we need to satisfy ourselves that we are all being the very best we can be and that your contribution is achieving the greatest good.

Earlier this year we completed our annual study of the satisfaction levels of families under the care of GBT Family Services.

We are happy to report that the national average satisfaction ratings have increased in all measured areas.

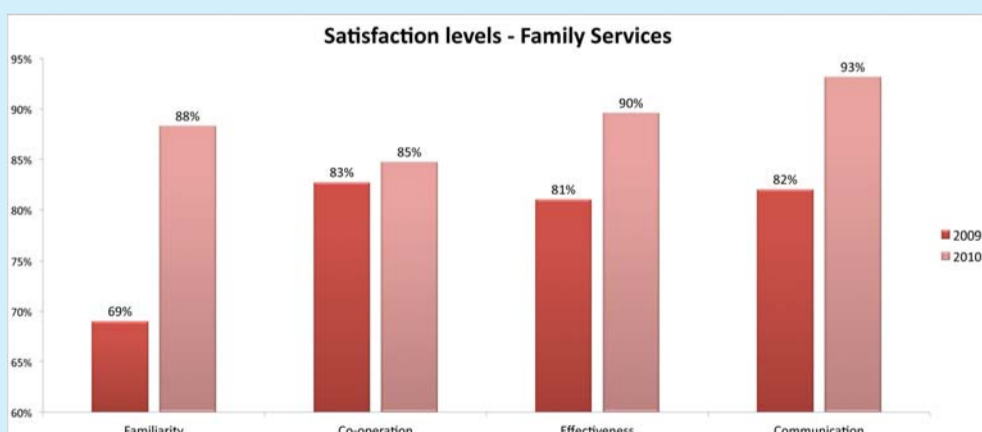
Here are some comments from survey participants:

"I would like to comment that the GBT family worker always goes the extra mile ... After speaking to her, I have clarity and peace of mind."

"All I can say is that she is the best thing that happened to our family thank you for helping us."

"The GBT programme is really effective and my brother has really changed. He is a different person and this programme has helped our family."

Satisfaction of families under the guidance of GB Town family services



TRAINING AND EDUCATION

'Thank you for saving my life. You came to my rescue with the teaching you gave about parenting'

Our Common Sense Parenting course has been extended to child- and youth care workers in Children's Homes and Early Childhood Centres in under-privileged communities. Since October 2010 we've trained 119 care-workers and 864 parents!

The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, as this testimonial illustrates:

"I would like to thank you for saving my life. You came to my rescue with the teaching you gave about parenting. Honestly, I had no hope. I didn't know what to do for discipline. I was beginning to have an "I don't care" attitude.

But after I received your training ... I am a different person now, calmer, more understanding but still firm with the rules. For me this was not just a three week course, but a lifetime course. Thank you, thank you, thank you!"

Zandile M. (Randburg.)

The Well-Managed Classroom programme was

extended to the Free State in August 2010 and completed in March 2011. Training was conducted at 10 schools with the result that educators felt better equipped to deal with classroom challenges in a more positive way. A further 20 schools in Gauteng will have the opportunity to be trained in the Girls and Boys Town Educational Model in the year ahead. We deeply appreciate the support of our donors for the beneficial impact on the communities we serve.

"In 2010 we improved our matric pass rate by 15%. Without your support this would not have been possible. What we can see is that what we, collectively, have put in is starting to bear fruit now. The GBT staff we work with are excellent people, they are humble and supportive." Extract from a letter of thanks from Coronationville Secondary.

Since 2001 we have delivered training to 8599 trainers at 742 schools benefiting – 267000 learners ... and we are not done yet!



From our CEO



The one constant everyone at Girls and Boys Town shares with you, our valued sponsors and donors, is that we care deeply for our youth. We will fight tirelessly, both practically and strategically, to achieve our goal of "removing the barriers that challenge youth at risk".

One such challenge is lowering the barriers to education faced by children in our residences and in the community-based families we serve.

Education is an unequivocal right, a necessity for a fulfilling life, yet it's often not accessible to many at-risk young people. That's why we made the decision to embark on a strategy to change this.

It was with pride we opened our first Learning Support Centre on our Kagiso campus in September 2010 and the second on our Magaliesburg campus in April. Four more will follow in our other regional centres later in the year. None of this would have been possible without your loyal support and a generous sponsorship from Lotto.

Maintaining such significant achievements demands that we as a national team remain focused, thus the implementation of strategy is the business of every staff member of Girls and Boys Town.

We're extremely lucky to have been offered an award-winning programme developed and sponsored by community engagement specialist The Virtual Works. This programme has run successfully at Deloitte's for the past three years, and will connect every Girls and Boys Town employee with our strategy and goals.

Recognition of individual contributions to strategy implementation is simple and immediate and system tools make collaboration between leaders and colleagues easier. We're thrilled to be breaking this new ground as we strive for excellence in our service to young people at risk.

Thank you for your enduring generosity and loyalty in making all this possible for the young people of our nation.

Sincerely

Lee Loynes
CEO Girls and Boys Town

PS. Please visit our website for ongoing news and updates.

FAMILY SERVICES

A family's resilience awes experienced social worker...

Mrs Daniels and her son live in a tiny one-roomed shack on the edge of a golf course in one of the more affluent suburbs of Cape Town. There are no electricity, water or ablution facilities.

The family has been trapped in a cycle of poverty for generations. Mrs Daniels is unemployed and pregnant with her fourth child. Her daughter was killed in a car accident seven years ago.

One would expect that a person coping with all this would have no hope for the future. Our social worker was overwhelmed by this family's resilience and their responsiveness to developing their skills and potential while being supported by Girls and Boys Town.

Mrs Daniels assisted her daughter complete high school. She passed Matric and is now working and living independently. Son Patrick is age appropriate for his Grade 8 and the educators at his primary school describe him as an avid reader whose general knowledge far exceeds that of his peers. He's always neat, well-mannered and punctual.

The inherent strength of this family is awesome – they are supportive and caring of each other. Though they have little to share, they stick together and Mrs Daniels will have the support of her family when her new baby is born.

We are left marvelling at this family's achievements and know that with the support of our donors and the continued assistance of Family Services this family will harness their own potential.



Despite the odds, Mrs Daniels's strength and determination has ensured that her children are getting the best start in life.

Fun times – and special gifts

A rounded, well-balanced life for our boys and girls is as critical to us as it is to you. Like any boy or girl they need to store up happy times in their childhood memory bank and they love to have some interesting holiday stories to share with their friends when they go back to school. Of course we budget and plan for special occasions and treats very carefully – but it is your kind and thoughtful support that ensures each child of joyous experiences and lifetime memories.

So you can imagine when the girls at Alpha family home in Cape Town were given personal gifts for Christmas last year, they were beside themselves with excitement.

For the average child in South Africa to receive gifts of special clothing is not an exceptional event, but for these girls a gift of branded “takkies”, pyjamas, beach thongs and bags, scarves, towels and toiletries was an occasion of great excitement.

To our sponsor – the girls send a very big thank you for your outstanding generosity.



Left “home alone” for the weekend, an outing to Putt-Putt for four boys from the Dingle Home was an exciting event. One of the boys who had not fared too well on a previous outing scored a hole-in-one. You can imagine what that did to his self-esteem!

Every year a group of boys and girls from Girls and Boys Town centres across the country get together to spend a week in the December holidays getting to know each other at our holiday home, Camp Caroline, at Munster on the KwaZulu-Natal South Coast.

There is a brilliant waterpark nearby and the youngsters enjoy hours on the waterslides, there is also a beach nearby. There is also a chance to meet successful Old Boys and Girls, who are a source of great motivation.

We are always awed that simple pleasures are so appreciated and enjoyed by our boys and girls.

A big thank you to our many thoughtful sponsors who give so generously and bring so much pleasure to our girls and boys.



Boys from Girls and Boys Town Glenwood and Tongaat had a great day out to Gateway Theatre of Shopping at Umhlanga recently and experienced an activity they would not normally have access to. A wonderful sponsor generously treated them to a morning at the indoor rock climbing wall then lunch. The day was thoroughly enjoyed by every one of them. Sincere and grateful thanks from the boys to another generous and caring friend!

Learning Support Centres: another milestone achieved!

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14 April was a day of great excitement for everyone concerned, especially our youth. A few had already seen the installation at Kagiso and could not wait for their turn to have a learning lab of their own. One of the boys anticipated the event by writing a poem, which was recited at the opening:

It was, it is and will be.
We were yawning
from tiredness,
Not wanting anything
to do with Protem.*
Little did we know where
we will be.
Then came today,
Wow, we looked and guess what?
No more Protem but Learning Support

Centre today
who knew it would be.
Behold, where do we see ourselves
With a shining tomorrow.
Taking ourselves each
beyond oneself,
Running into brighter tomorrows
Who do we thank?
Girls and Boys Town South Africa
Yes: All's worth to thank
When we find all going well.

(*Protem relates to the interim learning solution the boys participated in pending the launch of the technology-based Learning Support Centre.)



A message of inspiration from an Alumnus

“All my life I grew up in children’s institutions. I got myself involved with many un-impressive dealings that could have ended in death. Through the love and grace of God I found myself at Girls and Boys Town. At first I thought it was a dead end and sabotage, not knowing that I would grow rapidly in skills, talents and potential that I never knew I had. Girls and Boys Town was a blessing in disguise for me. After school I managed to get a marketing learnership at a mining company and I’m now working in the HR department. It’s up to the individual to embrace the opportunities at hand. I encourage all the young people at GBT to go for their dreams because nothing is impossible.”

Sifiso S.