



Youth TODAY

December 2008

A newsletter for friends of Girls and Boys Town

You changed my life

Special 50th Anniversary issue

A common thread runs through the stories that our alumni share here: they credit Boys Town (as we were then called) with changing their lives.

'I was accepted to Boys Town during the late 1950s, but replete with my confused anger, deep sense of shame, issues around self-worth and social maladjustment, I struggled to fit in. The tremendous patience, courage and tenacity of Father Orsmond and the Boys Town staff turned the effects of my prior upbringing around.'

'I went out into the world and made a success of my life. How proud I felt when my absolute mentor, Father [Orsmond], was a passenger on his way to Rome - and I was the Navigator on that flight. I had achieved my dream; I had always wanted a career in aviation.'

'I am now completing my autobiography and hope for the best. Thank you for the wonderful changes that you all made to my life, which was headed for disaster. I love you all.' - Frankie Panaino.



Our Magaliesburg Youth Development Centre opened in 1958 ... and all these children are our alumni now!



Anthony Agrella

'My time at Boys Town was one of the most memorable. Today, I live according to the values Boys Town gave me. I'm a landlord and have my own supermarket now, and I believe that my success stems from treating people the way I was treated at Boys Town.'

'When I arrived at Boys Town, I decided to place myself under new management'. I've served on the alumni committee for a number of years and God

willing, will do so for many more to come. I thank the late Bishop, Father Sham and all those who served Boys Town. You all moulded the person I am - and what you have done for me, I pass on to my own family now. Thank you.'

- Anthony Agrella

'After I left in 1992, Girls and Boys Town helped me find my first job as an assistant potter. I enjoyed it but my dream was to work with young people. While working, I studied. It was challenging, but Girls and Boys Town had taught me about perseverance. I had the chance to return to the organisation as a Child and Youth Care Worker and worked my way into the position of regional co-ordinator of training for Gauteng. I am so grateful for the way Girls and Boys Town has contributed to my development and I am proud to represent them.'



Noel Milner

'At first, it was tough. Then I discovered the Peer Group System and that was my saving grace. It instilled a sense of responsibility in me at 14 years of age. I wanted to show my parents that I'd make a success of my life. I moved up the system and started enjoying



Training



Girls



Residential care

school. The highlight was being elected Mayor of Boys Town three times ... that was huge!

'The way I conduct my life today is thanks to the lessons I learned at Boys Town. I built friendships that I have to this day. I have a beautiful wife and daughter, a great job and handle people with respect, integrity and honesty - which I first learned to do at Boys Town. I am extremely proud to say I'm an alumni. And I am forever thankful to Boys Town.'



Enclosed, with love:

- Your special supporter's Certificate of Honour
- Your historic Timeline calendar



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 (Act 100 of 1978)

FAMILY SERVICES

Reunited after 15 years

A Family Worker shares her experience of working with a teenager, Kris Domingo*, at Girls and Boys Town ...

Kris's* history is a tragic one. His mother died when he was two years old and Kris was entrusted to the care of his mother's family. His father had left to look for work.

His siblings were placed in different children's homes and Kris moved to other relatives before being placed in foster care. When his father returned, he desperately tried to find his children, but his efforts to locate them proved futile.

Kris's journey eventually brought him to Girls and Boys Town. We believe that all children need to have a sense of belonging. Without this feeling of connectedness, youth feel rejected and alone – which is why we were determined to connect Kris with his family.

Staff took Kris on trips to locate his siblings in

the Isipingo area. There were many unsuccessful ventures but we would not give up. Persistence paid off and Kris's sisters were found.

Reunited with their brother, they started to look for their father. We helped by following up leads and digging for further clues. Finally, we traced Mr Domingo. Although this is what Kris had wanted, he was anxious about meeting the man he'd last seen 15 years ago.

Kris and his dad will always remember October 8: the day they were reunited. It was an emotional time ... Kris reached out to shake his father's hand – but then, overcome by emotion and his father's tears, he embraced him.

They have started getting to know each other. Mr Domingo calls regularly to find out how Kris is doing.

Now that the Domingos are reunited, we need to help them become a bonded family – and this is the renewed focus of Girls and Boys Town's work. A lot has been achieved already, but our work with the whole family is only beginning.

*Name changed to protect privacy.



Father and son ... together again.

Your gifts = your positive support

Thank you! Your ongoing generosity tells us that you support the many ways in which Girls and Boys Town reaches into the lives of youth and their families. Without your investment in our work, it's doubtful whether any of the positive stories in this newsletter could have been written.

Every Rand that you kindly donate to Girls and Boys Town helps us to change lives – and futures. Thank you!

TRAINING AND EDUCATION

Learners and schools benefit

During the July school holidays, Girls and Boys Town Kagiso's Protem unit opened its doors to five learners from two community schools.

Two weeks were spent teaching these youngsters social skills and introducing them to different career opportunities. They enjoyed their time at our unit and made these comments:

'Protem has helped me to change my attitude towards the teachers and learners. I ignore the wrong things and don't get pressurised by friends.'
– Lorraine

'Girls and Boys Town is not a jail; it's a place where abandoned children are helped with their mistakes and we were treated like their own children. I would like to become a doctor one day.' – Thono

'I'm going to do the right things because I now know the skills ... if you follow the skills that they taught us you will make your dreams come true. Thanks for teaching us all the good things that we must know when we go back to school, to be the best



Learners focus on their work at our Protem unit.

learners in class.' – Christopher

Our Training and Education division has worked with many schools. In KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng, 12 schools and 392 educators have received training in the past few months, which has benefitted the 15 600 learners in those schools. Feedback from these schools has been positive – and we're looking forward to working with more schools throughout South Africa in 2009.

*A special word of thanks to our sponsors who help make this vital training possible.



EVALUATION AND RESEARCH

Quality of our services matter

Knowing that the outcome of our work depends on the quality of the services we offer, Girls and Boys Town formed a specialised Quality Services division in April 2008. We also realised that research would not only substantiate our effectiveness as an organisation, but improve effectiveness – so a research unit was incorporated into this department. Our Quality Service division therefore combines the functions of monitoring, evaluation and research and helps all other Girls and Boys Town departments provide enhanced quality in their services.

The research department has developed questionnaires that perform a unique function in bringing together a wide range of issues that examine relations between Girls and Boys Town's programme activities and their observed consequences.



Peter Marx, Head of Quality Services.



Kashiefa Kader, Researcher.

We
liste

Whether it's parents, educators, the girls and themselves – Here, we share the feedback received regarding experiences and Boys Town

From a mother
'Today my son came together as a family. I can honestly say my son came back more confident. I know that he is an example of the effectiveness of the programme and Boys Town

What an experience
'The children from Girls and Boys Town have been there. Many of them that they are have disappeared their placement and Boys Town only attributed care they received

From an adult
'They taught me to have respect for others and others a back and em others when weren't for Girls and Boys Town, I either be de



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Girls at our Home express views about Boys Town th

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**NATIONAL
HOTLINE**
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RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

Never a dull moment

Boys at our **Glenwood Family Home** in KwaZulu-Natal participated in a street clean-up as part of their community service efforts. Their positive attitude and teamwork impressed Tony da Silva, financial director of Key Hire, who kindly donated money towards the educational expenses of some of the youth at this home. Well done, boys!

Albert Hendricks of our **Dingle Family Home** in the Cape loves soccer and is a member of the All Stars soccer team. When Manchester United visited Cape Town, he was one of the children who had the opportunity to play with the Manchester players. Two other boys at our Dingle



The clean team ... our boys enjoy community service and often participate in projects aimed at helping others.



Fabian Oliphant proudly shows the trophy he won through the Toastmasters leadership course.

home have also been selected to play in All Stars: Unathi Gongqoba and Akhona Ntlutha. We're proud of you!

Fabian Oliphant, a Grade 10 learner at Girls and **Boys Town Macassar**, won a leadership programme run by the Chuckle and Chirp Toastmasters Club. The

toastmasters facilitators were pleasantly surprised by the enthusiasm of our boys and their eagerness to implement what they'd learned. Thanks to Toastmasters for this opportunity – and congratulations to the Macassar youth!



Regular training sessions are enjoyed by our young soccer stars.

Lessons from our youth

Today, 18-year-old Lungi tells other youngsters to **'value what you have.'** But when he came to Girls and Boys Town three years ago, his sentiments would have been different. Lungi had lost both his parents and felt he had nothing left to live for. He was taken in by a family member but his hurt and loss played out in substance abuse and being expelled from school. Lungi's last hope, at 15 years of age, was Girls and Boys Town.

Now in his final year at school, Lungi has his sights set on becoming a chartered accountant. He also plays rugby and soccer.

Lungi believes that his life has changed for the better during the past three years. Many of the friends he had prior to coming to Girls and Boys Town have dropped out of school and take drugs. He's grateful that he had the chance to change his life and did not go down the same path.

'It's important to search within yourself for the strength to do the right thing,' says Lungi. 'And parents should never give up on their kids.'



The way we were ...

Girls and Boys Town's 50th anniversary reminded many men of the time they spent with us as youngsters. Many community members, youth and their families enjoyed the fun day held at our **Tongaat Youth Development Centre** – which was also attended by many alumni, including two who were among the very first admissions in 1978: Krish Pillay and Rooplall Bissoon.

It was also a special day for Jakes Raman, Principal of our Tongaat Youth Development Centre – who remembers all these men as boys since he has worked at Tongaat since March 1978.



Tongaat alumni, back row, from left: Perumal Chetty, Rodney Pillay, Navindra Mothilall, Krish Pillay. Front: Strini Govender, Luckraj Ramphal and Rooplall Bissoon.

What our Magaliesburg Mayor says ...

Girls and Boys Town Magaliesburg's Mayor, Shaun Morton, reflects on what this responsibility means to him ...

'Being Mayor of a Girls and Boys Town Youth Development Centre is an amazing honour. It's not just a position of authority ... it's a passion and I really strive to give my best performance. I've worked hard for this position and I learned many lessons on my way here.'

'It's an achievement and honour to be Mayor. But as much as it is lekker, it's also scary! It's made me begin to realise that this is also what life 'out there' is like. You need to work at – and for – everything! Nice things don't just happen.'

'Girls and Boys Town has taught me to never turn to the past, but to learn from the past. Here, I've found parental figures, brothers and mentors.'



'Mr Mayor', Shaun Morton, in his 'official' regalia.

From our CEO



We've come a long way ...

What a journey!

This has been a year of many 'firsts': Girls and Boys Town turned 50, the first female chair and CEO was appointed and we saw the formal specialisation of organisational operations into four highly effective specialist service divisions – to mention just a few.

The commitment and support from Girls and Boys Town donors, volunteers and friends has made this a rewarding first year, as CEO, for me. Your belief in what we do and your championing of our vision and mission – despite these economically challenging times – has been deeply moving and has touched many lives positively.

Girls and Boys Town would have neither a past nor a future if not for your contributions over the years. This is why we'd like to honour you for your ongoing support ... through the Certificate and Timeline included with this special edition of Youth Today.

The success stories and updates, youth and family progress – and all the other stories contained within this publication – would never have been possible if not for you.

On behalf of our youth, I thank you. I also thank the voluntary Board and Regional Committee members, as well as the staff, for their efforts and personal sacrifices in ensuring that we offer services of excellence. Collectively, this all ensures that your investment in Girls and Boys Town delivers excellent outcomes.

Last but not least, I thank our youth, their families and educators, who have been committed participants in changing lives, circumstances and futures.

I wish you a safe and blessed festive season and look forward to the challenges and exciting developments that 2009 will bring, knowing that nothing will be insurmountable with your support.

Lee Loynes



Lee Loynes
Chief Executive Officer

I'd like to express my sincere gratitude to you for helping Brenton. He's been to several institutions but the day he went to Girls and Boys Town, improvement started. There's been a major improvement in his behaviour. I know there's been times where you were pushed beyond your limits - but through all that you had the patience to go on trying. I really appreciate the time and effort you dedicated to Brenton ..Thank you!

A mother's gratitude

When Prathina Albrech wrote to thank **Girls and Boys Town's Verulam Family Home** for helping her son, we had to share her letter with you - because it's your support that leads to outcomes like this ...



Prathina and her son, Brenton.

Mary's story

Everyone has their own ideas about what their job means to them - but Mary Molefe's is extra-special:



Mary Molefe

'I started working at Girls and Boys Town Magaliesburg in 1971, first as a cleaner, then in the laundry - and now I work in the kitchen. I used to walk for 8kms to get there. At that time, we had 105 boys.

One day I went to complain to the Bishop that the boys were being very naughty. Their rooms and bathrooms were messy, and I didn't think that I should have to tidy up.

'He explained to me kindly that the boys still have to learn. We have to teach them - and if there wasn't this work, we wouldn't have jobs! And to this day, I have always known that this is true.'



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.

You generate hope!

If you responded to our appeal for generators, thank you! And thank you for understanding how badly power cuts disrupt routines at Girls and Boys Town centres in all provinces.

Your kindness has ensured that our Magaliesburg centre was the first residential facility to be equipped - and all our other facilities will receive their generators during the months ahead.

We've heard that load-shedding will be reintroduced in 2009 - **so your generosity really has helped us to be prepared.** Thanks again!

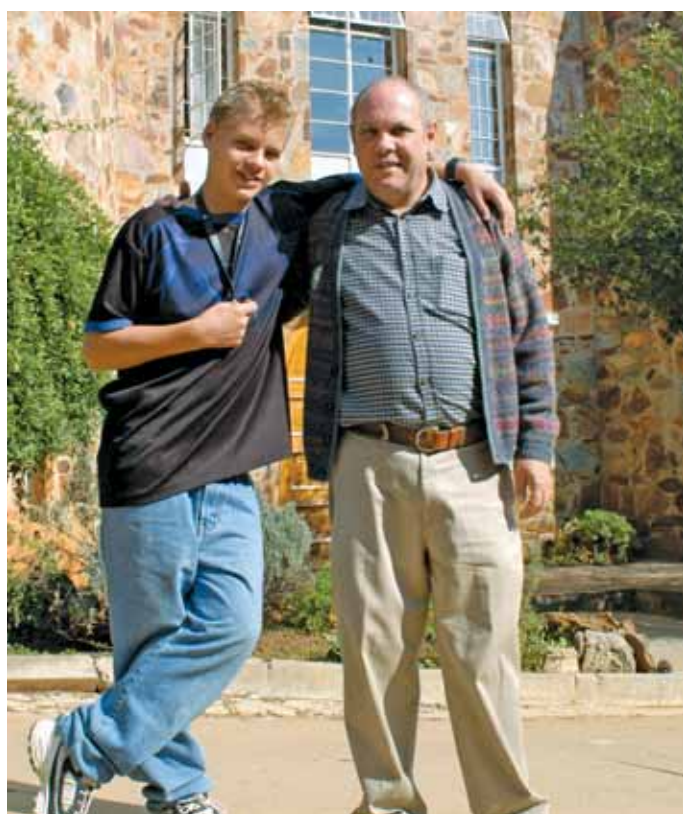


Thanks to your generosity, power cuts will no longer disrupt important routines at Girls and Boys Town. What a relief!



Public policies

1. Girls and Boys Town South Africa is a private, registered Nonprofit organisation in terms of the Nonprofit Organisation's Act (Act 71 of 1997) - Registration No 009-244 NPO.
2. Girls and Boys Town is registered as a 'Public Benefit Organisation' (PBO) in terms of Section 18A of the Income Tax Act (Act 58 of 1962). Donations to Girls & Boys Town are tax-deductible in the hands of the donor - up to **10% of taxable income**. No duty is charged on bequests made to it in Wills (SARS ref 18/11/13/379).
3. All donations received are used for the sole benefit and care of the youth of Girls & Boys Town.
4. Only staff in the employ of Girls and Boys Town are permitted to raise funds for the organisation - unless otherwise specifically authorised.
5. The names of Girls & Boys Town donors are never sold or divulged to other organisations.
6. The stories of youth published in our reports are true but their names may have been altered to protect their identity.
7. Youth are admitted to Girls & Boys Town regardless of race, colour or religion.
8. The Girls and Boys Town books of account are audited annually and its financial statements are available on request or can be viewed at the office of the Director of Nonprofit Organisations.
9. Girls and Boys Town does not receive funding from Community Chests in South Africa.



Harry Prince - who's a member of our alumni now - with one of the young residents at our Magaliesburg centre.

Our cross of love

Even the 'cross on the hill', near our **Magaliesburg Youth Development Centre**, has an interesting history, as Harry Prince will tell you ...

'On a hot Saturday morning in 1979, some alumni - along with the centre's youngsters - heaved two halves of the upright of a 20m steel cross up a hill.

We were determined to erect this powerful symbol of love and caring to show what the organisation represents. The wooden crosses that had been erected previously had been damaged by veld fires.

'It was a major exercise which had involved much planning and took great physical endurance. The camaraderie which existed between the 'old' and the 'new' boys and the staff involved was a manifestation of all that the then Boys Town stood for - and still does.

'We placed the cross onto bolts, which were firmly anchored into a concrete base to stabilise and secure it for many generations. What a

reflection of the love and stability that we had obtained from Girls and Boys Town!

Many changes have taken place over the years, but some of my fondest memories are of the warmth and love that we shared in the shadow of our cross on the hill that day. Long live Girls and Boys Town!



The cross on the hill ... a visible, shining symbol of the love and guidance that youth receive at Girls and Boys Town centres around the country.

