



SINCE 1958

# Youth TODAY

June 2010

A newsletter for friends of Girls and Boys To

## An Alumni youth reflects on lessons learned: The wisdom of hindsight

Some lessons can only be learnt with hindsight, as was the case with this old boy, who at first resisted the lessons and opportunities that Girls and Boys Town offered him ...

**N**ow that I'm grown up, I can see that the programme was designed to help me later in life. I keep in contact with my Family Teachers because I realised that all that they ever wanted was to help me grow as an individual and be the best I could be.

*I'm a proud ex-boy of Girls and Boys Town, and if there's any advice I can give the other girls and boys, it would be 'don't fight the system, work with it!'*

I regret the arguments I had with the staff and nowadays am very proud to have been at Girls and Boys Town. The life skills I learned, I use every day –

dealing with all kinds of people, working with difficult clients ... I'm proud that I can handle situations so well and I owe all that to the programme!

Thanks to Girls and Boys Town, I received a bursary to study and am doing very well in the working environment.

To all the staff, I want to thank you for all that you do for children around the country! To the donors, without you I wouldn't have had such a good upbringing!

Thank you all for your kindness and your love. May you be blessed!"

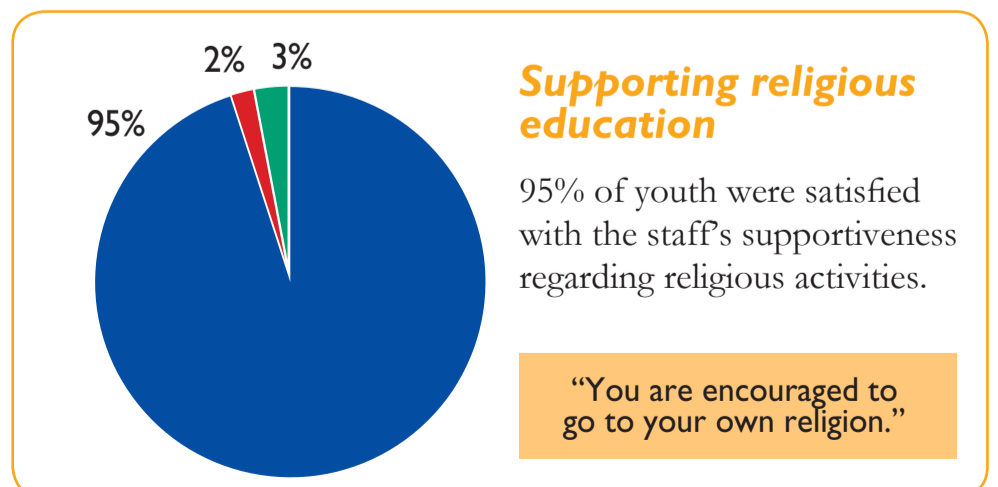
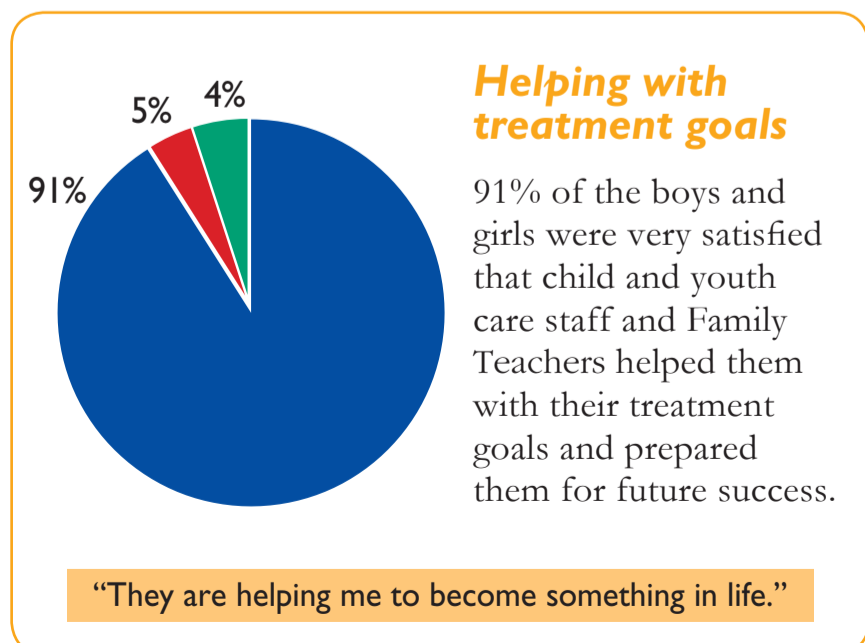


### EVALUATION AND RESEARCH

## Youth Satisfaction: A measure of success for residential care at GBTSA

We did it! Congratulations Residential Care for sharing in the mission of providing the best care for the youth that we serve ...

**W**e conducted a study to highlight the voices of the boys and girls with whom we work, where they evaluated the quality of the care they received. We surveyed youth in our eight residential care facilities in the Western Cape, Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal.



## FAMILY SERVICES

# Bridging the divide

The work of Family Services is often as much of a journey of discovery and understanding for our Family Workers, as it is for our youth.

**R**especting a family's cultural diversity is the foundation of Family Services work. Our Family Workers respect every family's values and traditions, and understand that each family is different.

Eshnett Booysen's, and Maureen Mangoele's cultural sensitivities were put to the test when they travelled to the rural village of Kunwana in the North West Province – about 350km away from their Randfontein office.

The purpose of the trip was to assess Knox\*, a 13 year old boy, and his family. After driving three and a half hours, they found the clay hut with the assistance of the villagers, who knew Knox well.

Knox and his siblings live with his granny and uncle.

Eshnett and Maureen realised something was amiss when the granny refused to speak to them, and communication wasn't as easy as they'd anticipated because, although Maureen speaks Tswana, the granny spoke a purer form of the language.

Our Family Workers managed to work out that the granny would only speak to them if a man was present, and only one man in particular.

Although they didn't fully understand why, Maureen and Eshnett agreed to wait for him to arrive. When he did, the

insistence for his presence made sense – he was the Chief of the village and nothing happens without him because he makes all decisions.

### Traditions

Realising that they had to work with the Chief in order to help Knox and his family, Eshnett and Maureen respected the family's traditions and worked with their culture rather than against it.

The Chief helped our Family Workers communicate with Knox's granny and they learned that Knox and his siblings were at risk of sexual abuse by their uncle. Girls and Boys Town facilitated the intervention to remove the children to a place of safety, and the Chief assured us that other children in the village would be protected.

Maureen and Eshnett felt like they had grown through this experience. The job of a Family Worker is infinitely challenging but they're constantly learning and being enriched by their experiences of the different personal values, cultures, traditions and beliefs that they come into contact with.

We're just grateful that we have friends like you to share these experiences with. Hopefully it is a journey of discovery and understanding for you too!

Our Family Workers, Maureen (left) and Eshnett (right).



## TRAINING AND EDUCATION

# Making community schools safer for learners

The Department of Education recently identified nine schools experiencing high levels of crime and violence, and contracted Girls and Boys Town to address the problems in these community schools ...

**I**t was clear from the start that these schools had similar challenges – high levels of crime, gangsterism and the use/abuse of drugs. It was also clear that the principals and staff struggled to deal with these challenges.

The availability of drugs and alcohol from nearby taverns and hostels posed a major threat to the safety of learners and also to the safety of educators.

And lack of proper access control was also a problem, with members of the community free to roam school grounds.

At most of these community-based schools, there was a lack of discipline, the staff acknowledged that discipline had collapsed.



Girls and Boys Town trained community-based school staff in empowering everyone to work together as a team to make things happen for their school.

Physical fights among learners were common, and some educators were even being victimised and threatened.

### Confidence

The Department of Education showed confidence in Girls and Boys Town's ability to empower those who had to deal with these problems. The first phase of the project was a huge success – it involved all nine schools, in nine different provinces, undergoing training in Positive Discipline and the Girls and Boys Town 'Well-Managed Classroom' programme.

The workshops couldn't have come at a better time – educators were eager to learn alternative ways to discipline their learners, as well as strengthen their management systems.

Deputy Chief Education Specialist in KZN, Mr Bhengu, said, "This is one of the best workshops that I've ever attended. It would be great for all our educators in KZN".

He went on to say that he strongly believed the 'Girls and Boys Town Education Model' was the solution they had been waiting for.

The Principal of one of the trained secondary schools in KZN addressing learners in assembly, said, "I have learnt that punishment doesn't make inappropriate behaviours go away, but teaching does".

Learners also expressed words of gratitude to our trainers for their presence in the school.

The poem on the right was written by one of the school's learners to show her appreciation for what Girls and Boys Town has done for her school.



## Guide to Action

Guide to the great Escape  
Guide to Action

Guide to Perseverance

You were here to remind us,

To remind us of the  
great future,

Of the responsibility,  
That we are Ambassadors of  
our own destiny and future.

That bravery in spite of fear  
is a success of its own.

To achieve hope.

To change our motives,  
to hopeful visions,

To remind us  
of the importance

Of being a leader and being  
leaded where our minds  
almost perished into,

Throwing in the towel  
and giving up on chance.

For us perceive the  
harshness of this world  
and that change must be  
worked for.

A poem to  
Girls and Boys Town  
South Africa by a  
Senior Secondary  
School learner

## RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

# Filled with hope for the future ...

Jarred is in his final year of school and will be entering the real world next year to pursue his dreams ...

**J**arred\* is 19 years old and in his matric year. Six years ago, he was 'deported' to Girls and Boys Town's Glenwood Family Home because he was 'too much to handle'. But what a turnaround!

A few years ago, no school would admit Jarred because of his poor behaviour record. Today, he's Chairman of his school's Representative Council of Learners!

Jarred's attained Achievement Level in the Girls and Boys Town Motivation System, which is our equivalent of a prefect in high school.

He's also a member of the National Sea Rescue Institute and regularly participates in training, meetings and exercises. Jarred is considering joining the South African Navy!

Jarred passed his learner's license recently and will be starting driving lessons soon.

Thanks to generous donors like you, Jarred's had many opportunities for social and emotional growth, over and above the love and care he receives at our Family Home.

In 2007 he was selected to participate in the Outward Bound experience in the Drakensberg, where he learnt to believe that he could do anything through shared experiences of hiking, abseiling and canoeing. Then in 2008, Jarred

took part in a Motorbike Hike to the Magaliesburg culminating in a National Youth for Christ week, where counsellors struck a chord. Jarred opened up to share some of his testimony publicly with other young people and found his Faith.

And in 2009, he went on a Wilderness Leadership Trail in the Umfolozi Game Reserve and learnt to risk trusting his trail companions enough to share things about himself.

Jarred sums up all of these experiences as '*changing his life for the better in a way that words cannot easily express – they become part of who you are.*'

In stark contrast to six years ago, Jarred is an inspiring youth with a hope-filled future. We're certain that all of his dreams will be realised as he develops and grows his gifts every day.

Thank you for the part you have played in Jarred's life and personal growth – I'm sure you join me in wishing him all the best for his final year and for what the future holds.



## From our CEO



### It takes time to learn life lessons

If there's anything we've learnt in our 52 years of work, it's that some lessons can only be learnt over time.

Journeying with our young people as we teach them the values, lessons, cultural tolerances and skills they need for adulthood is an important process.

Some youngsters are ready to absorb what they learn in that moment, while for others, these lessons gain meaning later in life. You could call it the wisdom of hindsight!

This edition of Youth Today gives you a glimpse into the journeys of our youth and our staff, and the lessons they have learnt along the way.

The significance for us as adults, professionals, helpers and carers is that we too develop and grow through our interactions with, and our journey alongside, these young people.

And as a part of our family, I hope that your journey with us is just as fulfilling.

*Lee Loynes*

Lee Loynes  
Chief Executive Officer

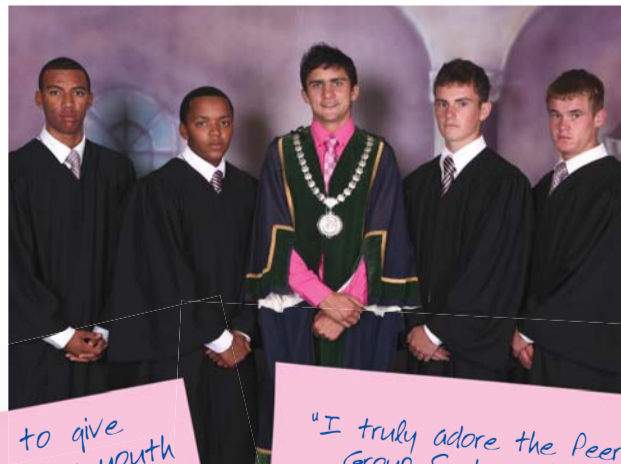
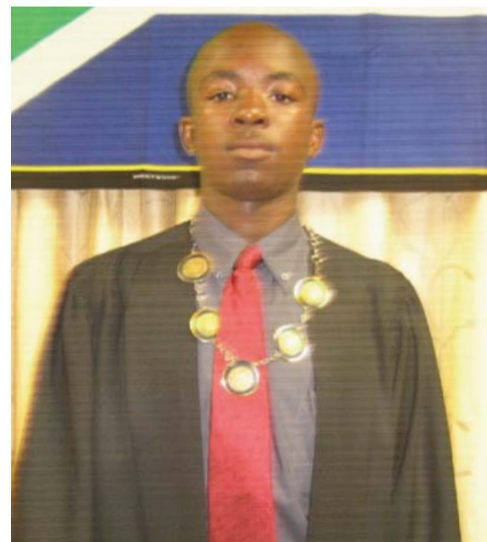
## PEER GROUP SYSTEM

# Our young leaders share their journey & lessons learned

**G**irls and Boys Town staff at Magaliesburg, Macassar and Tongaat were proud to herald in the new Peer Group System youth Council Bodies and Mayors.

Their jobs as youth mentors and leaders often find them facing their own personal challenges and opportunities for growth.

These young leaders share some of these challenges and opportunities with you ...



"The most important lesson I have learned so far is that 'through teamwork any mountain can be climbed. At first I tried to climb all the mountains alone, but there came a stage where I needed my team."  
– Magaliesburg Mayor

"The biggest lesson that I have learnt so far is to work hard and set a good example."  
– Tongaat Mayor

"Being a leader can have great privileges, but comes with great responsibility to lead by example."  
– Councillor

"I want to give everything to my youth on campus ... love which they don't all get at home, I want to work at developing their talents ... I want to give my life to leadership."  
– Macassar Mayor

"I truly adore the Peer Group System that Girls and Boys Town has established – it gives opportunities for me in so many ways. I now know what the real meaning of responsibility is."  
– Councillor

# Our young girls and boys reflect on lessons learned while in the wild



**W**hen our tour guide told us that we were going to camp in the bush with no fencing around the campsite, I got a bit worried, but hid my fear because I knew I would not learn anything with that state of mind.”

**I**wondered why I was asked to lead from the back of the line since I had no defence against any lions which may be behind me! I just followed my instincts and carried on walking without looking back because I really didn't want to know what was behind me.”



**T**his was a lesson to me: that in life we don't always have what we want so we should use what we do have to the best of our ability. I've also learnt that to be happy, you don't need a lot of money. You just need people around you who love you and

to encourage you to do the best you can.”

**W**e all had a chance to do guard duty at night while the others were sleeping and it was actually very creepy but it taught me to take responsibility.”

**I** learnt that team work is very important and respect goes a long way. Everything is quiet and you have a lot of time alone to think about your life.”

**A**bove all I started thinking about myself and my life. I learnt to work with others as a team and realised that in life we depend on each other and without the help of the others, I would not have been able to make it.”

**I** have learnt so many things – people should live simple lives and not cry for everything because it will come to them when the time is right; everything in life happens for a reason and when you make a choice from a place of love, you will never go wrong.”



**Our youth thank you, our donors and supporters, who afforded young people yet another 'learning life lessons' opportunity!**

“I am really thankful to you for your generosity. God bless you.”

“I am thankful that there are still people who look out for us and care. May God bless you and all your families. I will not waste the opportunities that are given to me and will make the best of them.”

“I am very grateful and thankful for having been given the opportunity to learn more about animals and wildlife. I learnt something new every day.”

“I just want to say thank you to the people that made this opportunity possible.”

## Our successful cyclist

We've seen one of our Dingle boys blossom into a phenomenal cyclist since he came to us three years ago ...

**P**ierre\* came to us three years ago from a severely deprived background. He showed an immediate interest in cycling and started repairing all of the bicycles at Dingle, and even started cycling to school, which was quite far away!

Last year, Pierres' Family Teacher entered Pierre into the Argus Cycle Race, which took place in March.

While Pierre was out training, he met a group of cyclists who belong to a cycling club. They were so impressed with his attitude and total commitment to cycling that they took him under their wing and bought him expensive cycling shoes and sunglasses.

They entered Pierre into his first race at the end of 2009, and he was placed right at the bottom of the rankings at 25. He did so well in that race that he rose to a 4 in the rankings!



The cycling club were so excited about Pierres' achievement and talent – they feel he could be a professional cyclist!

For the months building up to the Argus, Pierre trained exceptionally hard, sometimes cycling up to 150km in one day. He completed the race with three of our other boys from Dingle on Sunday 14 March and did exceedingly well.

Girls and Boys Town is so proud of Pierre and all that he's achieved!



### 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.



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