



**GIRLS  
& BOYS  
TOWN**

Helping youth S.H.I.N.E.® since 1958

# Youth TODAY

MAY 2019

A NEWSLETTER FOR SUPPORTERS OF GIRLS & BOYS TOWN



*Girls & Boys Town CEO Lee Loynes outlined the day's programme, and welcomed a diverse audience whose common interest was their involvement with youth transitioning from care.*

*Prof Adrian van Breda of the University of Johannesburg shared lessons learnt from 'Growth Beyond the Town' - study on care leaving conducted in partnership with Girls & Boys Town.*

## Girls & Boys Town Co-Hosts First African Care-Leaving Conference

On 18 January 2019, Girls & Boys Town co-hosted the first ever conference of its kind in Africa, along with the University of Johannesburg, the Africa Network of Care-Leaving Researchers, and Queens University Belfast.

Exploring the complexities youth face in forming an identity and creating a life once they leave the care of an organisation, the conference featured presentations from care professionals, practitioners and researchers. Focus was placed on sharing well-identified issues and the different ways these globally-faced challenges can be resolved in the South African context.

*Attendees were given insight into findings by academics and professionals from South Africa and Africa as well as parts of Europe, the United Kingdom and the United States.*

Topics covered in the conference programme ranged through care leaving, transitioning, social exclusion, vulnerable youth employment, poverty and sustainable living.

Girls & Boys Town, in collaboration with the University of Johannesburg, continues to devote extensive time to researching the challenges our own youth face when leaving our care. The purpose of this research is to track the transition of our youth into independence, annually measuring their progress and achievements.

These research-based best practices have proven to constructively prepare our girls and boys for life after leaving our care, and we have been able to share our findings and practice with other relevant child care organisations and researchers locally and further afield in Africa.



### 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.

### Benefits of a bequest to Girls & Boys Town

A bequest in a Will to Girls & Boys Town, 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 & Boys Town will consequently be entirely free from estate duty and will reduce the portion of your estate which is subject to Estate Duty.



**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)  
Registered as a Nonprofit Organisation (Act 71 of 1997)  
**Registration No. 009-244 NPO**  
PBO: 130000379  
Registered as a Welfare Organisation (Act 100 of 1978)



## “What makes you happy?” Self-care for caregivers?

**S**elf-care? - the easiest advice for someone to give, but often the hardest to accept!

Because of the inherent contradiction of caregivers taking care of themselves, we recently felt the need to set aside a day to give our professional carers the opportunity to fully consider this vital aspect of their jobs.

The end beneficiaries of this would naturally be both our caregivers and the Girls & Boys Town youth in their care.

When your role is to care for the health and happiness of vulnerable youth, the importance of this often outweighs other priorities. But, the reality is that when you're burned out, it is tough to do anything, let alone look after someone else. That is why taking care of yourself is not a luxury, it is a necessity. This is what our one-day workshop put into perspective for our team at Girls & Boys Town.

“As a caregiver it is impossible to care for others if you are unable to care for yourself,” was how one of our staff summed up the day's sentiments.

This is one of the most valuable, but often overlooked, tasks for caregivers. The physical, emotional, and mental health of a caregiver plays heavily on the well-being of the others in their care. The aim of the workshop was to communicate the seriousness of this in a fun and engaging way.

While getting to grips with the deeper concept of self-care, the day provided several diversions to aid self-discovery for the attendees...

It started out with a movie that plotted out a perfect example of how a lack of self-care can negatively impact those in your care.

Next, caregivers were offered practical tips, given some positive outlooks as well as physical and mental exercises to easily add to their daily routines that support this notion of self-care. Having warmed up, they then had a mini-Olympics where everyone had the chance to participate and simply have fun without the pressure and stresses of daily life.

And at the very end of the day, everyone had to answer one very important question...  
“What makes me happy?”

Caregivers left the workshop with a greater understanding of self-care:

“It was a very fruitful day spent together with our co-workers. We were able to share frustrations and came out with an overwhelming feeling of support knowing that we all face similar challenges.”

*Lee Loynes*

LEE LOYNES  
Chief Executive Officer



*The thrill of the moment! Peer Group Leaders get together before facing their assembled audience and publicly taking their oaths of service.*

# Oath-taking ceremony welcomes our 2019 Peer Group Leaders

**A**n oath-taking ceremony in early March formally brought on board our elected 2019 Peer Group Leaders.

Attended by parents, staff, and fellow youth, the annual occasion allows the new leaders to publicly take their oaths, but also to declare their willingness to lead and accept the responsibilities of their commitments.

Orientation began with a two-day workshop in mid-February. Its purpose was to equip newly-elected leaders with the skills they will need in the year ahead. Activities were both on- and off-campus with all leaders participating in the group discussions. After their training, leaders were allocated

to youth care staff mentors, and assigned to their specific portfolios, for example Health, Environmental Affairs, Education, and so on.

Going forward, leaders will have two meetings each week where they will need to report on the work being done within their portfolios.

The peer group system has long been unique to Girls & Boys Town, encouraging a sense of self government and family-style living where youth learn first-hand the values of leadership and responsibility.

We wish our 2019 leaders great success!



*Our outdoor ceremony venue (above), all ready to welcome important guests and peers. Building towards the oath-taking ceremony saw many hours devoted to group mentoring and orientation (below).*



### Now you can support us through MySchool

You can support Girls & Boys Town 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 & Boys Town 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 a bequest booklet available on our website, intended to be an easy-to-read guide for anyone who is interested in leaving a bequest to Girls & Boys Town.

By leaving a bequest to Girls & Boys Town, or ceding an endowment or insurance policy to us, you will ensure that we will always be here to keep on helping vulnerable young girls and boys for years to come ... empowering them to S.H.I.N.E.\*.

For more information on our Bequest programme and/ or to receive a copy of the brochure, please contact Gertrude Wilson on (011) 482 2655 or email her on [mailing@gbtown.org.za](mailto:mailing@gbtown.org.za).



# Kagiso youth outreach spreads the love



*Goodie-bags, greeting cards, snacks, and lots of attention – a joyful and rewarding day spent at a pre-school and crèche. Wonderful children and enthusiastic staff!*

*What finer way can there be to celebrate the ‘month of love’ than to spend time with desperately underprivileged children?*

That’s exactly what the staff and youth of our Kagiso family home did on their annual community outreach day in mid-February. Their chosen locality was an informal settlement on the outskirts of Randfontein, a place called Elandsvlei.

In this area, a local ministry runs a drop-in creche and a pre-school as projects – both desperately needed in a community where unemployment is high and families have little or no income.

“Our family home team sat together and decided that we definitely wanted to do our outreach day with these projects,” said one of our team members. “Elandsvlei became our place of interest because we saw that it is a community where many, many moms and dads did not have jobs. So we felt that it was fit to show our appreciation of the work already being done by the ministry, and teach our youth about love and generosity at the same time.”

On the big day, our team was welcomed by the ministry’s project manager and her staff, and we gave hand-made Valentine’s Day cards to the children as fun greetings. There were also gifts, and clothing for the toddlers.

What followed was a day of real enjoyment for all the children – a balloon match and other games all hugely enjoyed, and the winners very proud of their snack-pack prizes. Our youths and toddlers were so overwhelmed, and participation was very good.

Then there was music by our very own DJs, a dance contest – and even an egg race!

Concluding the morning were snacks - all served on a single large platter to reinforce the idea of sharing – and later, lunch for everyone.

“The day was a real success,” said our team spokesperson. “Thanks to everyone who made this day a success. The programme was closed with a prayer, and we all parted with a real sense of joy!”



*What could be more fulfilling than surprising a stranger with the gift of a beautiful rose? Love – and the moment – shared.*

## The Great Valentine’s Day hijack!

Looking to draw a more lasting meaning from the world’s annual day of love, our KZN team had some plans in place when 14th February dawned this year.

First up, the youth in their care were woken up with roses and chocolates accompanied by small personalised notes recognising each youngster’s positive attributes. And the message that went along with this was that, while love was great to get, it was great to give it too.

Straight away, the youth grabbed the baton and went out to ‘spread some love’ of their own. Boys handed out unexpected roses to neighbours and passers-by, and our girls added to this with the gift of small hand-made cards and greetings. Just little surprises, happily given, joyously received.

This was a wonderful opportunity for our youth to learn about the meaning of love, how to appreciate our neighbours and the communities we stay in, but also to embrace each other.

A lasting learning – warmly delivered by the day of love.



## LOVE, HUGS & HANDBAGS ...

### ... during donor visit to Kagiso!

A visit by one of our donors coincided with an uplifting surprise recently. It was an occasion for lots of love and hugs, with our girls using the moment to say a big 'Thank You' for the generosity our donors share with us.

Also present were ladies from a charitable

organisation that reaches out to vulnerable women, bringing hope with gifts of handbags that are filled with 'goodies'. And our girls' faces were naturally full of smiles, and sparked with joy and excitement, when they were invited to choose bags for themselves.

Our guest speaker summed up the

spirit of the day when she said: "We look at these girls and we see ourselves by helping them walk through their own life journeys." The Kagiso girls were deeply touched by the treats, spoils, and thoughtfulness.

## AWARD CANDIDATES REACH FOR A GREATER CAUSE

This year, our KZN region has 19 participants in Girls & Boys Town's President's Awards Programme. It is a demanding challenge that focuses candidates on learning new skills, participating in sport, and doing community work.

Under the guidance of local staff, the youth have regular get-togethers where they plan events and share ideas, but also learn to facilitate these sessions themselves.

What has followed has been an increase in youth participating in a new range of activities...

- *Community outreach activities have involved the youth in visiting old age homes where, for example, they have been singing songs, reading poems, playing the piano, washing windows, serving tea and snacks, and sweeping patios. Candidates have also been involved in clean up campaigns in their local parks and beaches.*

- *Learning new skills - our youth have showed enormous appetite to learn things like cooking, playing pool, modern dancing, and art.*

- *Participating in new sports - apart from their favourite games, there has been renewed interest in having sessions in the gym, jogging, or playing netball.*

It has all been amazing and encouraging to watch! Full marks to these youngsters for banishing any fear of failure and venturing well outside their comfort-zones. Good luck in the Awards.



## Kick-off!



### A great contest!

Competition is the name of the game on the soccer pitch!

So, when our Tongaat campus hosted its annual soccer tournament, four other neighbouring child youth care centres were invited to enter their teams. All accepted, all of them eager to win.

A late change had to be made by the organisers when it became clear that one of the care centres could only field young boys. In the spirit of fair play, the solution was to divide the entire tournament into two divisions - Under 13, and an Open category - and the whistle could be blown.

Then, a day of fierce contest ensued, with each team shouting on their players and sweating their on-field tactics. Sadly, our Tongaat heroes did not make it into the Open final, but all disappointments were forgotten in a happy round of refreshments at day's end.

There was great engagement between the teams, some fantastic skills on display - and all players went home tired but happily uninjured. Roll on next year!