



**GIRLS  
& BOYS  
TOWN**

Helping youth S.H.I.N.E.® since 1958

# Youth TODAY

MAY 2021

A NEWSLETTER FOR SUPPORTERS OF GIRLS & BOYS TOWN



*They may leave our direct care, but staying in touch provides valuable insights into how they're making their way in the world – and how we might better prepare future care-leavers for 'life beyond the Town'.*

## FINAL RESEARCH REPORT:

# How well are youth coping when they leave us?

Girls & Boys Town South Africa (GBTSA) and the University of Johannesburg are delighted to present you with our latest research report: *Resilience and Outcomes of South African Girls & Boys Town Care-Leavers Over the First Six Years Out of Care.*

It presents the quantitative findings of the Growth Beyond the Town longitudinal research from inception in 2012 up until the end of 2019,

updating a similar report written two years ago. We now share our final findings from the 150 participants who were interviewed as they disengaged from GBTSA, and the measured progress of many of these care-leavers during annual follow-up interviews. The report also provides an analysis of resilience variables that predict better outcomes for care leavers during their transitions through their first six years out of care.

We hope you find this a valuable report and we welcome any questions or feedback. To read more:

<https://www.girlsandboystown.org.za/portfolio-item/uj-gbtsa-final-longitudinal-research-report/>

## CELEBRATING 63 YEARS

“Here’s to 63 years of working with young people to help them heal from traumatic life experiences. It has been a rewarding journey, filled with more highs than lows”

Lee Loynes, CEO  
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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.

### 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.



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



**GROWTH BEYOND THE TOWN SA:**  
A longitudinal study on youth leaving care, which tracks resilience and outcomes of South African Girls and Boys Town care-leavers over the first six years out of care - 2020.  
Developed by Girls and Boys Town South Africa, in partnership with the Department of Social Work and Community Development, University of Johannesburg







## Reflecting on our 63rd Year

This January, Girls & Boys Town South Africa (GBTSA) celebrated its 63rd anniversary as it continues to develop and strengthen vulnerable children across the country and further expand its support of youth, families and communities.

These 63 years of working with young people to help them heal from traumatic experiences has been a rewarding journey, filled with more highs than lows. We realise that we exist to create opportunities for youth to grow and develop into responsible citizens, able to contribute to family and community life. This gives us resolve to carry on.

Each year gives us so many reasons to be inspired, and this 63rd year is no different. In this edition of our newsletter, we invite you to draw some inspiration from our alumni, Siphon, who is making a mark on both the people and the landscape in and around Cape Town. This year has also seen us reach the milestone of delivering our latest - and final - Growth Beyond the Town report which outlines 'Resilience and Outcomes of South African Girls & Boys Town Care-Leavers Over the First Six Years Out of Care'.

After a slightly delayed start to the 2021 school year, the youth currently in our care have now settled into their routines and, as always, are receiving assistance with their academic challenges from remedial support staff and through our learning centres. In our mission S.H.I.N.E – E stands for the Education pillar, an important element of the holistic care extended to our youth at Girls & Boys Town South Africa.

Like many organisations and communities, the COVID-19 pandemic has affected GBTSA over this past year, and still does. We've not only had to invest in adapting our facilities in line with government regulations, but also provide physical and emotional care for many children who could not spend time with their families.

Yes, COVID-19 has rewritten the social rulebook – most notably for the youth who just matriculated at the end of last year. With the majority of our elders still at risk and the high percentage of our population that have comorbidities, our matriculants now find themselves in reverse roles: they have become true care-givers and helpers to their families.

A quick look at the statistics shows how so many livelihoods have suffered across the country. It naturally affects people's ability to support NGOs like us. However, as an established non-profit, we know it's not the first time we and the country are going through tough times. It requires grit and resilience, being flexible and cost-conscious – and appealing to our wonderful, loyal donors who share our vision of protecting youth to help wherever they can.

Your continuing partnership, especially during these critical times, will put enormous strength behind our efforts, and reach so many vulnerable children whose broken lives must be put back together.

*Lee Loynes*

LEE LOYNES  
Chief Executive Officer



## CATCHING UP WITH THEIR PEERS

*Learning Support Centres unlock youngsters' real potential*

Most of our youth come to us with broken hearts and a sense of hopelessness, having faced rejection and emotional or other abuse. Some have behavioural challenges too and, as a result, are one to two years behind in their school grades.

Our Learning Support Centres have been set up to deal with our youth's extra educational needs and behavioural challenges, reshaping them so they're able to fully function among their peers again. Ultimately, this leads to them becoming better citizens, able to contribute positively to society.

Before a new child is placed in a centre, his or her last school report is thoroughly reviewed by an educator. An assessment establishes the youth level of the learner's educational status, allowing us to plan for any remedial intervention before possible school placement. We then collaborate with our relevant schools as well as the Department of Education to ensure that our learners are placed appropriately. Each learner is an individual so choice of school ranges widely, from the traditionally academic to the more practical and vocational.

After placement, a two-week intervention program is done with youth, helping them towards school readiness.

*Computer-based research under the guidance of a Learner Support Educator.*



### 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/)



### Our Learning Support Centres help youth with:

- Remedial Intervention
- Teaching fundamental, core and elective subjects
- Completion of homework, tasks, projects and assignments
- Subjects where they have a particular weakness

Where possible, learners attend school in 'platoons', enabling Learning Support Centres to synchronise reviews of what was taught the previous day, help with corrections and attend to new assigned work. WhatsApp groups, set up by individual learner and subject, help track work, tasks, and projects. In our computer centres, learners can research subjects under guidance of a Learner Support Educator. Part of their time is also spent with the social workers.

Naturally, the ultimate goal of helping our youth to function equally among their peers again depends not only on getting them into the appropriate school, but also keeping them there. We're pleased to say that our collaboration with the Department of Education and special contact people at each school has resulted in a drastic drop in suspensions and disciplinary hearings involving our learners.

*One-on-one reviews of those subjects in which learners may have a weakness.*

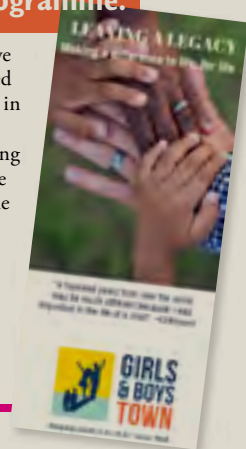


### Know more about our bequest programme.

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 & 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).







## Adding our voice on Children's Day

Too often, our careless world turns a blind eye to the physical and emotional harm that breaks the hearts of so many South African boys and girls each year.

So, during Children's Day last year, our youth took to streets, adding their voices to the *16 Days of Activism for No Violence Against Children*. South Africa has some of the most progressive legislation on the rights and protec-

tion of citizens of all ages and genders, yet the war on children continues. It was time to say 'Enough is enough!'

We at Girls & Boys Town would like to encourage society to acknowledge that violence against children is NOT a government or criminal justice system problem but a societal problem. Failure to view it as such results in all efforts to eradicate this scourge also failing.



**SPEAK OUT** We offer short-term counselling, assessment and or referral services for adults and young people needing guidance, through our national hotline service. Call us on 0861 58 58 58 for help.

## THINKING POSITIVE! THAT'S HOW YOU CHANGE DIRECTION

If you met Brian today, you couldn't guess at his recent history.

Here's an exemplary young man, focused positively on his matric year, taking on difficult school assignments, welcoming input from his host family, youth care workers, and the wisdom of academics to help him really achieve. The boy who grew up as an orphan now has a real will to achieve.

But two years ago Brian failed Grade 11, putting him at a crossroad.

Intervening on his behalf, our Learner Support Educator proposed to Brian's school that he nevertheless be progressed to his matric year because his results were not that far below the pass grade – and he was already 19 years old. The educators agreed... but Brian was not happy at all. He refused to be progressed and opted to repeat Grade 11.

Last year, he studied hard, drawing on the assistance of our Learner Support Centre and Youth Care Workers, passing his final exams and clearing his way into his final year of school. Now, Brian has a clear goal: achieve a university entrance pass mark in his matric exams.

Brian is growing in leaps and bounds. He will achieve more, just by having a positive outlook. The unwavering support of our dedicated staff members is right behind him.



## Amazing! Touched by the warmth of two 'budding young philanthropists'...

Are our Christmas wish-lists just dreams? Often, they are. But one Grade 11 learner from a Gauteng school - an enthusiastic young philanthropist – made sure that the dreams of youth at one of our campuses did indeed come true at Christmas.

She started a project in August last year with the goal of giving back to others, calling on residents in her community to assist her with donations to Girls & Boys Town South Africa. In December, community members and fellow learners from her school presented Christmas gifts and handmade decorations to our children.

We did not expect so many of our children's wishes to be granted. As they opened their gifts, there were squeals of excitement, running to their mentors to show what they had received, and to the young donor to show their immense gratitude.

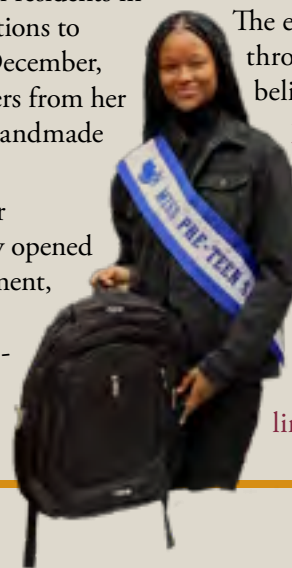
Another selfless teenager, the

reigning Miss Pre-Teen, has also taken it upon herself to help other young people. Along with her friends and their parents, they do a lot of philanthropic work in disadvantaged communities and when schools were re-opening this year, she took it upon herself to donate school backpacks to GBTSA.

We are so grateful to these youngsters, their communities and families for what they have done. The energy and powerful gestures of young philanthropists like these are helping vulnerable youth to believe again – and to thrive!

### DO YOU KNOW A BUDDING YOUNG PHILANTHROPIST?

Is there a budding philanthropist in your family who would be interested in joining this movement where young people reaching out to other young people? Your support will go a long way. Interested to join? Please send us an e-mail with "Budding Philanthropist" subject line to: [mailing@gbtown.org.za](mailto:mailing@gbtown.org.za)







'Fitness with Siphon'... leading a happy team on regular beach workouts.

## The story of a happy hustler



Since leaving our care in 2017, Siphon Njengezi has often found himself drawing on the skills he learned at GBTSA to try and make a living.

Now 22 years old, this bright, inspirational young man is staking his claim in the world and owning his future. Open-minded and adaptable, he has explored options as they have presented themselves, including spending time as a hotel chef, encouraging physical fitness, and exploring the world of artistic expression.

One of the constants in his life has been his passion for rugby, fitness, and sport in general. Achieving a personal fitness certificate from the Western Cape Sports Academy gave him the insight to create his business Fitness With Siphon Njengezi. The initiative entails training sessions hosted in public spaces in and around picturesque Kalk Bay. Basically, you get to spend time in gorgeous nature while working up a sweat – we couldn't be more jealous of his clientele.

Unfortunately, when lockdown was announced and public spaces like beaches and parks were closed, his business was not able to operate.

Seeking to find ways to keep busy and maintain sound mental health, he turned to building menhirs – vertical rock art formations – at various sites near Cape Town.

"Building the structures is a form of meditation for me personally and they represent the balance I am striving to achieve in my life," says Siphon.

It is during this period that he was invited by Three Ships Whisky to create a stone formation for the company's Master's Collection at the Norval Foundation where an audience watched him sculpting live.

Siphon embodies the resilience we all should strive for. We could not be prouder of his successes and wish him all the best for the future.



## Ribbon-cutting ceremony celebrates new kitchen

Bright and shiny, fully equipped, our old kitchenette in one of our family homes had been fully refurbished and was standing ready for use. But the youth and staff at this home all agreed that not even a slice of toast would be made until the very thoughtful donor who'd made it possible was given a rousing 'Thank You'.

While observing Covid -19 regulations, a small celebration was arranged, with one of the children assuming the role of Master of Ceremonies, welcoming the donor party, and leading the proceedings. It was a simple and genuine acknowledgement, warmly appreciated by our donor.



We strive to create a home-away-from-home for youth in our care, and a bright and functional kitchen can be the heart of that. It creates a nurturing environment, strengthening relations and teamwork - and preparing youth for independent living once they're out of care.