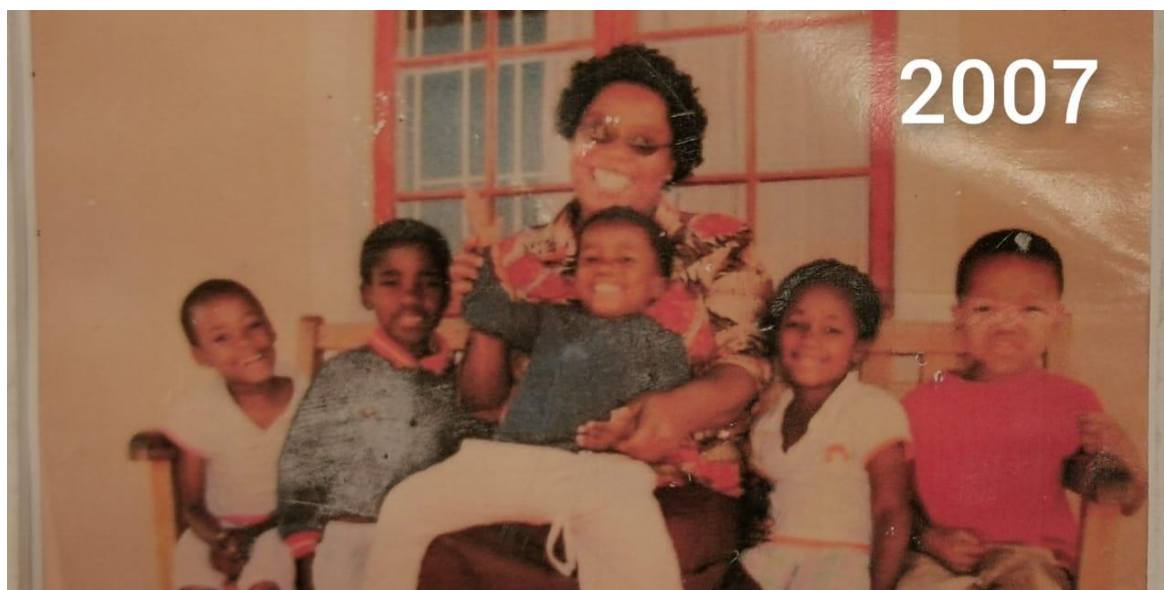


# Mid-Year Report 2022

## Introduction

With the 5<sup>th</sup> wave of the pandemic being thankfully less impactful in SA than anticipated and the very recent withdrawal of almost all restrictions, these first six months of 2022 has felt closest to the old 'normal' for over two years. All our Home from Home (HfH) children have been back at school full time, extra mural activities are up and running, all staff are back in the HfH office and the full busyness of old, appears to have returned. While there is an element of comfort in going back to the old 'normal', we have in fact been quite surprised at how frenetic and busy this was and is. It has prompted us to be careful of just jumping onto our hamster wheels, but trying to create disciplined times of thinking and learning. I think you will agree in reading the highlights and challenges reflected in this report that this work demands a flexibility and creative focus to reaching the necessary opportunities for the precious young people in our care.



*Disclaimer: All the young people in the image above are over 18 and have given Home from Home written consent to use their images. The youngest sibling of this family who is under 18 is not reflected in the pictures.*

### **The 2007 to 2022 picture of Mama Nikki's family:**

In the Child and Youth Care field, it is commonly recognised that the tangible successes of the work are usually very belated, often not seen amongst the crises/difficulties, and very seldom celebrated. Few highlights however, could come close to topping the one reflected by the picture on the first page of this report of Mama Nikki and her five foster children in 2007 and 2022. These once vulnerable three, four and five year olds with no family to care for them are seen in 2022 with Mama Nikki after having all successfully completed their schooling at the end of 2021. Furthermore, the loving family bonds, which they have established between siblings and mother, are no less deep than with any biological family, and will be forever.

This 2022 picture was taken at an event at their home marking some of the siblings moving out to more autonomous and independent living arrangements. Could it be considered the epitome of achievement for a foster mother and our organisation? It may well be, but we are also aware that even given the levels of commitment, dedication and love that this took from Mama Nikki and the support team, there is definitely also part miracle involved. Where God is invited into the sincere actions of humans, miracles can be created. What is clear is that we need to celebrate these and the other amazing outcomes for our children and recognise our Founders in the principles of this work they have established.

### **Children's stories of hope:**

There are so many of these wonderful stories that we need to remind you (the supporters) and our staff of to encourage the support and hard work involved in this work.

- Uzu\*, who has needed to attend a school for the deaf since she has been 10 years old and now at 17, has developed her skill at golf to such a degree that she is ranked in South Africa and playing in recognised tournaments.
- David\*, who expressed his joy and thanks when a sponsor supported him for his matric dance by having a tailor-made suit, a corsage for his date and a chauffeur driven car for the event.
- Janet\*, who after a number of years of struggling in mainstream schooling and her own self-confidence, is now blossoming in a special needs environment where she is employed at a second-hand charity shop and in training as a Youth Care Worker.
- Siphosethu, who has been with us since she was four years old and achieved many remarkable things in her life already such as, being selected for the Western Province Life Saving Team in 2019, successfully completing her matric last year and competing in the Table Mountain Cableway Charity Challenges for the last two years. However, a new very exciting development has been that her athletic running ability has been recognised and she has been offered a full bursary to attend a USA athletic college from this year.
- Renee\* will be graduating from nursing college on 8 July, after studying for a year and a half. She is hoping to work at Robin Trust where she used to do her practical. Robin Trust is a non-profit organisation, delivering excellent nursing and home-based care.

### **Opening of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Transition House:**

The first Transition house, for those youth who do not have suitable accommodation options when they need to leave their HfH foster home, was established at the end of 2019. This has provided an important support and launchpad to our young people leaving our care. With the need of this support increasing, we have been so fortunate to be supported to open a second transition house in Khayelitsha earlier this year. Three young men are currently living in the house with space for two more. We are having an official opening ceremony on the 30<sup>th</sup> June, which we are sure will be a good celebration.

### **Positive outcomes for our 'Aging out' group:**

We have been aware for some time that Home from Home's group of older young people has been growing over the years. This stimulated the development of the Evelyn Connolly Transitional Support Programme, which was established at the end of 2019 and has been actively working with the 16 years and older group to prepare them for living more independently and aging out of care. It is therefore so encouraging to see some of the outcomes for our young people in this age group. Firstly, we were very proud of all six of our matric students for 2021, who successfully passed their last year of schooling and

are following tertiary opportunities now. However, the South African context for young people it is not easy with the NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) statistic for youth recently indicated to be close to 50%. Again, it is encouraging to note that only 10% of our over 70 children of 16 to 25 years were NEET at the beginning of this year. Additionally, those from HfH who do find themselves in this predicament are still being actively assisted by our team to change this.

#### **Growing Educational and Transitional Support:**

Although the economic instability all around prompts a reaction to avoid growth or new development of any kind, we feel compelled to still focus on developing the Educational and Transitional care support we provide our children. It was estimated that the Covid pandemic resulted in most children in South Africa losing at least one year of schooling during this time. Added to this the growing unemployment rate for youth in this country (recently estimated at 66,5%) means that we cannot avoid doing more to increase their chances of 'survival' in the harsh realities of the SA context.

Trying to develop different forms of support ourselves is far too costly and onerous, so we believe it is crucial that we grow our relationships with organisations that are already doing this work.

Fortunately, we have established relationships with organisations like, Preeva and their tutoring programme, as well as, Oxford Reading Safari. However, we have also been growing further partnerships with some new wonderfully creative organisations whose work we believe is making a huge difference in this area.

- **The Orange Art Project:** who started out as a pilot in a few homes, has expanded to be working in 20 homes and with 86 children and proving to have a much greater impact than simply the wonderful art produced. We have seen the benefits to our children and families in their social awareness, education and general well-being through this project.
- **Surfpop:** began as a pilot with only six of our children last year and because of their impact we are expanding their programme to 35 of our children this year. Surfpop is an NGO that offers an after-school programme for children from Gr 2 up to and including, Gr 9. Their programme involves a twice weekly surfing activity with the children that is combined with a thrice weekly link to education and life skills training. By incorporating the physical activity in nature, with their social and academic support, we have seen positive impact for all, including our special needs children.
- **Home of Hope:** This NGO works specifically with children on the special needs spectrum with the express focus on helping them to become productive and responsible members in their communities and offer further assistance into their adulthood. A number of our children have benefited from the relationship we have with Home of Hope and we are hoping to grow this partnership further.

#### **Budget outcomes for the financial year ending 28 February 2022:**

With the economic impact of the pandemic resulting in a number of our funders having to withdraw or lessen their funding commitments to us over the past 18 months (approximately R3 million), it was a real highlight that we were able to meet with our budget for the last financial year (FY22). This was due to some tight controls on expenditure, which resulted in savings made possible, but mostly, through new donors coming on board and some loyal donors being able to increase their support.

#### **Budget development for FY23:**

With the already unstable economic situation in the world, the Ukraine war has only exacerbated this and made it very difficult to agree on budgets. We have taken a very conservative approach in developing our budget this year and although having agreed on a budget after some reworking of the original, we will still do a full budget review at the end of August. The knock-on effect on many budget items with the fuel price increasing so significantly, as well as, the fundraising environment going forward, will undoubtedly have an impact on our budget. This will be important to review more regularly than in previous years

**Independent M&E conducted of HfH:**

The Department of Social Development (DSD) in South Africa is responsible for the oversight of all non-profit organisations and child protection agencies in our country. Child protection agencies include Designated Child Protection Organizations, Child and Youth Care Centres and Cluster Foster Care Schemes, like ourselves at Home from Home (HFH). DSD is the arm of government, which reviews and renews our registration every three years, as well as regulating and monitoring our service delivery on a continual basis.

DSD completed their onsite evaluation of HfH in February and released their report in April. We were very pleased that we received high ratings of 80% and above for all areas of the evaluation, which we believe is a wonderful affirmation of the standard of work that we are providing.

Home from Home has subsequently been classified by the DSD report at the top level of functioning, 'Level One', and defined as a 'Mature' Cluster foster care Scheme.

**Long-term strategic plan:**

It has been excellent to have a long term planning process facilitated by an external consultant, James Taylor. Two workshops with office staff, together with representatives from the Foster Mothers from each region, saw three days of work towards our first longer term plan in the last three years. We have developed a clear framework for a five-year plan for our organisation and now need to specify these core strategies with details of the plan that will then be ratified by our Board. Although it is administratively challenging to involve all groups of our HfH family, involving our Foster Mothers has been invaluable and going forward we want to also include the youth. We hope to be sharing some of the specifics of this longer-term plan in the End-of-year report.

**Thank You:**

Amidst the continued times of difficulty and change we are so thankful to you, our supporters. We know that the world is full of 'empathy and giving fatigue' with the amount of need out there. Also, many of the challenges of the world have come close to home and family for many of you, yet we at Home from Home continue to be blessed with your support.

As we appear to be emerging from the Covid threat, I also want to acknowledge our staff team. Both Office staff and Foster parents, who are mostly the same team from over two years ago, have weathered the storm and I believe become a more strongly connected and effective team.

May God's grace continue to shine on us with the loyal family members we have!

With gratitude



Peter Marx  
Executive Director