



Home from Home

Mid-Year Report: June 2021

South Africa is being engulfed by a third wave of the Covid pandemic at present, with lockdown measures being reinstated and the vaccine roll out unlikely to reach our staff and families for some time to come. We could be forgiven for feeling a little paralysed.

However, when looking back on the past year and recognising how we have been supported and managed to navigate the many challenges, we can only remain hopeful and trust that we will come through this too.

In fact, there have been many happenings, events and outcomes in the first half of this year for us to be celebrating rather than bemoaning (a number highlighted below in this report). Possibly the clearest example of this is where, although the predicted economic crisis has had a significant impact on a number of our supporters, there has been new support and those able to increase support, resulting in Home from Home completing the financial year end (end of February 2021) with a small surplus.

This is an amazing outcome and there have been many more that we need to be recognising and celebrating. It is surely in living with this perspective on life that we assist the children we care for to be resilient in the face of their far greater challenges. As a young person battling with cancer was recently quoted as saying; *"I can't wait for life to stop being difficult, before I decide to start being happy"*.

Strategic Highlights

In the End-of-Year report last year, we reported on three crucial areas of focus going forward; developing our Transitional Support Programme, increasing our staff team capacity and securing our core business during the economic crisis.

There have been amazing developments in all three since the start of this year:

- **Development of the 'Evelyn Connolly Transitional Support Programme':** Besides having established some support for our young adults transitioning out of our care last year, we realised how much more needed to be done in preparing them and enabling their work readiness. We are so excited that funders have come on board not only to support the continuation of this programme in 2021, but the development in the support offered by this programme, as well as, the majority of the funding for the next three years. This will make a marked difference for those young people who are 16 years and older in our care and give them a fair chance of 'making it' in the ever more difficult society they need to transition into.
- **Increasing the Staff Team capacity:** In recognising last year that we needed more capacity in our staff team to enable the quality of work we aim for, but also to introduce a more substantial Transitional Programme, we accessed volunteers to assist us.

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We still have volunteers involved, but fantastic developments have happened where three new full-time posts have been funded for our team. Two dedicated posts to the Transitional Programme came from those funders and a further Social Worker position has been granted from the Department of Social Development.

The two transitional workers are already in place (Lynne Brown and Nasiphi Landingwe) and we hope to find the new social work position within the next month or two. We have also had a part time fundraising position approved by our Board for 2021 and Tanya Townshend has been a very welcome appointment. These positions have already made a big difference and will increase in their impact into the second half of the year.

- **Securing our core business in the economic crisis:** The withdrawal of some funders and the reduction in the support of others due to the economic crisis created by Covid, sparked our focus on securing the core of our business, the 36 Loving Family Homes at Home from Home.

From the beginning of this year our fundraising team has been on a campaign to target any funding deficits for this financial year in terms of keeping each of our homes open and providing the necessary care to the children. We have had an amazing response to this campaign and can report that the vast majority of our homes are now fully funded for the rest of the year.

Other Highlights

There are so many highlights and miracles that happen each day in the lives of our children and families that it detracts from the reality in mentioning some, however, we do want to bring broader organisational highlights to your attention.

- **All matriculants of 2020 pass their final year:** It was rewarding for us to obtain the news that our three matriculants of 2020 had passed. Furthermore, one of them has become our first university student in being accepted into the University of the Western Cape.
- **Connectivity project is completed:** Shortly after the start of Covid last year we went on a campaign to get all our homes set up with computers and connected with internet access. This was crucial as it enabled the continued support of our families through virtual platforms but also, supported the children's education where they were unable to attend school. The wonderful response from donors saw us secure this funding within months and begin setting up our 36 homes. This was a mammoth project that needed to navigate the restrictions of lockdowns, but we are so pleased to report that we have completed these installations one year later. As this pandemic extends into the second year we realise how much more valuable this development is becoming.

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- **The Founders Story:** Pippa Shaper and Jane Payne, have played a crucial role in the transitioning of new leadership for the organisation. Their direct support over the last two years has been invaluable and as they have 'cut the apron strings' to no longer being directly assisting, their acceptance of the roles as the first Patrons of Home from home, will certainly mean that their support is not lost.

Since the beginning of the year, they have had more time to write up the history of our organisation and this very interesting and important document has been finalised. It will be appearing on our website in the near future.

- **The Orange Art Project:** This is a wonderful collaboration with Jill Trappler, a local artist, who set up a group of local artists working with the children in our homes. They started small in 2020 but the interest in the youth grew phenomenally and soon there were twelve of our homes involved with over 60 children producing pieces of art.

In February this year 347 pieces of our children's art was exhibited in an established Herbert Baker gallery in Cape Town. Witnessing the Foster Mums and their children coming to see their art exhibited in this building was a very special experience. This project is continuing and Jill has plans to extend it to more of our homes, however additional funding support is needed to keep it going into the second half of this year.

- **Cableway Charity Challenge:** This was an incredible fundraising event this year in Cape Town, where we were fortunate to be selected as one of three beneficiary organisations. The goal for participants was to seek sponsorship for each lap climbed up our iconic Table Mountain within 10 days. One of our staff members, Tanya, and one of our young adult (children), Amaza, participated in this event with Amaza being awarded a prize for the funding she attracted. Our entire head office staff team supported them and many even climbed Platteklip Gorge at least once in support of Amaza and Tanya. It will be difficult to beat this event for a team building exercise!

Priorities of focus going forward

- **Connection/Connectedness:** Ironically, the severe social distancing practices of Covid have heightened for us the importance of connection with each other. The foundation of our work is creating family where there has been an absence of this for our children and so being able to create this connection even where there are limitations has become crucial.

We have worked hard as an office team at developing this 'family' connection as we believe it is central to our resilience and effectiveness in meeting the challenges of the time. Going

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forward we want to develop this further by, more significantly, bringing the other role players in our Home from Home family closer like, supporters, volunteers and service providers.

- **Longer term strategic plan:** Since the onset of this pandemic it has been difficult, if not futile, to make longer term strategic plans. Our focus has been predominantly on adapting to the immediate changes and at best, making short term strategic plans.

This year, we have however, re-introduced longer term strategic planning. Central to this has been the involvement of the Reading University Henley Business School Executive MBA project in working with us and some other selected NGOs in Cape Town. Their work with us culminated in an immersion week at the end of March and a detailed report recently sent to us, where they have assessed our functioning and made short, medium and long term recommendations. We will be using these to base the start of developing a new three to five year strategic plan for Home from Home.

- **Improved marketing:** With these economic times and the reduction in the 'pot' available to NGOs, the competition for funds is greatly increased. At Home from Home we are blessed with a good model of care and very powerful content coming from our work, but we do need to find improved ways of getting our story to be heard.

By actively involving more people in telling our story and not leaving it mainly to the small fundraising team of three, is something that we have been working on. Making our story available and accessible to other staff, board members, donors and supporters is surely a strategy that can make a difference. We will certainly need to delve into our creativity and be innovative in finding the edge in our fundraising efforts, as economically, the situation is likely to get worse before it improves.

Thank You

We, at Home from Home are yet again, so grateful for the incredible support we have received from you, our supporters. It is humbling and wonderfully hopeful, to know that even during a time of world crisis, where all are under greater pressure to provide for their own, there are those who can still provide such significant support to those they do not know. God bless you all!

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