

EPWORTH CHILDREN'S VILLAGE NEWSLETTER: A CELEBRATION OF COMMUNITY AND GRATITUDE

FOR JULY 2024

A Celebration of Home and Thanks

We are filled with joy and gratitude as we reflect on the incredible support and love that have transformed Epworth Children's Village into a true home for our children. Your contributions, both big and small, have made a profound difference in their lives, providing them with hope, security, and a brighter future.

Nelson Mandela Day: Celebrating 15 Years of 67 Minutes

In the spirit of Nelson Mandela, we gathered to celebrate the 15th anniversary of Nelson Mandela Day. This day, dedicated to 67 minutes of selfless service, honors Mandela's 67 years of fighting for social justice. As Mandela once said, "It is in your hands to create a better world for all who live in it."

Nelson Mandela Day is a reminder that each of us has the power to make a difference. This year, we were blessed to celebrate it with our community, and we are deeply thankful for the generosity of our donors who made this day special.

Thank You to Our Donors

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the incredible donors who joined us on Nelson Mandela Day and contributed to the well-being of our children. Your support means the world to us and to the children we care for.

ACTOM Electrical

Thank you for adopting Oaks for the day and for your incredible efforts in repairing window rails, window handles, door locks, and taps. Your contribution of much-needed beds was greatly appreciated.

Ageless Glow

Thank you for the delightful sweets. Your generosity brightened everyone's day!

Bowen International School

A big thank you for the singing, dancing, and uplifting performances. Your enthusiasm brought so much joy to the children.

Discovery Vitality

We are grateful for adopting the therapy centre for the day, and for coming in to clean and paint. Your support has made a significant difference.

Distant Grand Lodge

Thank you for your kindness and support.

ECSA

Thank you for spending time with the children and meeting everyone. Your presence and engagement were truly appreciated.

Eden Perfume

Thank you for your generous donation of groceries, lotions, and bed. Your support helps us meet the needs of the children.

Howden Africa

We appreciate your donation of blankets. They will keep our children warm and cozy.

Joy Ministries

Thank you for coming and lifting the children's spirits. Your visit made a meaningful impact.

OnStyle

Thank you for your support and generosity.

Pari

Thank you for the groceries. Your contribution is greatly valued.

Protea OR Tambo

We are grateful for the soup and rolls. Your donation was both practical and appreciated.

Rooftop Ministries

Thank you for your groceries and continued monthly support. Your consistent generosity is vital to our mission.

Scoop

Thank you for the soup jar meals. They provided warmth and nourishment to the children.

Tiger Milk Bedfordview

Thank you for providing a delicious meal. The pizza was a hit!

Vibrant Vision Foundation

We are thankful for your groceries and monthly support. Your ongoing contribution plays a crucial role in our work.

A Call for Continuous Acts of Kindness - While Nelson Mandela Day encourages us to give 67 minutes of our time to help others, the spirit of this day should extend beyond just one day a year. At Epworth Children's Village, we believe in the power of daily acts of kindness and the lasting impact they can have. Let us strive to embody Mandela's legacy every day, creating a ripple effect of compassion and care throughout our community.

Thank You

We are profoundly grateful for each of you who has contributed to making Epworth Children's Village a place of love, safety, and growth. Together, we can continue to build a nurturing environment for our children, ensuring they have every opportunity to thrive. Thank you for your unwavering support and dedication to our cause.

Where Are We Now: An Update from Epworth Children's Village

Epworth Children's Village found itself in dire financial straits. We have faced enormous struggles with department funding over the last two years. A really difficult decision was made in March 2024 to close the home on the 31st of May 2024. With the backdrop of a very challenged welfare sector, it became obvious that the children would not all be placed by the 31st of May. Provision was made to continue with a skeleton staff until all children were safely placed.

In a crucial turn of events, a firm of attorneys came alongside Epworth and took the DSD to court. The case was won, and a court order was issued that forced the government to pay the monies due to the home for the first two quarters of the year. This happened one day before we were scheduled to close, allowing us to keep our doors open. Our dedicated staff, who had not taken other employment, all agreed to stay on and continue working.

This court order has given us the opportunity to review the situation and continue the valuable work that we do. However, we urgently need financial assistance to keep ourselves afloat. Some large corporates are being approached to assist financially, while others are helping us to restructure our expenses and look for cost-cutting opportunities, such as utilizing solar energy and our borehole for daily water needs.

At present, we have 41 children in our care, with the capacity to house up to 84 children at full capacity. We offer care to children placed with us by the courts after being found in need of care under the Children's Act of 2005. Our commitment includes around-the-clock care and therapy for our children, ensuring they receive the support and attention they need.

Way Forward

As the paths remain unclear, we know that we have a purpose, and we are collaborating with various experts to find sustainable solutions for Epworth. We are exploring alternative revenue streams and are currently expanding our Therapy and Assessment Centre, seeking partners to support this initiative. Additionally, Epworth has started to engage other individuals and the community to assist with upgrading the village, ensuring a better environment for our children.

Your Support is Crucial

We are calling on our community and supporters to help us navigate through these challenging times. Your generosity and assistance can make a profound difference in the lives of the children we care for. If you would like to contribute, please consider donating or assisting us in our cost-cutting initiatives. Together, we can ensure that Epworth Children's Village continues to be a safe and nurturing home for children in need.

Thank you for your continued support and dedication to our cause.

Current Situation

- **Welcoming Back Our Children:** We are heartened to share that we have begun re-admitting children into our care. Three of our children, who had been transferred to another facility, have returned home, and we eagerly await the return of five more.
- **Welcome to our newbies** – We admitted one female age 3, in the 3rd week of July and are waiting for a 4 and 5-year-old to join.
- **Our Dedicated Staff:** Our staff's unwavering dedication has been instrumental in maintaining a safe and nurturing environment for all the children at Epworth Children's Home. Their tireless efforts ensure that our children feel loved and secure, fostering a stress-free atmosphere.
- **Reuniting Families:** We are in the process of reuniting a few more children with their families once the necessary paperwork is completed. These reunifications are filled with hope and joy for the children and their loved ones.
- **New Applications:** Statutory social workers are actively submitting applications for placement, and the process is already underway. We are hopeful that our home will soon be filled with the laughter and joy of new arrivals.

Problem Areas

- **Impact on Academic Performance:** The insecurities surrounding their future have led to a drop in the pass rate for our children. We are working tirelessly to provide the stability they need to succeed.
- **School Enrollment Issues:** With the anticipation of more children joining our care, enrolling them in school poses a major challenge. We are committed to ensuring every child receives the education they deserve.

Achievements/Highlights

- **Academic Progress:** Despite the challenges, some of our children have shown remarkable resilience by progressing to the next grade. Their determination inspires us every day.
- **Independent Living Success:** In January 2024, four of our senior children began an independent living program at Alberton Methodist Church. They are thriving under the guidance of the Methodist Church and Amcare.
- **Successful Reunifications:** Out of the 22 children who left Epworth, 10 were successfully reunified with their families. These reunions are heartwarming milestones for everyone involved.