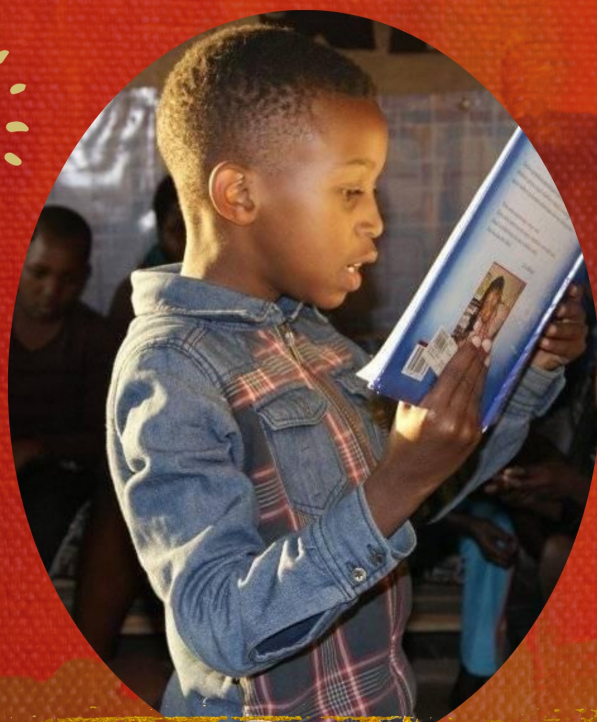


Celebrating
2023!



CHOSA

Introducing our newest monthly grant recipient, Imfuneko Community Projects

One of our newest partners, Imfuneko, has seen exponential growth this year! Imfuneko runs an after-school program attended by nearly 100 students in the township of Masiphumelele, an area that has been systematically under-resourced. Students receive academic support, life skills training, a hot meal, and a safe space to connect with peers. Many of these students are the children of participants in Imfuneko's programming for adults with disabilities.

Imfuneko's staff have seen improvement on the report cards of nearly every student who attends regularly. But they aren't only concerned about their academic growth; Imfuneko also takes the children on hiking trips to experience the healing benefits of nature and expand their understanding of the world beyond the township.

Our favorite new initiative at Imfuneko is its community garden. **Seeking to fight poverty and hunger in their community, Imfuneko partnered with several organizations to plant a community garden,** which now provides food for their community soup kitchen and for the participants in their after-school and disability programming. In light of the garden's success, Imfuneko is now training other grassroots organizations in their unique collaborative approach.



While CHOSA's monthly grants cover Imfuneko's most pressing daily needs, they are growing rapidly as word spreads about their programming. CHOSA staff are providing capacity-building support to help Imfuneko build its own website and social media channels in order to expand their fundraising and collaboration opportunities. This is key to our mission of helping our partners become sustainable long-term. Imfuneko's biggest goal for next year is to expand their physical structure to accommodate more children, and CHOSA is proud to provide financial and capacity-building support to Imfuneko as they serve their community.

Occupational Therapy training changes lives at Hlumelo Educare

Hlumelo Educare is an inclusive preschool where autistic children learn alongside their neurotypical peers. Hlumelo welcomed a volunteer from Pacific University this year, an occupational therapy (OT) graduate student named Carly Egli. OT helps autistic children learn crucial life skills, as well as strategies to manage their unique sensory needs. Below, Carly shares about her experience:

"I was delighted to meet [CHOSA staff member] Zukie and [Hlumelo's founder] Phumeza and hear about the impactful work they do with a team of teachers. They shared with me that the teachers needed extensive training about autism, as well as support strategies they could implement to meet the needs of autistic students. **I had the privilege to spend 6 weeks working onsite with the staff at Hlumelo, providing a teacher training session on autism and neurodiversity, and then working on strategies for the teachers to support neurodiverse children in the classroom.**

When I returned to the U.S., I continued to send training resources to them, while developing connections that may provide more support in the future and examining the research on ethical international student learning to make sure the needs of Hlumelo are always kept at the forefront. We were able to connect with a local university in Cape Town to begin the process of additional OT support, as well as develop training materials for students who are interested in future international service learning.

The women who run this school are working so hard to serve these children with the resources they have, and it is my hope that we can continue to support their work into the future through additional training, resources, and whatever Phumeza and the Hlumelo team identify as priority needs. I feel incredibly honored to play a small part in their work."



Amplifying youth voices at our year-end networking event

Last month, CHOSA hosted a transformative networking event. *Dreams Beyond Barriers: Towards a Just South Africa* brought like-minded community-based organizations and other stakeholders from across Cape Town together to connect and collaborate.

Central to the event was a panel discussion addressing "Systemic barriers and innovative solutions: overcoming the complex unjust systems in South Africa," with a specific focus on the challenges faced by children in under-resourced communities. The panel sparked insightful conversations by delving into historical context, practical solutions, and the intersectionality of the issues.

Beyond discussions, the event featured compelling performances and impactful storytelling by the CHOSA partner projects' children and youth. The event served as a rallying point for fostering awareness and understanding of systemic challenges facing vulnerable youth in South Africa, laying the groundwork for collaborative efforts to overcome these barriers. We look forward to hosting more events that amplify the voices of the children and youth driving the movement toward equity in our country.



For more of our latest news, follow us!



ChildrenofSouthAfrica



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Make your year-end donation today:

By check: CHOSA, 220 N. Kenter Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90049

Online: www.chosa.org/donate

info@chosa.org | (323) 327-6193

We are so grateful for your support this year!



Stories of success: from Centre of Hope Children's Home to university!

Centre of Hope Children's Home, founded by Hazel Maposela, cares for 29 children and receives monthly grants and capacity-building support from CHOSA. Today, we're celebrating the incredible work of Centre of Hope by hearing from two young people who grew up at the home and have now transitioned to university.

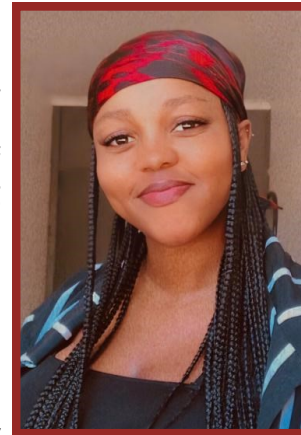
Sisipho came to live at Centre of Hope when she was in 7th grade. With no parents to care for her, she moved from the home of one extended family member to another, but was suffering mistreatment that left her feeling like a burden and wondering if, somehow, she was the problem.

"When Hazel took me in," Sisipho remembers, "I was closed up. I didn't want to be a burden, I didn't want to open up, and Hazel let me be. She was patient, and took baby steps with me. She showed me there was never anything wrong with me; I just wasn't in the right place yet."

At Centre of Hope, Sisipho finally experienced unconditional love. "I got to bond with Hazel so much," she says, "that everyone outside thought she's my mom. Since I never had that mother figure, I got another mom here with Hazel. **There's a gap that feels like it can't be filled, when you're succeeding and you want your parents to be there to watch and cheer for you. But Hazel filled that gap.**"

One of Sisipho's fondest memories is her high school graduation. "Hazel planned everything for me. We went to do makeup and a photoshoot, and after the ceremony I went out with my friends. I had the best time of my life, and I will never forget that moment, thanks to Hazel."

Today, Sisipho is completing her third year of her Office Management and Technology degree at Central University of Technology. Moving across the country, away from everything familiar, was incredibly challenging. "I felt so lonely and lost, but Hazel was there for me. I was calling day and night, crying, saying that I wanted to come back, and she was there to support me in every way that you



need from a parent when you fly away to university. She would go to lengths that I can't even explain to make sure I had food, toiletries, books, a place to stay, everything—even though she had other problems and other kids at home to care for.

Now in her final year of university, Sisipho is confident that the values instilled in her at Centre of Hope have molded her into a goal-oriented, resilient, and determined young woman.

"Before, there was no light," Sisipho says. "I didn't know that I would come this far, but with Centre of Hope and everyone that loves us and supports us every day, now I can see a little bit of light. Now it's possible for me to be successful in life because of Centre of Hope."



When **Sisikelelwe** was 14, he moved from his small town to Centre of Hope after his grandmother could no longer care for him. He describes the home as "a place where you can be just yourself, express yourself freely and just be you. We are a family there! There is love and I can feel it, and I think that's the most important thing in my life." While each child had their own unique story of hardship before coming to Centre of Hope, "none of us ever made another one feel small or invalid, or rubbed that in each other's faces, even when we fought."

Sisikelelwe recently finished his first year at Stellenbosch University, where he is studying to become an accountant. He attributes his success to Centre of Hope: "Although I worked hard and got good grades, it was never enough. I needed an opportunity, which Ma Hazel and Centre of Hope gave me by enrolling me in a good school and providing everything that was needed until I graduated. I know for a fact that if it wasn't for Centre Of Hope, I wouldn't be where I am today."

But even more important than the empowerment and opportunities, the relationships are what Sisikelelwe values most. "The children at Centre of Hope are the core of my love for this place. I love their love, how they would call me when I'm at school and tell me how much they miss me. **I found a family in them and, for me, family is everything.**"