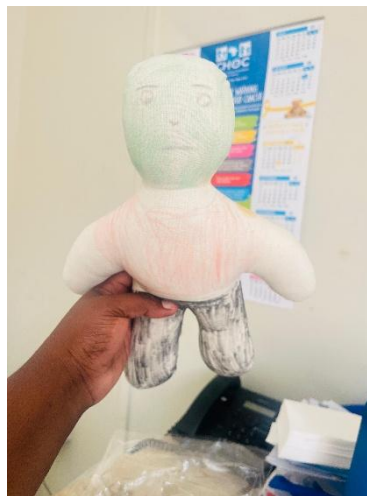


PROGRAMME UPDATE

TO

GLOBAL GIVING

PERIOD: 01 MARCH 2024 – 28 FEBRUARY 2025



1. INTRODUCTION

In 2024, CHOC proudly marked 45 years of unwavering service to children and teenagers with cancer or life-threatening blood disorders, and their families. What began in 1979 as a single support group founded by parents has grown into a nationally recognised model of care—our Comprehensive Child and Family Support Programme. This model addresses the socio-economic, emotional, and logistical barriers to accessing childhood cancer treatment in South Africa. CHOC is driven by a vision of a cancer-free childhood and is committed to increasing the survival rate to 60% by 2030, aligning with the World Health Organization's Global Initiative for Childhood Cancer and South Africa's National Cancer Strategic Framework.

Thanks to the generous support of Global Giving and its donor community, we are tackling critical challenges faced by our beneficiaries, including:

- Delayed diagnosis due to limited rural healthcare access.
- Stigma and cultural misconceptions, which delay or prevent treatment.
- Emotional and financial distress, often leading to treatment abandonment.





or

2.

These challenges are real, but so is our resolve. Founded by a mother who personally experienced this journey, CHOC continues to be guided by a board of parents who have walked this path. Their lived experience ensures that every programme—whether psychosocial support, nutritional aid, transport assistance, education—centres compassion, dignity, and hope.

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

During this reporting period, the Global Giving community raised \$157, directly supporting our Comprehensive Child and Family Support Programme, which reached 5,377 beneficiaries. Your support continues to bring care and dignity to some of the most vulnerable families in South Africa. Key Impact Results:

- 471 new diagnoses supported
- 34,301 bed nights provided across 13 CHOC Houses
- 105,069 meals served
- 833 Carebags distributed to newly diagnosed children
- 19,782 disbursements of transport financial assistance
- 304 families supported through bereavement financial aid

Real Lives, Real Impact

“I was scared and confused when I heard the word cancer.”

– Mother of a 10-year-old boy from Rustenburg, North West Province

This family travelled over two days to Chris Hani Baragwanath Academic Hospital for treatment after a leukaemia diagnosis. Language and emotional barriers made the situation overwhelming. CHOC’s Social Worker provided compassionate support, translating the diagnosis into Setswana, explaining the treatment plan, and ensuring the family felt supported. They were housed at a CHOC House, received meals, transport support, and a Carebag. The child, now in remission, has returned to school and continues to attend CHOC survivorship events.

3. PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHTS AND DEVELOPMENTS

1. Sustainability and Infrastructure

- Installed solar power at CHOC House Bloemfontein and completed room renovations at CHOC Saxonwold.
- 9 CHOC Houses now have solar systems, 10 have JoJo water tanks, 4 have boreholes, and 6 run active recycling systems—reducing costs and carbon footprint.
- A bedroom at CHOC Saxonwold house was renovated by a donor.



2. Expansion of Paediatric Oncology Support

- A new Paediatric Oncology Unit was opened in Mbombela, Mpumalanga, reducing the need for families to travel to Gauteng. CHOC has a volunteer distributing Carebags and food parcels to beneficiaries.
- Strategic planning underway to support Nelson Mandela Academic Hospital in Mthatha, where families currently travel up to 700km for treatment.



3. Early Detection Programme

- CHOC's resources (Parent and Nurse Handbooks) are now used in online nurse training by the Harry Crossley Nursing Development Unit.
- Hosted a Wits MedzTalkz webinar on early warning signs, reaching 900 healthcare professionals.
- Developed an Early Warning Signs Addendum with the Department of Health for integration into South Africa's IMCI guidelines—potentially expanding reach across Africa.

4. Psychosocial Programme Strengthening

Our Psychosocial Support Programme (PSS) remains a pillar of CHOC's work, helping families emotionally, practically, and psychologically navigate the childhood cancer journey.

Key Successes:

- Support Amid Crisis: A mother abandoned by her husband post-diagnosis received CHOC's intervention to reclaim her child support grant and emotional care to rebuild her strength.
- Cultural Barriers Addressed: CHOC engages traditional leaders and healers to challenge myths, reducing treatment abandonment due to cultural beliefs.
- Teenage Mothers Supported: Young mothers receive tailored counselling and mentorship to ensure they remain engaged in their child's treatment.
- Treatment Adherence Ensured: CHOC's follow-ups helped one mother overcome community pressure and resume her child's life-saving treatment.
- Palliative Care Advancements: A Palliative Care Committee at Pietersburg Hospital integrates medical, traditional, and religious perspectives to provide dignified end-of-life care.
- Holistic Child Development: iSchoolAfrica-supported iPads, cognitive walls, and distraction tools help children continue learning and develop emotionally during treatment.
- Teen Support: Tailored psychosocial interventions help teens process identity, body image, and mental health issues.
- Healthcare Worker Support: PSS teams also provide emotional support to doctors and nurses coping with the stress of paediatric oncology care.
- Rare Disease Support: Emotional and advocacy support extended to families with rare chronic conditions such as Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (SLE).

5. CHALLENGES

Despite great progress, challenges persist:

- Parental emotional strain, guilt, and isolation.
- Severe financial hardship due to unemployment and food insecurity.
- Deep-rooted cultural beliefs associating cancer with witchcraft.
- Teenage mothers struggling with responsibility and stigma.
- These challenges further motivate CHOC to continue innovating and strengthening our psychosocial services.

Real Lives, Real Impact

As I sit down to write this letter I'm filled with a mix of emotions. Our journey with leukaemia has been a challenging one. I want to share with you, our story.

Describing the diagnosis: The day we received the diagnosis was overwhelming. We were shocked and scared. It changed our lives forever.

Treatment & progresses: The treatment has been a long and difficult road. We have faced many ups and downs. Despite the challenges our child is strong and resilient.

Emotions and reflections: As a parent it's hard to see my child go through this. It's been an emotional roller coaster. There are moments of sadness and frustrations. I am finding joy in the little things.

Sharing progress: We are taking things one day at a time. We are celebrating every milestone. I am learning to cherish the moments.

CHOC house: As Soyama's mother, I want to tell you that you are the backbone of this organisation and we appreciate you. CHOC house makes a real difference in our lives of our children and families. We are honoured to have you as part of our journey. I say thank you for being a beacon of hope.

To the staff of CHOC: I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to each and everyone of you. Your care and compassion have touched our lives in profound ways. We are grateful for your love and support you have shown to our child. You were not just caregivers; you are part of our extended family. Your dedication and expertise are truly remarkable.

Love, Soyama's mother, Pietermaritzburg.

I am Soyama Nomadlongo 9yrs girl fighting leukemia.

I am scared sometimes, but my parents and doctors are helping me. I am strong, and I am fighting hard.

My family's love and support. The doctors and nurses who take care of me. The medicines that help make me feel better.

I wish to play with my friends again. To go to school and learn new things. I wish to feel happy and healthy again.

Thank you for thinking of me. I love you and I am grateful for your support.



6. THANK YOU

To the Global Giving team and every donor who stood with us this year—thank you. Your generosity ensures that no child or parent walks the journey of childhood cancer alone. Together, we are not only saving lives—we are changing them.