# HILLCREST AIDS CENTRE TRUST

ANNUAL REPORT **2016/17**

**LETTERS FROM THE FRONTLINES**

# ADOPT-A-BED APPEAL

**IN OUR OTHANDWENI (PLACE OF LOVE) RESPITE UNIT**

Wendy* is a young exuberant mother in her late 20s, full of the love of life with a child of eight years. However, when Wendy originally arrived at HACT's Respite Unit her immune system was in very bad shape. Her CD4 count** was exceptionally low at 24 (normal range is 500-1500) and X-rays arranged by the Unit showed she had water on the lungs.

Once on treatment for Tuberculosis and after a stay in hospital, she returned to our Respite Unit for rest and ARV initiation - the process of being put onto the Anti-retroviral drug therapy for HIV. Wendy soon gained strength and a new zest for life.

Just before being discharged, she said, "Life is beautiful - I am happy with the help here from the AIDS Centre. I have put on weight and am eating strong, and I can now walk again fine. I am on medication and am taking them well. **Soon I can be with my child and my family!"**

## MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF PATIENTS LIKE WENDY!

## ADOPT-A-BED AND SAVE A LIFE!

**We would love to hear from you.**

**Please CONTACT our Marketing and Fundraising team on**
**Tel:** +27 (0)31 765 5866 | **email:** fundraising@hillaids.org.za
Also **SEE PAGE 41** for more information.

*Name changed
**Measure of the immune system

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## Reporting from the frontlines...

This year's Annual Report is a collection of moving letters reporting from the frontlines of our work, each demonstrating love in action, each a testimony to the commitment and energy of our staff, and each revealing the impact of the Centre on the lives of those we have served over the past year.

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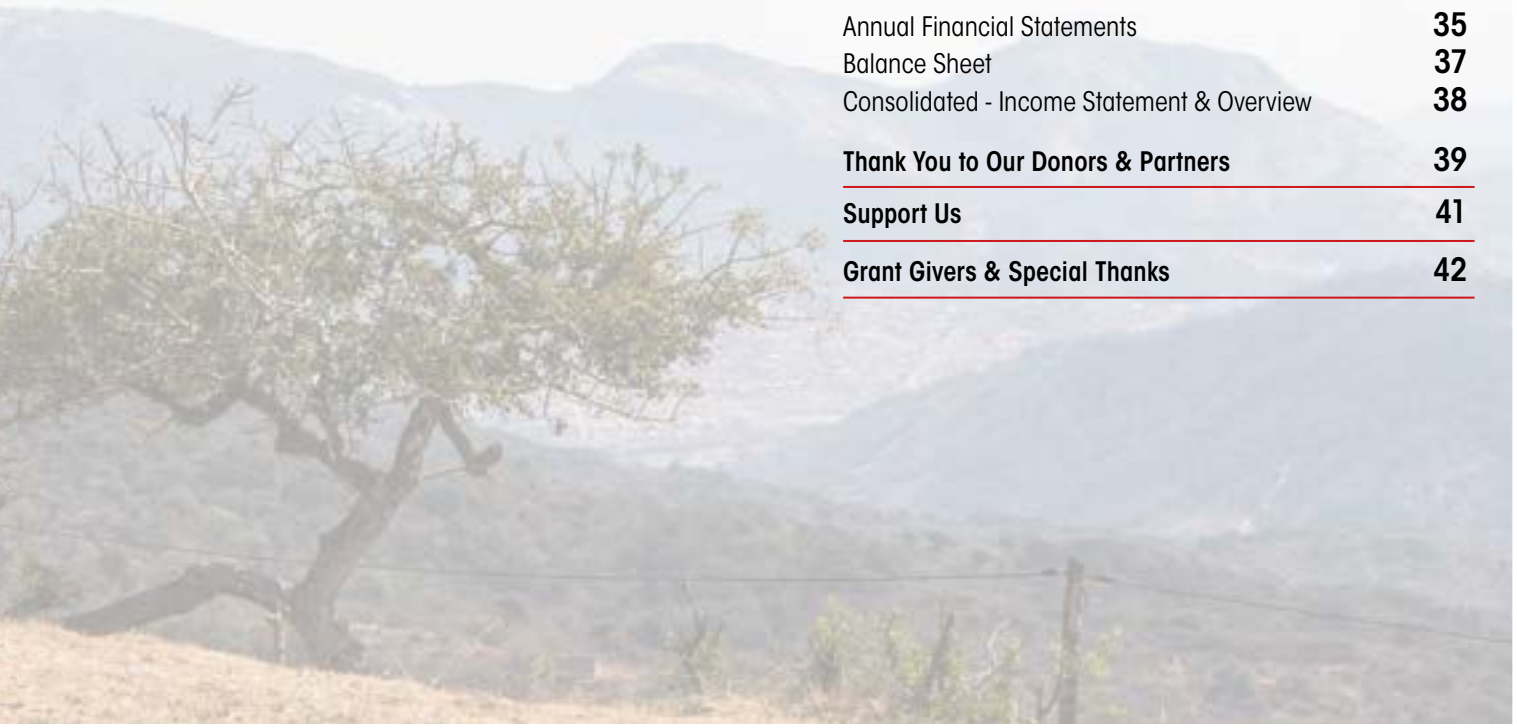


# WHO WE ARE

**One of the first NGOs in South Africa to focus exclusively on responding to HIV/AIDS, the Hillcrest AIDS Centre Trust (HACT) was founded in 1990 as a ministry of the Hillcrest Methodist Church.**

HACT is a registered Non-Profit Organisation located in Hillcrest, KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), South Africa. We are a community-based organisation with over 95% of our staff hailing from the communities we serve. Our geographical emphasis is the rural and disadvantaged communities of the Valley of 1000 Hills (eThekwini district) region of KZN – one of the epicentres of the global HIV/AIDS pandemic with HIV-infection rates of up to 40%*. Our beneficiaries are predominantly black South Africans.

For the past 27 years, HACT has been working on the frontlines of the battle against HIV/AIDS. Our vision is an AIDS-free Valley of 1000 Hills, and all our projects work towards this dream. Collectively our projects and programmes directly impact the lives of thousands of people every year, the vast majority of whom are women and orphaned and vulnerable children and young people. Our mission is to provide unconditional love and hope to all those impacted by HIV/AIDS - unconditional, in that we help anyone in need, regardless of their ethnicity, lifestyle, or religion.

*Source: South African National AIDS Council

We adopt a holistic, family-centric approach to tackling the HIV/AIDS pandemic by focusing on HIV prevention, care, community outreach, and economic empowerment. In this way, we strengthen the capacity of individuals, families and communities to rise above the impact of HIV/AIDS to address poverty and other socio-economic challenges, and to empower people to reach their full potential. This way they can actively contribute towards the growth and development of our country.

HACT is governed by a voluntary Board of Trustees who bring expertise from the medical, counselling, corporate, community development and HIV/AIDS sectors. Our team consists of 130 paid staff and 40 unpaid volunteers. HACT works with a range of local and international donors and partners to deliver its life-saving and life-changing services.

## Our Values

### Passion:

To serve with passion, energy and commitment, always acknowledging the privilege it is to be helping others.

### Faith:

Seeking to do as Jesus would do: "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." NIV John 13: 34-35.

### Integrity:

The message and the messenger must be the same, we must practice what we preach and be honest in all things.

### 'Ubuntu':

'I am because you are' – being community driven and constantly aware that our actions impact on those around us and that the sum is always better than the parts.

### Empowerment:

Helping people to take ownership over their lives.

**PHOTOGRAPHER**
Alan Blackman

PHOTOGRAPHER
Rebekka Stredwick

# MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

**Dear Friends,**

**The Hillcrest AIDS Centre was started to show unconditional love to all people impacted by HIV and AIDS in the Valley of 1000 Hills.**

There is no better way to reflect the power of this unconditional love than through the first hand reports and stories from those on the frontlines of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The word love has many definitions and we have many expressions of love at the Centre. This year's Annual Report is a collection of moving letters from the frontlines of our work, each demonstrating love in action, each a testimony to the commitment and energy of our staff, and each revealing the impact of the Centre on the lives of those we have served over the past year.

And what a year it has been! Despite the pull of demands from all directions, we have kept hold of our number one strategy – to tackle the HIV pandemic holistically. We have renewed our efforts with vigour in terms of the empowerment of our beneficiaries, in particular through economic and social empowerment initiatives.

**COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

There has been a new emphasis on intergenerational projects, starting in our Granny (Gogo) Support Programme where gogos, their children and their school-leaving aged grandchildren now learn to sew and attend courses together. We also made a significant step into supporting the human rights of gogos through advocacy. After attending a three day national gathering, hundreds of gogos from our Gogo Programme marched through Durban with others to the doors of the 21st International AIDS Conference in 2016 calling for their voices to be heard: "Nothing about us without us!"

**HIV PREVENTION**

Our Children's HIV Prevention Programme has continued to reach out to children and youth, enabling them and their families to be more at ease with making use of the HIV testing and counselling, both at the Centre and off-site. Knowledge of one's HIV status and healthy disclosure can lead to the opening up of possibility and empowerment – the possibility of a healthy, productive life and the empowerment that comes with making healthy choices.

Our HIV Prevention Education staff have again worked hard to spread healthy-living messages through teaching life skills and peer education in local schools to break down barriers caused by stigma and misinformation about HIV/AIDS.

**HIV CARE**

The ultimate expression of love must be our Othandweni – Place of love – Respite Unit. This is where people come to be loved well. The care given to the patients has allowed more than half of those admitted over the past year to be discharged so they can go on living fruitful lives. The Unit depends entirely on donations so we are very grateful that a few more beds have been 'adopted' through our Adopt-A-Bed campaign enabling us to fund the associated costs of patients occupying those beds such as medicine, nursing staff and food. There are still beds that urgently need to be funded so we will be intensifying our efforts in the coming year to find new 'adopters'.

**ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT**

Our Woza Moya economic empowerment project continues to grow and become a crafting 'hub' of KwaZulu-Natal, working with more than 1000 crafters and a myriad of partner NGOs. The crafters not only produce a high standard of exquisite traditional, new and recycled crafts, they are able to earn sufficient income and many support family members through school and university. The dignity and self-worth the crafters achieve from their contribution is tremendous.

Internally, we have improved management systems and progress in our sales and marketing strategies, and we have seen each of our programmes implement succession planning goals through personal and skills-set development opportunities for our staff.

One of my favourite projects at the Centre – the Izingadi Zethemba Gardens of Hope Plant Nursery – demonstrates HACT's vitality and love of life through the beauty and bounty of the thriving plants which grace our Centre and which are lovingly nurtured and tended by our Plant Nursery staff. I am pleased to report that the Nursery is making steady progress towards sustainability, and continues to provide a wonderful source of indigenous South African plants which are tough and adaptable for customers seeking to manage gardens in drier conditions.

In conclusion, I wish to thank HACT's Board for their love and time given freely to the Centre. A special thank you also to the staff of all HACT's programmes and projects - for expressing God's love in everything you do. Congratulations to our Gogo Support Programme which celebrated their 10 year anniversary! To our out-going CEO, Olivia Myeza, we thank you for your tireless work in leading the team through challenging times. We extend a warm welcome to our new CEO, Candace Davidson, who will lead the Hillcrest AIDS Centre Trust through the next chapter to all those impacted by HIV/AIDS.

**It is with unbridled gratitude that I wish to thank all who read this letter – for your time and your compassion.**

**Linda M Knox**
HACT Trustee & Founding CEO

# CEO'S REPORT

**To the amazing HACT team of staff and volunteers,**

**I'm writing this, my sixth CEO's report for HACT, on the eve of my departure from South Africa and the end of my season of leadership with the organisation.**

What an incredible season it has been for me personally and for the organisation as a whole. I'm deeply grateful for everything I have learnt along the way and for the journey I have been privileged to take HACT on, in partnership with all of you. I leave to return with my family to my home country of Australia with mixed emotions – a heart that is breaking over the goodbyes but also excitement for HACT under the leadership of our new passionate CEO, Candace Davidson.

The year in review was, for me personally, not only about preparing all of you to carry on without me, but also about ensuring the sustainability of the organisation – recruiting the right people into critical positions in finance, fundraising and project management, empowering you as a team to take on increasing responsibility within your roles and programmes, professionalising many aspects of our operations and ensuring our finances are as stable as they can be within the volatile non-profit sector and challenging economic environment in which HACT operates.

In addition to all this, the recruitment process for HACT's new CEO was a key focus for the Board and I. You as a team of staff prayed throughout the process, which was so encouraging. Our efforts were rewarded in the appointment of Candace in March 2017. Candace is not new to HACT, having served a maternity leave contract as our Project Manager for our Home Based Care and Orphaned and Vulnerable Children's programmes in 2014/2015, and having stayed in touch with HACT ever since.

Candace comes to us with many years of management experience in the NGO sector across Canada, Namibia and South Africa, and a rich academic knowledge of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in sub-Saharan Africa which will benefit HACT greatly as it navigates the challenges of securing long-term funding to continue our much needed services and, in time, to deepen and expand our impact.

Personally, I am exceedingly proud to be handing over the reins of HACT at this point in time – a robust, dynamic organisation served by a passionate and talented team which has a deep community footprint and the ability to change and save lives on a daily basis.

To our Board, our staff and volunteer team, our donors and partners, and to the beneficiaries and communities we serve - thank you from the bottom of my heart for all you are and everything you do, and all that you have taught me during our time together. We are bound together through 'Ubuntu' - I am who I am because of you and you because of me, and both are better for our time together.

Luke 8:16 speaks of shining our lights:

No one after lighting a lamp covers it with a jar or puts it under a bed, but puts it on a stand, so that those who enter may see the light.

HACT, and all those who serve and love her, is a shining light of hope, grace and unconditional love.

Thank you for warming me with your light for the past six years – I will carry it forward to Australia where it will forever shine in my heart and, I hope, warm others.

All my love and gratitude,

**Olivia Myeza**
HACT's CEO

**Dear Friends and Supporters of HACT,**

**It is my honour and privilege to be writing to you as the new CEO of the Hillcrest AIDS Centre Trust.**

As I step into this role I am mindful of the important developments in the HIV/AIDS global and national picture during the past year. 2016 saw the focus of the HIV/AIDS community brought back to Durban at the 21st International AIDS Conference, which was the culmination of local and international efforts in research, advocacy, prevention and health promotion. Several HACT programme managers attended the AIDS Conference where they busied themselves learning about the latest research, strategies and best practice, and how HACT might respond.

The new South African guidelines of "Test and Treat" commenced in September 2016 making it possible for everyone who tested HIV positive, no matter what their CD4 count*, to immediately start ARV treatment. Another major step was the national alignment of working towards UNAIDS 90-90-90 targets (90% of people living with HIV know their status; 90% who know their positive status receive sustained ART; 90% receiving ART achieve viral suppression).

This reporting year also saw attention focused on key populations and geographical areas of highest HIV burden which has put our own region – eThekwini and the Valley of 1000 Hills – fully in the spotlight. For the communities in which HACT works, the most significant key population remains adolescent girls

*Measure of the immune system

# OUR IMPACT IN 2016/17

**242** patients were admitted to the Respite Unit

**64%** **154** were discharged

**36%** **88** passed away with dignity and respect

**873** HIV tests conducted

**89%** of women tested negative

**92%** of men tested negative.

**7** staff were employed through our Izingadi Zethemba Plant Nursery and Facilities services enabling them to support their families financially

**1208** orphaned and vulnerable children from **512** households received care and support from **20** Child and Youth Care Workers

**20** women were economically empowered by starting businesses selling donated clothing through our Clothing Scheme

More than **2000** grandmothers were reached through our Granny (Gogo) Support Programme

**350** crafters received a sustainable living wage through Woza Moya

**1500** crafters received market access through our three Woza Moya shops

**1097** Primary school children across five schools enrolled in the Life Skills programme

The number of Granny Support Groups grew to **58**

**60** Peer Educators trained within six high schools

**We have once again received 100 % B-BBEE SED recognition (Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Socio-Economic Development).**

and young women who are particularly vulnerable to HIV infection due to a myriad of risk factors. HACT therefore remains challenged to creatively and sustainably tailor prevention, treatment and care services within this local context.

I thank you in advance for your continued support and ongoing partnership with HACT. I am looking forward to all that we will accomplish together in the future.

In appreciation,

**Candace Davidson**
HACT CEO

# HIV CARE REPORT

# RESPITE UNIT

*Jesus always walks alongside me in my work so I have written this report as a letter to Him...*

**Dear Jesus,**

**What a journey we have been on this past year in our Respite Unit. We have had many highs and lows but I know that we could not have achieved what we have without you holding our hand and at times carrying us. So this is really a letter to say thank you for the privilege of serving you.**

We are all too aware that you are with us although at times we fail to recognise you. If we slow down for a moment, then we see you in all your guises. We see you in the eyes of the bewildered patient, newly admitted and afraid. We see you in the eyes of the dying woman as she takes her last breath. We see you in the eyes of the man walking for the first time in many months. We see you in the eyes of the father who has been discharged and is joyful to go home to family again. We see you watching when families are reunited after many years. Lord, help us in the year ahead to tune into these privileges, so that we can know you more personally.

It is good to reflect on what has been because it helps us plan for the year forward as the demographic of the HIV epidemic changes. ***Over the past year we have had 242 admissions, 88 deaths and 154 discharges. This means that 64% of our patients left our unit.*** Many went home and were reunited with their families, often as parents and breadwinners, and were missed terribly when they were away. ***What a celebration it is to send them home again!***

Lord, as we reflect not only over the last year but over the history of this disease and how the nature of it has changed, we are encouraged by the fact that our country has the largest antiretroviral (ARV) programme in the world with over 3 million people on treatment, and we rejoice that everyone now has access to treatment at any stage of the virus. However, this does not mean that our journey is over.

Along the road, there are new challenges surfacing despite the developments in health care. We have seen an increase of men and women dying in our ward due to malignancy, cervical cancer in women and throat cancer in men. Both these diseases are linked to HPV (Human Papilloma Virus) which can now be prevented with available (but costly) immunisation.

We also have seen a large number of people admitted to our Respite Unit who do not adhere to their medication (defaulters), and we hope that the new national guidelines of test and treat approach to HIV infection will help cut down the number of defaulters in the future.

The more people in the infected pool who are virally suppressed [undetectable level of HIV in the blood], the less HIV is going to spread because viral suppression dramatically reduces the risk of passing on the virus. Pre-test counselling now includes giving this information to people and motivates those infected to remain on lifelong treatment and to achieve viral suppression.

Jesus, thank you for the people who work tirelessly in our care projects at HACT: the nurses, counsellors, cleaners, cooks and caregivers. We ask you to give us strength to continue in the year ahead and to provide the necessary funds to do this work despite the challenging economic climate.

Yours in faith,

**Julie Hornby**
HACT Nursing Services Manager

We think sometimes that poverty is only being hungry, naked and homeless. The poverty of being unwanted, unloved and uncared for is the greatest poverty. We must start in our own homes to remedy this kind of poverty.

Mother Theresa

**PHOTOGRAPHER**
Rebekka Stredwick

**"I WILL ALWAYS TRUST IN GOD'S GRACE BECAUSE OF HOW I'VE BEEN LOOKED AFTER."**

**Palesa***
Respite Unit Patient
now discharged

*Name changed

Diagnosed as HIV positive and on medication for Tuberculosis, Palesa* was a patient in our Respite Unit. As a child she had grown up in an atmosphere of fear, abuse and later faced stigma and betrayal. When she arrived in the Unit in October 2016 she could barely walk and her arm was crippled. Over the course of a few months, Palesa recovered her health, her arm healed and she was discharged from the Unit to be reunited with her children.

# HIV CARE STORY

# RESPITE UNIT

## THABANI MBAMBO'S STORY

**Dear Thabani,**

**I am writing to you because I want to encourage you... and remind you of how far you have come in your life since I first met you at the Hillcrest AIDS Centre's Respite unit.**

I have known you now since you came to our Respite Unit in January 2015 when you were desperately ill and were re-admitted later that year for a few months when you struggled to recover. Now I am responsible for your follow-up visits at home. I know you battle with arthritis and with your ability to move around without a walking aid so I want to keep encouraging you to have hope and to think positively. It was very good to see you when I last visited two weeks ago. You looked very happy to see me and my colleagues. I remember how you were when I first got to know you, you were in a terrible state - you had full blown AIDS and couldn't walk or take care of yourself. You had been diagnosed previously with HIV at the end of the ten year relationship with your partner and mother of your two children, and were given the ARV's (anti-retroviral medication) but you didn't take them as required and continued with an unhealthy lifestyle.

Thankfully, the care-worker in the community contacted us and the Unit gave you a bed. You soon learnt the importance of taking responsibility for your health and taking the medication regularly. I remember how eagerly you ate the food in the Unit which you loved, and how amazed you were at the clean state of the facilities. You said, even recently, that the cleanliness contributed to the improvement in your health.

**PHOTOGRAPHER**
Boni Xaba

I'm grateful for accepting me in my death bed. I had accepted that I was going to die before I met you. I wish you can do this to other people. Your work is saving lives and I wish God can bless you with more facilities to accept more people.

**Thabani Mbambo,**
Respite Unit patient

Your life has not been easy. You told me your story - how you were born in Clermont (KwaZulu-Natal) during the height of the political unrest in South Africa. How you had an unstable childhood with your parents separating when you were small, and how you moved with your mother to Zululand. You lost touch with your father and then your mother left you with relatives for a few years in order to find work in Durban. Finally, at a tender age of 10, having been moved to the Valley of 1000 Hills here in KwaZulu-Natal to live with your mother and stepfather, their relationship broke up and that was the last time you saw your mother. You still wish to find her (we know this when you speak of her with tears) and I pray this will be so. It is not surprising that with the lack of support in your early life, you enjoyed the care given to you by our loving Respite Unit staff.

You are only 42 years old now but can testify to the battles you have and are still trying to overcome. You live alone in a one roomed mud house without running water. Your dream is to live in a solid house – one where there is no threat of storms washing it away and one which is big enough to use a wheel chair. It's very hard for you because you can't fetch water yourself or travel to the clinic to collect your medication without someone's help. We are just so glad that we could get a proper toilet for you to use. We are making enquiries about the other vital things you lack.

Thank you for your kind words the other day – I was humbled to hear them. You mentioned how I had "brought hope to your life". I know you see me as a kind of father figure and I am glad I can be there to help – this is my role with all the patients I am responsible to check on after they leave the Unit. It is so important that after leaving the Unit the good habits and routines are maintained. We want to make sure patients do not end up back at square one when they face challenges after discharge. Helping you register for your disability grant, making sure you had access to regular food – these are all in the line of duty which is part of our follow-up but I also do these things in my role because I love helping people and I care about you and your life.

Thabani, I must finish this letter now. Look after yourself and keep taking your medication regularly – do not give up on this for it is a matter of life and death as you know. Stick to your clinic appointments. Keep your place clean and stay away from any unhealthy habits like smoking. I am glad to hear you wish to see a better future for your children, for them to receive education and a place to call home. Keep smiling that bright smile and I will see you soon at your next follow up.

God bless you,

**Baba Mshengu**
HACT Respite Unit Patient Advocate

# CHILDREN'S PROGRAMME

PHOTOGRAPHER
Ryan Morgan

**1208** Orphaned and vulnerable children and young people received care and suppor

**200** Young people participated in KwaNyuswa Youth Day event

**110** Young people were educated about HIV prevention through the Grassroots Soccer programme

**200** Children participated in the Prevention Holiday Programme

**180** Children attended Molweni Wellness Day event

**60** Young people participated in the three-day Youth Leadership Camp

**75** Young people graduated from the Vhutshilo training programme

**Dear readers,**

**It is with great excitement and gratitude that I am writing this letter to you on behalf of the Hillcrest AIDS Centre Trust's (HACT's) Children's HIV Prevention Programme.**

The past year has been extremely busy for our team as we've strived to deepen the impact of our targeted HIV prevention services for orphaned and vulnerable children and young people living in the Valley of 1000 Hills. In total, our Children's HIV Prevention Programme has benefited 1208 orphaned and vulnerable children and young people over the past year lending support and giving hope for a brighter future to those most in need of assistance.

***Through our weekly support group meetings, home visits, facilitated sessional training projects and programmes, we have provided comfort and support, sparked conversations and debate, and armed our young beneficiaries with the accurate and age-appropriate HIV prevention information they need to protect themselves and their families.***

One of our most exciting and successful activities has continued to be the Vhutshilo (meaning "life" in Venda) programme. Over the past year, 75 young people aged 14 – 17 years participated in this programme which is specifically designed for key populations such as these which are at high risk of future HIV infection. The programme comprises of 15 structured sessions aimed at creating a place of trust and consistency for young people to gain accurate HIV prevention knowledge.

I personally attended one such session which our team was holding in Shongweni back in May 2016, and I cannot tell you how alarming it was to hear the misinformation and myths these young people were receiving from their communities about STIs and HIV! One young girl said to the group that she'd been told that there was no need to go to a clinic for an STI as these could be cured using traditional 'muthi' (medicine) and that if you got pubic lice it was a result of witchcraft! The fact that our young people are basing decisions about their health and wellbeing on such grossly inaccurate information is really concerning and serves to remind me just how important it is for us to continue creating these kinds of platforms where young people can come together, and that this kind of harmful and dangerous information can be corrected.

Another very successful activity over the past year has been our Grassroots Soccer Programme, an innovative initiative, which through soccer, helps young people engage in relevant and important discussions about their health; it also helps them to access and build support structures and learn how to avoid risk-taking behaviour that leaves them vulnerable to contracting HIV/AIDS.

I've learnt it is important to talk to your children, even if it is sometimes difficult. The support group has really helped me - it is good to know we are not alone in our problems and to be able to lean on each other.

Inchanga Circles of Support, Support Group member

Following an intense three-day training workshop involving all 20 of our Children's Programme field workers in June 2016, our team used the evidence-based Grassroots Soccer model to educate, inspire and mobilise 110 young people to lead healthier and more productive lives.

One of the key components in our successful HIV prevention strategy is our holistic and family-orientated approach to tackling the epidemic. I am therefore pleased to report that within the past year, our Children's Programme team has provided intensive support to 40 caregivers (20 from Molweni and 20 from Inchanga) through our Circles of Support Programme. The aim of this structured series of eight support group meetings was to help the caregivers develop effective ways of communicating with the children and young people in their care, many of whom are orphaned or vulnerable.

The meetings were overseen by our trained facilitators who also provided the caregivers with up-to-date and accurate information about HIV/AIDS, STIs and other health-related issues, thus enabling the caregivers to feel more confident and better equipped to broach these subjects with their children and families. The meetings also provided a much needed safe space in which the caregivers could share and talk about their particular challenges in raising their children and how to talk to them about HIV/AIDS, death, interpersonal relationships and other sensitive yet important issues.

All of this would not have been possible if it wasn't for the support of NACOSA and our many other donors who have journeyed with us over the past year. On behalf of my team and the young lives that have been touched through our programme, I would like to say "siyabonga kakhulu "– thank you very much!

Yours in HIV prevention,

**Linda Chule**
HACT Children's HIV Prevention Manager

# HIV PREVENTION STORY

# CHILDREN'S PROGRAMME

## FIKISISWE'S STORY

**Dear Hillcrest AIDS Centre Trust,**

**I am writing to thank you for giving me the opportunity to make a difference in my community of KwaNyuswa.**

**PHOTOGRAPHER**
Boni Xaba

My life has come far since the time when I joined the support group in your HIV Prevention team's Children Programme. It was 2015 then and I was 22 years old. I had lost all hope and the support group helped me a lot. In fact, I have written a poem which sums up my feelings and experiences and I have added it to the end of this letter.

You told me then that these groups give youth in the community the psychological and social support they need through empowerment programmes and other projects which focus on HIV prevention. And it did just that. We were all girls and young women between the ages of 14 and 23 years, and I know that is a good age to target for HIV prevention and other types of support because it is a vulnerable time.

Back then I had fallen pregnant with no job prospects and my dad was unemployed. Being part of the Children's Programme helped me realise there was light at the end of the tunnel. My life is different today. I understand how to protect myself from unhealthy situations and most importantly, I now have a job to support my son. Please thank Ntobe again for me – she's one of the Prevention team's field workers. Ntobe was the one who persuaded me to join the support group when I was going through a tough time.

As you know, I live with my parents, three siblings, nephew and my 11 month old baby. My mum, sister, and I all received skills training from you. It has been great that we could find work straight after the training which has given new life to our family. My sister and mum enjoy working in the HACT Respite Unit as caregivers.

I love my job in your Education Programme as a Peer Education Facilitator. I always try to bring excitement and love to every session I facilitate with the thirty-five Peer Educators I work with. They are just some of hundreds of learners in the community of KwaNyuswa. I am at Kwa Mnyameni Secondary School and one of three Peer Education Facilitators. I want to give them the hope that I felt when I joined the Children's Programme support group.

HIV and AIDS, along with violence, drugs, teen pregnancy, and unemployment, are problematic in my area so I work alongside the school teachers daily to deal with these issues. I feel that I can help bring about a positive change in the lives of the learners and in the lives of those around them. It is now my dream to study part time to get a teaching degree and become a teacher.

Thank you again.

**Fikisiswe Ngcobo**
HACT Children's HIV Prevention Beneficiary

**P.S. Here is my poem.**

## In our youth times

Everything looks glittery
We, the youth want the little of the glittery that the earth has to offer
We are busy looking for our identity
In this journey called life we get lost
Get bought by promises
That promise us a better life than we have
Give our all to these promises
With the hope of getting the glittery that will last us forever
After all we have given to these promises
We see that this was just promises and nothing more.

Suddenly the dreams for a better life disappear
That time it's difficult to pick ourselves up to try again
There is no hope for a second chance
You need a hand that never loses hope about you
A hand that can lift you up and show you a path that's going forward
For you to reach your dreams
And bring back the hope that you have lost.

From the mistakes that we did yesterday
We thank the hands that didn't give up on us
Planted a seed of positive words to us
That grows each day on us
As we look forward to the bright future ahead of us.

**Poem by Fikisiswe Ngcobo**

# EDUCATION PROGRAMME LIFE SKILLS

*I have written my report as a letter to one of the schools we work with closely. It is only in partnership with schools like this in our communities that we can run our vital programmes...*

**Dear UkusaKwabashi Primary School,**

**I am writing to thank you, along with all the schools we work with, for once again participating in our Life Skills Programme during 2016/2017.**

The success of our Life Skills Programme relies heavily on the commitment of the five participating primary schools which is why we are so grateful to you and the teachers for your ongoing passion and enthusiasm for our programme. We are overjoyed that more than 90% of the learners who participated in the programme this last year passed the academic year and that you continue to note marked improvements in their attitude and behaviour in the classroom. In total, 1099 Grade 5-7 learners participated in our Life Skills Programme, which has been delivered by our team through 45 minute sessions at each of the five schools, twice a month.

It moves me to write to you about the change I see and how motivated the children are. They will remember what they have learnt for the rest of their lives. I am reminded time and time again of why it is so important to teach our children life skills from an early age. As you well know, life for many of your learners and their families is not easy which is why it is so important they learn problem-solving skills, social skills, and more about the challenges of HIV/AIDS and related issues.

It is vital that they understand the importance of healthy relationships from a young age, before they reach their teenage years. Teaching children to value themselves and each other, and teaching them to be excited about the future is a major step on the road to prevention.

It has been very exciting to see the learners grow and develop over the year, not least because it is my first year in this role as a facilitator, a role I have found so rewarding. Many learners have already crafted a vision for their lives. They are saying, "I can't wait to go to high school. I really want to be an engineer or a teacher – to do something which brings fulfilment to my heart". Others come out of their life-skills lessons saying, "I want to achieve more than my friends seem to; I also want to teach them what I've learnt so we can all be part of this change".

> The Life Skills lessons teach us to talk to our parents about what's bothering us. I've also realised I need to take care of my body and to value it.
>
> Ayanda Gumede, 13 years-old from Empilweni Primary School

***It is always such a privilege to work with these young learners and to help equip them with the basic skills and confidence they need to grow up and successfully navigate the challenges of life.*** This is especially important for the Grade 7s who are preparing to transition to high school.

We are very proud of the learners and no more so than when they use what they have learnt at our annual Positive Lifestyles event. This popular event, which took place in May 2016 at the Pinetown Civic Hall, was no different and the 500 learners who took part really impressed us with their energetic performances in singing, dance, poetry and drama. The HIV prevention and other messages portrayed through their performances were so powerful and I have no doubt, will be remembered by their friends, teachers and families for many years to come. Yet such events are, as you know, not just about developing young people to be confident, articulate adults. ***The aim is to spread the message of healthy and positive lifestyles well beyond the classroom and the stage – to tell communities about the importance of HIV prevention, of knowing one's status and of accessing treatment and emotional support before it is too late.***

Our two-day Life Skills Camp took place once again at Shongweni Dam's Spirit of Adventure in November 2016. This was our team's opportunity to expose the young people to a different world from a platform where independent thought and decision-making is taught in a fun and relaxed environment.

**1099** | Grade 5-7 learners participated in our Life Skills Programme

**90%** | Learners passed the accademic year

**500** | Learners took part in our Positive Lifestyles event

At the camp, we worked one-on-one with 15 Life Skills Programme Learners who had achieved well academically over the past year despite very difficult personal backgrounds. As a fellow educator, you will know that there are always some learners who need a little extra support and encouragement to succeed.

Furthermore, many learners have families who struggle to provide them with school uniforms and stationery, which is why this year we were once again truly blessed to have the support of Margaret Turnbull and her HACT-UK donors who not only funded our 2016 Life Skills Camp, but also funded the uniforms and stationery for 15 underprivileged learners from across the five primary schools.

In closing, I am reminded of a well-known Zulu phrase:

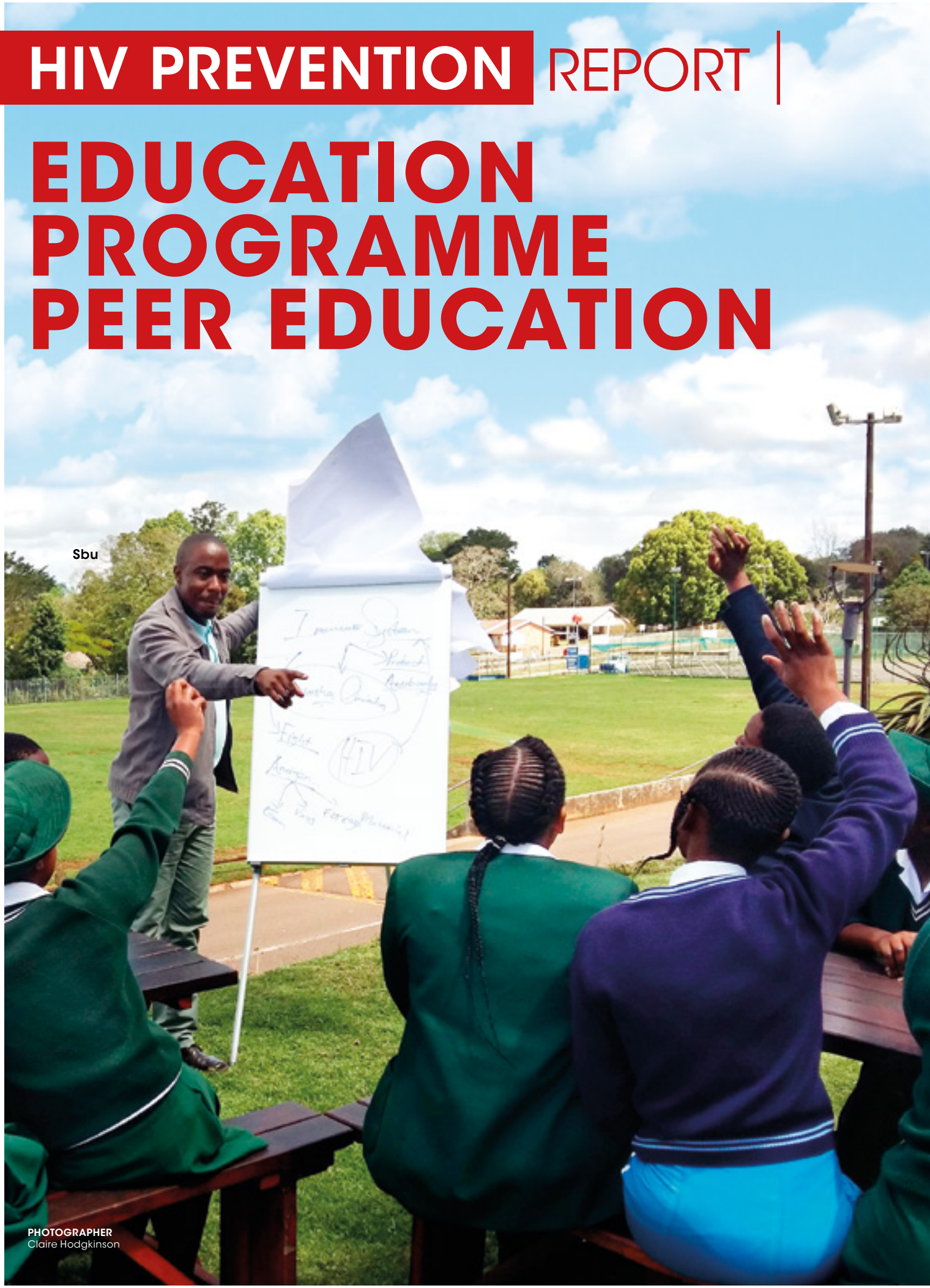
... We are developing young people who will be the 'bulls amongst the calves' ('Inkunzi isematholeni'), the leaders of tomorrow and the agents of change in our nation.

Thank you for your important part in making this past year's achievements possible.

Yours in Education,

**Pemla Mtshali**
HACT Life Skills Coordinator

# EDUCATION PROGRAMME PEER EDUCATION



Sbu

PHOTOGRAPHER
Claire Hodgkinson

**60** | Young influential leaders were recruited from 6 local high schools

**5727** | Fellow students were made aware and educated about HIV/AIDS, teenage pregnancy, drug & alcohol abuse

**619** | Grade 12 students benefited from 7 career expos over the past year

*My report is dedicated to the Peer Educators who have excelled in all they have learnt this year...*

## Dear Peer Educators,

## On behalf of the Hillcrest AIDS Centre Trust, it is my pleasure to congratulate you as the true future leaders of our nation!

You have worked hard and have shown great commitment to our Peer Education Programme over this past year. I want to thank you not because you are Peer Educators but because of what you have done as Peer Educators by standing firm against all the challenges at school. Others in their teenage years face issues such as drug and alcohol addiction but you have taken responsibility for your lives right from the start and have demonstrated that making the right decisions can change your environment and influence others for the better.

In 2016, we recruited 60 young influential leaders, from six local high schools in the Valley of 1000 Hills to take part in the intensive three-day Peer Education Training. As you know, we challenged each of you to find creative ways of sharing what you had learnt amongst your peers, friends and families throughout the year. Some of you gave talks or performed plays, poetry or songs in your school assemblies, while others arranged for representatives from local clinics and police stations to come and chat to you and your peers about their services.

Together, you planned and delivered eight awareness campaigns and events at your schools, creating awareness and educating 5727 of your fellow students about HIV/AIDS, teenage pregnancy, drug and alcohol abuse, and other issues which you had personally identified as problems within your schools and communities. In addition to disseminating valuable information to your peers, it was so rewarding to watch you make new friends, grow in confidence and develop into strong, positive leaders along the way.

Not only have I witnessed your concern about the challenges you and your peers face at school, I have seen your values and actions which go far beyond the call of duty. This has resulted from a deep, obvious sense of calling and desire in your hearts to bring about change. ***You have excelled in campaigning hard for a shift in mind-set amongst your peers, spreading messages of healthy lifestyles and hope for the future.*** This has impacted others around you. Your teachers and our facilitators have reported how others have made changes to their lifestyles as a result, for example by standing up against addictions and abuse, and telling others about HIV prevention.

I now know my weaknesses and strengths as a person, and most importantly, I know that I'm important and unique…

Nolwazi Makhathini, 14 years old,
Grade 9 pupil and Peer Educator
at Entebeni High School

You have also shown a firm commitment to education and setting career goals for the future. With your help, we delivered seven career expos to 619 Grade 12 students from seven local high schools over the past year. Here at HACT, we are only too aware of how daunting the prospect of life after school can be, which is why we have encouraged you and your fellow students to pursue your dreams by exposing you to different career paths and assisting you in identifying and applying for bursaries for tertiary study.

We know that for many of you, the highlight of the past year was the three-day Peer Education Leadership Camp which took place in November 2016 and in which all 60 of you took part. The camp was a fantastic opportunity for you to come together and share experiences to enhance your leadership skills and to gain more in-depth information on HIV/AIDS and other issues. Once again, we were so impressed with the way all of you made the most of this once-in-a-life-time experience and we are aware that, for many of you, this trip represented your first trip away from home and your families.

We would like to encourage all of you to keep working hard and to continue pursuing your individual goals and dreams. Together, you are South Africa's next generation of leaders and I believe our country has a brighter future in your hands.

With much thanks and admiration,

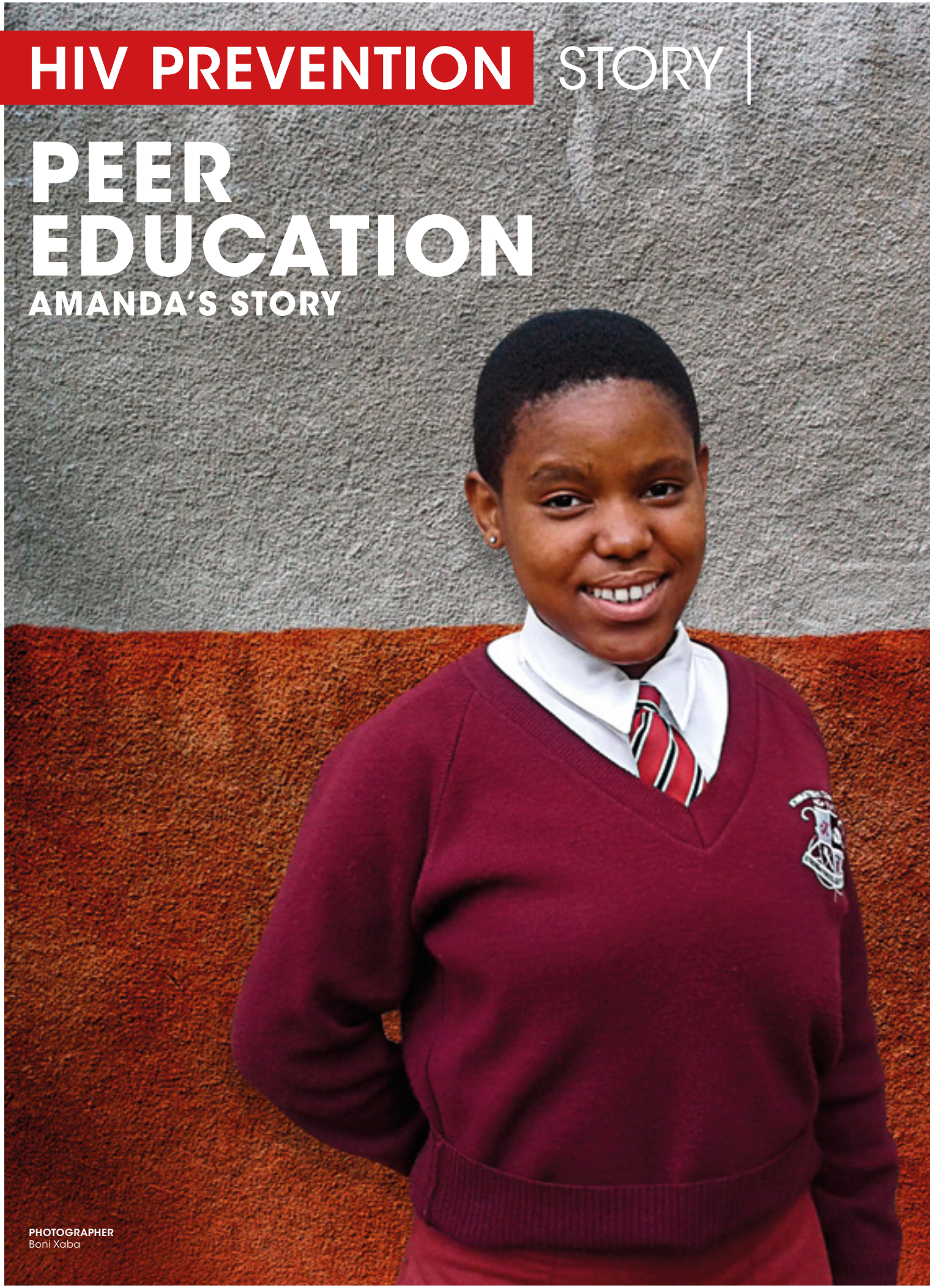
**Sibusiso "Sbu" Mthethwa**
HACT Education Programme Manager

By leveraging the power of positive role-modelling, HACT's Peer Education Programme is helping young people to make good life choices based on sound values, to achieve their full potential and make a difference in their schools and communities.

HIV PREVENTION STORY

# PEER EDUCATION

## AMANDA'S STORY



**PHOTOGRAPHER**
Boni Xaba

**Dear Sbu,**

**I want to thank you for all you and Pam have done to help me become a Peer Educator. Being part of Hillcrest AIDS Centre Trust's Peer Education Programme has made such a difference to my perspective on life and to my choices at school.**

As you know, I live with my grandmother, mother, and three younger siblings. I go to high school in KwaNyuswa and have been part of the programme since 2015 when I was in grade 9. Now I am in grade 11 with big dreams and I am excited about my future.

Through your programme, I have learnt so much about subjects that are often seen as taboo in our society. These range from learning in-depth about peer pressure, sexual abuse and teen pregnancy as well as how to make healthy choices for the future. I have also learnt how to choose my friends carefully and to focus more on my dreams for a better future.

The opportunity to participate in the Peer Education Programme came at an important time for me as I was just entering the first stages of being a teenager. Becoming a Peer Educator meant that my life turned around completely.

> Before, I was struggling to listen to my parents and was prioritising my friends over everything. When I became a Peer Educator it changed the way I viewed the world and I realised that life is full of possibilities.

I have since moved away from friends with bad influences and I spend more time at home doing my school work. The programme has not only helped me academically but also with my relationship with my mother. I now listen to my mum more because I know she wants the best for me. The programme has also influenced my career choice as I now wish to become a social worker.

I understand others more. I would tell any young woman who has made mistakes or who finds herself in a difficult situation such as teenage pregnancy, "You can still go back to school and turn your life around. Stick to your books and they will never let you down!"

Sbu, I think you and the Programme Facilitators are doing a wonderful job. Thank you!

Best wishes,

**Amanda**
Peer Educator, HACT Education Programme

# COMMUNITY OUTREACH REPORT |

# GRANNY (GOGO) SUPPORT PROGRAMME

*To all readers and supporters everywhere and to the Valley of 1000 Hills community...*

**Dear Friends and Supporters,**

**It gives me great pleasure to write to you about the busy, challenging and successful past year in the Gogo Support Programme.**

***It is our 10th Anniversary year!***
Looking back from where we started as a programme, to where we find ourselves now, I am reminded of the passage from Jeremiah 17:7-8.

Jeremiah 17:7-8.

...Blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him. They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.

And what a fruitful year it has been! I can hardly keep up with all the skills training courses we have run in conjunction with the excellent community based training company, Fli Hi, and made possible through the generosity of our funders. ***We now have 58 Support Groups across seven communities; 40 gogos graduated from our six month sewing courses, 120 gogos completed our parenting skills training courses, and 15 gogos took part in a fabric-painting course.***

Our early strategic focus on training and development has really paid off, both in terms of staff and the gogos and their families. Phindiwe Mashiloane, our Deputy Manager, has worked hard to develop her already impressive skills set and is assisting me with running the office and our events with great confidence and energy. Our field staff have received training in First Aid, HIV awareness, and Computer skills, and as I write, have just completed a three-day organic farming course run by City Hill Church in Embo so they can pass these skills on to the gogos through the coming year.

2016 saw the birth of our ground-breaking Parenting Skills and Children's Rights training courses in response to a call by our gogos for help with the difficulties they face bringing up their orphaned grandchildren. Over the year, we delivered seven six-week parenting courses and many gogos reported very positive progress. Our sewing schools have expanded to include beneficiaries from Inchanga and Molweni in addition to KwaNyuswa and Ngcolosi. In February, we advanced our intergenerational strategy a step further to include gogos, their children and school-leaving aged grandchildren in the new Molweni sewing school.

In addition to skills training, we have continued to invest in the health of our gogos and at the sixth Gogolympics on the 22nd April 2016, 1000 gogos competed, which is the first time Molweni has hosted the event. Held together with eThekwini Municipality, the Department of Sports and Recreation and Fisher's Net, the 2016 Gogolympics attracted new community-based partners including ambulances provided by the Department of Health and the services of the Metro Police and South African Police Services. The commitment and participation of the Gogolympics Planning Committee, the Molweni community and the Molweni War-Room Committee really made us proud.

A new and exhilarating venture was our first major step on the international stage in terms of advocacy through our lead involvement in the Grandmother's Gathering in July 2016, which started the ball rolling. The Grandmother's Gathering is an international event which takes place in a different country each year championing the rights of grandmothers and highlighting their needs. We were honoured to be selected by our long-serving partner - the Stephen Lewis Foundation - to play a central role in the organising committee of the three-day gathering in Durban, which saw 300 gogos attend from across South Africa, Canada and Australia.

We were also tasked with mobilising 1000 local gogos in a march to Durban's International Convention Centre on the eve of the 2016 International AIDS Conference where, together with gogos from across South Africa, Australia and Canada, they delivered a statement to our Government and the world reclaiming

**PHOTOGRAPHER**
Ryan Morgan

the dignity, strength and rights of South Africa's gogos. Both events attracted huge national and international media coverage, and the statement drew positive acknowledgement from South Africa's Minister of Health in an interview on national television. I am very proud of the gogos and know that this is only the beginning of the struggle for their voices to be heard. We look forward to continuing to work with our partners for the rights of gogos across South Africa.

Over the past year we realised a long-held dream to conduct a comprehensive baseline survey on the demographics, needs, and skills of the gogos impacted by our programme. A team of 13 young stipend volunteers from the communities we work in, together with our Programme Field Officers and seven social work students, enthusiastically carried out the survey of more than 800 gogos after receiving training by our Gogo Support Programme Volunteer, Rebekka Stredwick.

In our 10th Anniversary year, let me round off by sharing with you the joy we all experienced at our Gogo of the Year event on the 22nd November 2016 in KwaNyuswa. Crammed into the hall were hundreds of gogos celebrating, singing and dancing. With great pride, the winning gogos and support groups took to the floor to receive their prizes and the impact of our programme was evident from the many organisations and partners present.

An inspiring letter directed to the gogos from Her Worship, Mayor Zandile Gumede of eThekwini Municipality, was read to all those present. It is reassuring to know that our work is recognised by so many in our communities alongside our Government who restated their commitment to our gogos and our Gogo Support Programme.

Thank you for your steadfast support over the past year and for helping us to empower and uplift the gogos and their families. Long may we be fruitful!

Yours Sincerely,

**Cwengi Myeni**
HACT Gogo Support Programme Manager

# COMMUNITY OUTREACH

STORY |

# GRANNY (GOGO) SUPPORT PROGRAMME

## KHUTHALANI SUPPORT GROUP

**PHOTOGRAPHER**
Max Bastard

**Greetings to the 1000 Hills community!**

**We, the gogos (grannies) of your community, are writing to you today to encourage you to empower and uplift yourselves despite the hardships that you live with each day.**

We have experienced success and we know there is hope for others too. We were once just loose beads but we have turned those beads into something beautiful! You don't have to start with much...

It started out with a little help from our friends – Sister Cwengi Myeni and the Hillcrest AIDS Centre Trust (HACT). After that we pretty much did it all on our own – as HACT encouraged us to. We have learnt that you cannot wait until people do things for you. We set up a Gogo Support Group and now it has 18 members. **We are running a bakery and pizzeria, we rear chickens for eggs, we sew, and we garden to put fresh food on the table; we also make bricks and we play sports to keep fit, and we also run a crèche.** Yes, we are grannies but our age doesn't matter. It is our passion and our faith that counts. It's about not giving up - never, never, never give up!

How did we do it? In November 2009 we had something on our mind – we wanted to make some money to support ourselves and our families. There were 29 of us and with encouragement from Sister Myeni, we mobilised into a group. This journey started with six cushions. Sister Myeni gave us a little fabric and we turned these into cushions which we sold. We then used the money, together with some other money we had saved, and bought some chickens. We sold the eggs and made some profit which we used to buy some more chickens, which we then sold for meat and made a bit more profit!

In 2013, HACT gave three of us the opportunity to take some courses. One of us learnt to bake, the other two learnt to be crèche workers. Then HACT motivated some of us to take a dressmaking sewing course. Once we graduated, we were given the machines and then trained others in the group. Even when our first idea to start a baking business didn't work out, we didn't give up. In May 2015 we founded our bakery and pizzeria at our home in KwaNyuswa, in partnership with Mama Mimi's which is a company that helps start and grow small baking enterprises in the community.

One of our gogos is over 80 years old but she has learnt to sew and plans to start a business!

To prove how small things can grow into big things, we now bake 30 loaves of bread a day using two ovens which we are paying off, but by the end of the year we will own them outright as ours. We sell the loaves at our shop twice a day at the corner of the road and from Monday to Friday we sell cakes and hotdogs at the local primary school. In addition, the member who was trained as a crèche worker has now completed her teacher training! The secret is working together and each person pays R20 to join the group and then R10 per month thereafter, which is how we save money.

Our group was crowned 2016 Gogo Group of the Year – the third year in a row in recognition of our enterprising efforts. One of our gogos is over 80 years old but she has learnt to sew and plans to start a business. Our next dream is to become a co-operative and then we can expand our markets. We would also love to join forces with other gogo support groups especially in gardening so we can supply schools and other places with fresh and nutritious vegetables.

**There is strength in togetherness! This is the encouragement we would like to leave you with. Be unified, be strong, have faith, and be hopeful.**

We wish you God's blessings,
**Khuthalani Gogo Support Group**

# ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

# REPORT | WOZA MOYA

*I have written this report as a letter to my dear friend and the mother of the Little Travellers beadwork designs, Thandiwe Chamane...*

**Dear Thandiwe,**

**I have just returned from visiting one of the crafters in her home - what a visit! We were greeted by a group of children who were so excited to see us and entertained us with beautiful traditional dancing and singing.**

I left the homestead with a feeling of great joy but also sadness. I was struck by how peculiar our situation is. This crafter is one of the few who live in a traditional wattle and daub hut and the family survives on what is made from beading and other traditional means. What struck me deeply is that these are the last islands of tradition and culture, and that in the near future we will not bear witness to these moments. As young people are drawn to modernisation, some of our culture is being eroded.

Beading is not unaffected by this; it is a dying art form undervalued for far too long. If we look at craft trends globally, craft is practiced by a few specialised individuals and to buy craftwork is very expensive. We have the reverse in South Africa. Here, we have a large group of crafters trying to make a minimum wage from beading and charging very little. Living costs have skyrocketed and many beadworkers have no choice but to pack it in as beadwork prices have hardly increased, yet transport and bead costs have.

***We have to give beadwork its place in the sun if we are to see it survive into the future. Woza Moya has always tried to pay a fair price for beadwork looking at time spent making a piece, the cost of beads per item, and the skill and uniqueness of design.*** It is vital that we make these facts known and this year, we had a great poster campaign in our shop and on social media to share this knowledge with our customers to raise awareness of the challenges the crafters face and how important it is to support them.

You would be so excited by all the new developments. We now have three shops! We were given a wonderful opportunity to open a "pop-up" shop at Fields Shopping Centre in Kloof thanks to the Fields Hill Centre management team, and it is doing very well. The shop at Embo Craft is flourishing and we have hosted several artist and craft exhibitions at the Woza Gallery, securing work for this sector where before there was none: Nicky Chovu Chovu, Paul Muzefani and Bongiwe Buthelezi's exhibitions were a sell-out and their work went around the globe thanks to the exposure we received on Facebook. You would also be amazed to hear about all the trainings we have run for staff, including sending a group of our staff on finance (Pastel accounting) courses.

The past year, we have developed Artist Cards where artists could create small paintings that we turn into cards enabling them to earn a sustainable income to pay the rent. The Woza Gallery has allowed us to showcase artists and crafters who would not have the opportunity to exhibit anywhere else. We established the 'Big Big Designer Sale' this year at Embo and, Thandiwe, you would have loved being there in a room full of women trying on clothes and accessories, laughing and shrieking with delight!

The highlight of our year was definitely the 21st International AIDS conference in Durban last July. Our stand was definitely a hit as we were inundated by shoppers desperate to take some Woza Moya beadwork home.

You would also love our Upcycled Art Centre which is doing very well under Francis' care. He has trained up Clive - a beadworker's son - to recycle glass and with a bit of help from our design team called Lumo Design, who rebranded the drinking glasses and Francis's box packaging, they are selling up a storm! This means Clive will soon earn a sustainable income from glass recycling - one more job created. Sometimes it is frustrating as things move very slowly with our limited resources but we are patient and Woza Moya grows organically and can sustain its growth.

And of course, 2017 is the 15th birthday of the Little Traveller! We started marking this special anniversary from January. Can you believe that we have been making and selling Little Travellers for 15 years and they have been helping crafters earn a sustainable income all that time! Last year, we sold ***400 000 Little Travellers*** who went all around the world and because of them we were finalists in the Transnet Exporter of the Year Award. Germany has been our most popular destination for all our crafts and beadwork.

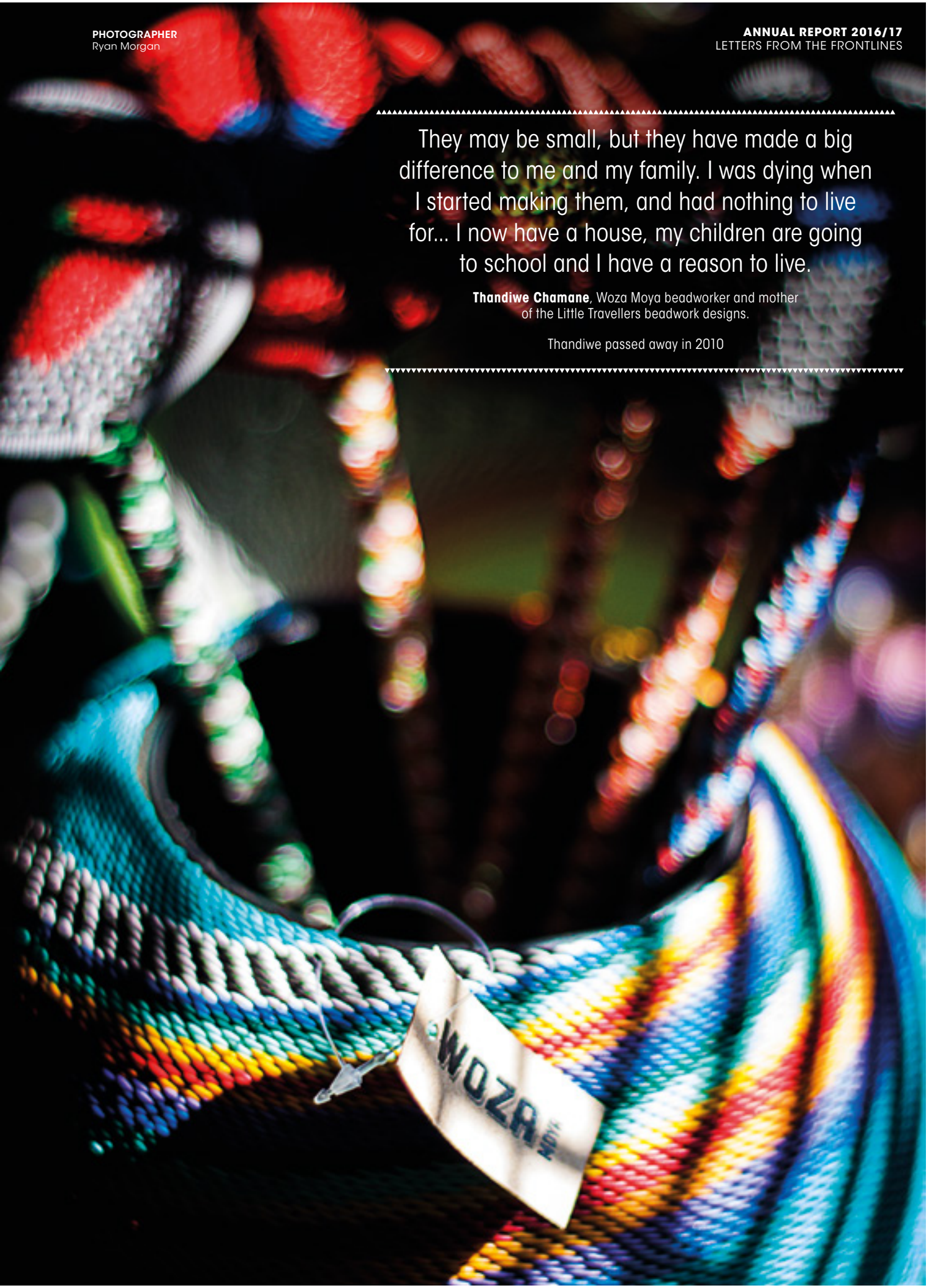
Thandiwe, we are celebrating your creativity this year as the mother of the Travellers and many of your designs have been passed onto other crafters in desperate need.

I think of you often and miss our chats in the office each week and your positive outlook on life. Your children come to visit and how they have grown. My heart breaks when I look at them, as they have had to grow up very fast and things have not been easy for them.

Woza Moya is still benefitting from everything we learned at Action Coaching and we are seeing the fruits of all of that work paying off with improved management systems and progress in our sales and marketing strategy. Our staff continue to serve the customers and crafters with enthusiasm, and we are thankful to our dedicated team of volunteers.

With love,

**Paula Thomson**
HACT Woza Moya Manager




They may be small, but they have made a big difference to me and my family. I was dying when I started making them, and had nothing to live for... I now have a house, my children are going to school and I have a reason to live.

**Thandiwe Chamane**, Woza Moya beadworker and mother of the Little Travellers beadwork designs.

Thandiwe passed away in 2010

# ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT STORY |

# WOZA MOYA

## ROSE SHOZI'S STORY

**Dear Hillcrest AIDS Centre Trust,**

**2004 was the year that changed my life! It was the beginning of my wonderful journey with your Woza Moya empowerment project and I am writing to thank you and to tell you about it so you can encourage others like me and give them hope. Here is how my life changed a few years ago...**

My name is Rose Shozi and this story begins with my neighbour, Bathoko, who worked for the Woza Moya craft project. She used to loan me beads she bought from Woza Moya and I used to make things with them. After a while, I decided this was a good opportunity for me to ask Bathoko to take some pictures of my products to show Woza Moya's manager, Paula. Well, after this things happened very fast. Paula was happy with the style of the beaded enamel cups I made and asked me to make ten bangles.

Bathoko took my bangles to Paula and one thing led to another. I was asked to work with the project. Since then, I have been trained in a lot of things like making beautiful necklaces with balls of beads which have since been used in fashion shows and they make good sales in Woza Moya's three shops. In 2016, my dream came true – I was chosen as Beader of the Year and given a Gold Trophy and a monetary prize!

I would describe myself as a creative person – I can make almost anything out of beadwork – dolls, cutlery, necklaces and ornamental condiment holders. I work on my own or ask my two daughters to help me if I need extra hands. I work well under pressure and most importantly I love and respect my job. But things haven't always been this good. In fact, before I came to work with Woza Moya, I faced a lot of troubles in my life like many women living in the rural areas across South Africa.

I would describe myself as a creative person. I can make almost anything out of beadwork – dolls, cutlery, necklaces and ornamental condiment holders.

**PHOTOGRAPHER**
Boni Xaba

I live in Shongweni Dam with my husband, seven children aged 10-27 years, and my three grandchildren who are all under six years. My husband hasn't been employed since 2007. He worked for a company for 19 years but the work came to an end and he came away with very little. This has left me as the sole breadwinner in my family. My oldest son is the only employed one apart from me. He works part-time at a local factory but he can't earn enough to keep us – we are a family of twelve.

I have not had much education due to financial hardship. I also lost two of my dear children. The first loss was in 1988 due to a miscarriage and then in 1999, I lost my daughter – my first-born – in a drowning when four children lost their lives during a school trip at Shongweni Dam.

I remember it like it was yesterday. My daughter was the first to be recovered by a group of divers. It has been so hard emotionally but I found some help to deal with my sorrow through my love for arts and crafts.

In fact, I started beading as a teen. While my friends were playing, I would sit and just play around with beads. This grew from a play time activity to decorating traditional attires for my friends and family. Then, I started selling my beadwork informally on the streets until 1997, when I had the opportunity to sell through a church but the sales were up and down. Some days I would go home with no bread in my hand and I tried other places too but none were like the way Woza Moya has turned out to be.

My wish is for all my children to get a good education and to have a much better life than I have had. I am so excited to tell you that my 23 year old daughter is now in her first year of a Bachelor's Degree in Teaching through UNISA. Paula and Woza Moya have played a big role in my daughter's university journey by supporting my vision for my children. Paula allows me to pay for tuition first before settling my beads account at Woza Moya. She prioritises my daughter's education and this shows her deep kindness and understanding.

Thank you Paula and thank you Hillcrest AIDS Centre for believing in me!

**Rose Shozi**
HACT Woza Moya crafter

# ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

## STORY |

# CLOTHING SCHEME

*Our report is addressed to our 20 Clothing Scheme beneficiaries to congratulate them on all they have achieved this past year...*

**Dear Clothing Scheme beneficiaries,**

**I am writing to you because I cannot contain my pride as I look back over the past year and see how far you have come since you joined our Clothing Scheme.**

My colleague, Dudu, and I took over managing the scheme last year in 2016 and it has been such joy to see you working hard to improve your situation through your clothing businesses. You were unemployed when you were offered a place on the scheme and some of you are HIV-positive or are impacted in some way by HIV/AIDS – Many of you have lost a family member tragically that way too.

I remember visiting one or two of you when you came to our Respite Unit very sick. You had no food at home to eat with your medication and no money to buy food so you were sure the best option was to go home again and die, rather than coming to the Unit. And yet, as you got better and were given the hope of starting a clothing business with the potential to earn R250 a week, your views changed. ***You realised the importance of living. This is real empowerment!***

When I look back at our log book, I see how busy the year has been with the Clothing Scheme always full – around 20 people on the Scheme at any one time. It has not been difficult to fill the spaces when clients have found other employment because there is always a need. Most of you are women who are from our Respite Unit, Gogo Support Programme, or are young people leading your households.

Dudu and I are thankful that you are using the clothing sale profits wisely. With the first bag of clothes at no cost (thereafter R15 per bag), some of you have used the profit from the first bag to buy vegetable seedlings from our plant nursery to plant vegetable gardens so you have food to eat. You are also following our advice – banking the money immediately and saving a bit each time. I was excited when I visited a gogo on the scheme recently and saw the vegetable garden she made with the profits. It was full of turnips, cabbage and spinach, and they are selling well!

I think of the very young ones – you who are the first-born looking after your brothers and sisters at home because the angels took your mum and dad. I remember I met one of you last year – I was very new then and your sister was sick in our Respite Unit. I saw how you were scared about what would happen when she was discharged back home, you did not know how you would feed her or your siblings. So we invited you to join the Clothing Scheme.

> You learnt to value yourself through the Clothing Scheme and you made us proud.

When I visited again, I was honoured that you wanted to share your food with me to show how well you are doing. I couldn't stay to eat of course – we are so busy – but I was glad to see you spending money on sensible things like school uniforms for your sister – it shows how much you have grown.

Dudu often tells me she feels so blessed by her role in sorting and packing the clothes. It is hard physical work and not easy to make sure each person gets the equal quality and type of clothes but we know our work is not in vain. Dudu says it makes her feel happy to see children being able to wear clothes like other kids; and people having an income so they can stay healthy.

***The Clothing Scheme is truly helping to save lives; helping people feel human again.*** We are also amazed at what you do with the clothing that doesn't sell. You cut, sew, and recycle making new items so that nothing goes to waste. And the communities see this too. They see your perseverance - this is a good role model for them.

Therefore, our message to you is to keep on with your businesses despite the challenges you face. To the members of the public who donate clothes to make this all possible, Dudu and I say thank you – and we ask that the donations of clothing continue.

God Bless you, Amen.

**Thobeka and Dudu**
HACT Clothing Scheme staff

## The Hillcrest AIDS Centre Trust's Clothing Scheme assists impoverished, HIV/AIDS-impacted families by providing them with a dignified means to earn a living and encourages entrepreneurial skills.

Potential beneficiaries are visited to confirm whether or not they have other income. If they have no other income and there is at least one family member who is HIV positive taking ARVT (HIV medication) daily with food, they are eligible to join the scheme.

Thobeka

Dudu

# ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

STORY |

# CLOTHING SCHEME

## NTOMBIKHONA'S STORY

**Dear Hillcrest AIDS Centre,**

**My name is Ntombikhona* and I want to tell you about the way you have helped us through your Clothing Scheme. I am a mum of 44 years old and live in Molweni in the Valley of 1000 Hills.**

My husband and I are both HIV positive; we have four boys at home aged 9 to 25 years, and a 7 year old grandchild. I am a member of your Clothing Scheme. **Running my own clothing business has made a big difference to our lives because just a few years ago, we didn't have enough to eat and I often had to go hungry so I could feed the children.** It has been a challenging journey for all of us but I want to tell you my story.

I lost my mother in 2014, two years after losing my 23 year old son to drowning at Inanda Dam. It is very hard to talk about it. Apart from losing the two people I love much, my mum and son both brought in income - we had all relied on her pension and his salary.

It still pains me a lot when I think how I lost them in such a short space of time. My son had gone out to fish and swim with his friends as they usually did. They always ended the day with a swim but little did he know that it would be his last. He drowned in the late afternoon and was only recovered the next morning. His body was in a terrible state, we barely recognised him.

My husband was diagnosed with HIV in 2009 after a long illness – he was losing a lot of weight and suffered from gastro. His employees brought him to your Respite Unit for a check-up and counselling but he only agreed to treatment in 2011 when his health was going down fast. He suffered from swollen feet and sometimes couldn't wear his shoes. He lost a lot of weight and could hardly walk. To this day he has no income.

I remember the day I found out I was HIV positive. I had been sick with non-stop diarrhoea for two months after my mother's death. The day I found out, I went home and sat down with all my children. I asked them for their love and support and also told them about protecting themselves. I went straight onto ARV (anti-retroviral) medication.

It was when I saw a HACT vehicle in our area that I decided to contact HACT and find out more. Later I was invited to join your programme which delivered food parcels and then this was replaced by the Clothing Scheme empowerment programme. When I think back to the time before I was part of the Clothing Scheme, I just can't hold back my tears. I had to sleep on an empty stomach back then whilst taking my ARV medication which was very bad for my health.

*Name changed

> But now, with the profits from selling the clothing, I can buy a bag of maize meal, rice, potatoes, oil and sometimes a piece of meat! I can also make my own building blocks with the help of a hired machine.

My dream now is to build a brick house with the money I save from my business so my family and I can move out of our mud house.

This dream now feels real at last, thank you!

**Ntombikhona***
HACT Clothing Scheme Beneficiary

# ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT REPORT |

## (GARDENS OF HOPE)

# IZINGADI ZETHEMBA PLANT NURSERY

**Dear Plant Lovers,**

**The past year required our plant nursery here at the Hillcrest AIDS Centre Trust (HACT) to respond to some challenging conditions, starting with water availability.**

The prevailing drought which gripped the country has not been kind to the nursery or our customers – many of whom have had little option but to suspend their home gardening projects in order to help conserve what precious little water remains in our local dams and reservoirs. ***However, our plant nursery's focus on indigenous, drought resistant plants has helped to keep our sales ticking over by attracting those customers who are changing their gardens to adjust to the dry conditions.***

Economic empowerment is our buzz word this year and our incredible team of plant nursery staff demonstrates this in spades. One of our longstanding nursery staff, Jabulani Msomi, was promoted from Foreman to Nursery Supervisor as part of HACT's empowerment succession planning, and Siyabonga Shabalala was promoted from Gardener to Assistant Facilities Manager.

We created a new Facilities team to oversee the maintenance of all buildings and other assets, and quickly got to work building a new training room and kitchenette with an attractive garden area. ***The training room and garden are available for hire for events, meetings and training courses at a very reasonable cost, the proceeds of which help support HACT's work for those impacted by HIV/AIDS. Just contact us at the Centre to learn more.***

The spring season started with a bang! A heavy hail storm, with hailstones the size of golf balls, destroyed our nursery's shade cloth area and shredded many plants. The upside was that this area was sorely in need of attention anyhow and we were spurred into action to replace most of the poles holding the shade cloth. As a result, this area now looks far better than it did before and it has helped to improve the general appearance of the nursery. Soon after the hail storm, we had another unexpected turn of events when we arrived at work to find a massive tree had blown over during the night and destroyed the roof of our nursery's potting shed. Thankfully, our team was once again able to repair the damage relatively quickly and carry on with our plans for the busy spring season that lay ahead!

One of the highlights of the past year was our inaugural Spring Talk that was held on the 1st September 2016. We were honoured to have Lindsay Gray, Principal of the School of Garden Design in Hillcrest, as our guest speaker who gave an informative talk about the do's and don'ts of spring gardening to a packed crowd in our new Training Room here at the Centre. This, in addition to several sales and special offers, including our much anticipated Pre-Stock-Take Sale in March 2017, helped to boost sales and attract new faces to the nursery.

Over the past year we have worked closely with HACT's Marketing and Fundraising Department which has promoted our nursery extensively on social media, within our bi-monthly newsletters, and through targeted advertising in the local newspapers. Their efforts have not only helped to attract more customers, but have given our team a much needed boost in morale – so important during tough times.

On behalf of our nursery staff and volunteers, I would like to thank all our gardening clients for your ongoing support and commitment over the past year. We have several new projects in store for our nursery over the forthcoming year and, God-willing, we will keep building a beautiful space to grow and sell plants and provide employment to the staff who work hard within our nursery team.

Keep gardening and growing!

Yours Sincerely,

**John Lund**
HACT Plant Nursery Manager

I'm proud of my job because it supports my family and benefits HACT. I enjoy making the nursery look clean and smart for our customers and giving them a big choice of plants which makes them happy. The vegetable seedlings I grow feeds schools and people in the community who buy them from us. I love to feel the soil with my fingers and to propagate plants, which is what I first learnt here. I know these skills help move HACT forward.

Xolani Zondi, Plant Nursery Gardener

**PHOTOGRAPHER**
Alan Blackman

What makes me happy is that I made good sales over the past year and the customers appreciate my help. The plants themselves look healthy and attractive and this is why the customers always come back to us.

Bhekani Nxele, Plant Nursery Sales

# ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

# REPORTING FROM THE FUND-LINE

**The Annual Financial Statements for the financial year ended 31st March 2017 were approved by our Trustees and signed by the external auditors Marwick and Company Inc. on 31st August 2017.**

We were fortunate in the past year to have received funding from four new grant givers which is in line with our strategic long-term funding targets. The Woza Moya income generation programme generated a surplus of R81 471 as a result of a 13% increase in sales of craft products. However the programmes were, overall, still underfunded for the year by R704 901 (R1 005 330 in 2016).

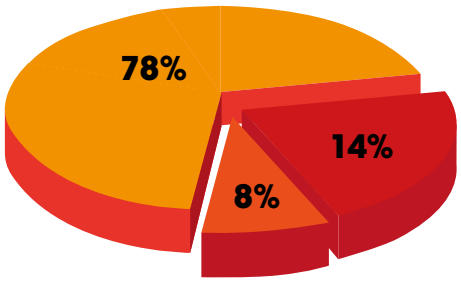
Our financial systems have been strengthened and staff upskilled and this has, and will, result in a more sustainable administration structure. New fundraising strategies are continually explored in order to cover the full services offered by the Trust. This includes our Hope Club and MySchool/MyVillage/MyCommunity card fundraising initiatives which connect with local donors.

Although the financial position of the Trust is stable, new funding injections are required in order to achieve longer term financial stability and continued programme delivery.

Presented on pages 35-38 is a summary of the Annual Financial Statements period. A copy of the full Annual Financial Statements is available on request.

## WHERE YOUR MONEY GOES

Of the Trust's overall income, 78% is spent directly on our HIV Care, Economic Empowerment, HIV Prevention and Community Outreach programmes.




**Programme Costs**

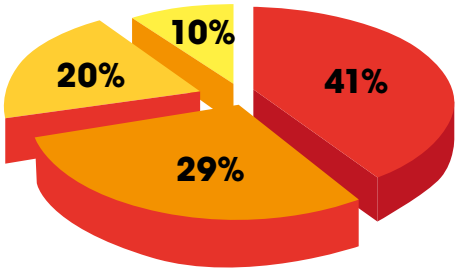
HIV Care, Economic Empowerment, HIV Prevention and Community Outreach programmes.

**Support and Running Costs**

Administration support (14%)

Fundraising (8%)

**Programme Breakdown**




HIV Care (41%)

Economic Empowerment (29%)

HIV Prevention (20%)

Community Outreach (10%)

**PHOTOGRAPHER**
Rebekka Stredwick

# ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

# BALANCE SHEET

## ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2017

| Statement of Financial Position | 2017 | 2016 |
|---|---|---|
| **ASSETS** | | |
| **Non-Current Assets** | | |
| Property, plant and equipment | R2 945 135 | R2 945 135 |
| **Current Assets** | | |
| Inventories | R2 920 396 | R3 115 533 |
| Trade and other receivables | R425 492 | R420 807 |
| Cash and cash equivalents | R3 977 369 | R4 858 737 |
| | **R7 323 257** | **R8 395 077** |
| **Total Assets** | **R10 268 392** | **R11 340 212** |
| **Equity** | | |
| Trust capital | R100 | R100 |
| Accumulated surplus - Hillcrest AIDS Centre Trust | R4 633 825 | R5 384 371 |
| Accumulated surplus – Woza Moya | R2 465 443 | R2 338 325 |
| | **R7 099 368** | **R7 722 796** |
| **Current Liabilities** | | |
| Trade and other payables | **R3 169 024** | **R3 617 416** |
| Total equity and liabilities | **R10 268 392** | **R11 340 212** |

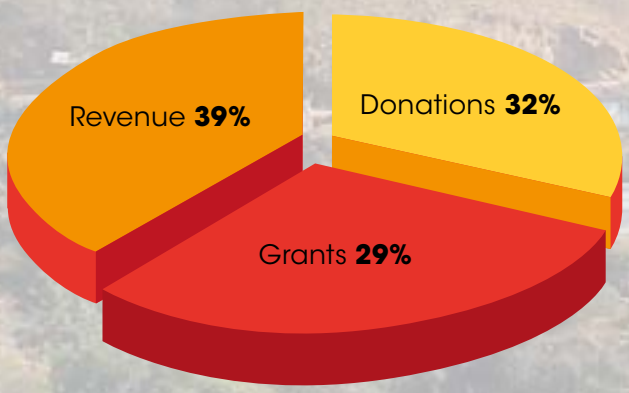
# CONSOLIDATED

## INCOME STATEMENTS & INCOME OVERVIEW

| Consolidated Statement of Comprehensive Income | 2017 | % | 2016 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Donations** | **R4 776 024** | **32** | **R4 356 983** |
| **Grants** | **R4 299 634** | **29** | **R3 810 839** |
| **Revenue** | **R5 870 926** | **39** | **R5 071 294** |
| Administrative income | R471 096 | | R297 247 |
| Programatic income | R36 065 | | R72 747 |
| Horticulture and nursery income | R471 245 | | R502 239 |
| Income generation income | R4 892 520 | | R4 199 060 |
| **Other Income** | **-** | | **R1 814 644** |
| Stock adjustment | - | | R1 814 644 |
| **Total Income** | **R14 946 583** | | **R15 053 760** |
| **Cost of Sales** | | | |
| Income generation cost of sales | R3 073 715 | | R2 165 286 |
| **Expenses** | **R12 496 298** | | **R11 730 773** |
| **Deficit for the year** | **(R623 430)** | | **R1 157 701** |

(REGISTRATION NUMBER IT2182/99)

**INCOME**



# OUR DONORS & PARTNERS

# THANK YOU

**We would like to acknowledge the generous support of the following donors and partners who have played a vital role in helping us provide unconditional love and hope to HIV/AIDS impacted communities over the past year:**

1000 HILLS COMMUNITY HELPERS
ANTALIS
ASHLEY EDDY
AQUELLE
BARLOWORLD FORD
BIDVEST CAR RENTALS
BIG TIME PROMOTIONS
BRENDA QUINN
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GOLD YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
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HAESLOOP AGENCIES
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HILLCREST HOSPICE
HILLCREST KWIKSPAR
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IKHAYA
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JOHN & MARY KENNEDY
KENT MOTORS
KEY FOUNDATION
KLOOF BAPTIST CHURCH
KLOOF METHODIST CHURCH
KLOOF SPAR
KOLLEKTE GOTT
KZNCSOC
KZN DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
KZN DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
KZN DEPARTMENT OF SPORTS & RECREATION
LA VITA SPA
LINDSAY GRAY & THE SCHOOL OF GARDEN DESIGN
LITTLE TRAVELLERS CANADA
MALVERN PREPARATORY SCHOOL
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NATIONAL EDGING
NATION CHANGERS
NINA LINDTSTEDT
OOBA
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SMITHS PLASTICS
SOZO FOODS
SIVA PILLAY
SIVEST SA
SPAR GROUP LTD
SRC TOURS
ST AGNES CHURCH
ST MARY'S DSG KLOOF
STOTT NIELSEN AFRICA
ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY (KLOOF CATHOLIC CHURCH)
S VAN DEN BERG
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THUMB PRINT
TIMBER HAULAGE TRUST
TOM & MARGARET BATE
TRULY GROUND
USIZO LWETHU CLINIC
VALLEY TRUST
VICKY CHRISTINA'S
WATERFALL METHODIST CHURCH
WESANT
WESTFIELD FARMING ESTATE T/A THT & EXCLUSIVE CAMPERS
WILL LUFF
WOOLWORTHS (DELCAIRN LIFESTYLE CENTRE)
WOOLWORTHS (HILLCREST)
WORLD CHANGERS ACADEMY
YOUTH CONNECTED

**PHOTOGRAPHER**
Ryan Morgan

# SUPPORT US

# MAKE A DONATION

We are completely reliant on the generous support of our many donors, sponsors and partners in order to provide our life-saving and life-changing services. If you are keen to support our work, there are many ways individuals, corporates, organisations and groups from all sectors can get involved and help us deliver our important and timely mission to those impacted by HIV/AIDS.

## Donate online via our website OR donate via EFT / Bank Transfer:

**Acc Name:** Hillcrest AIDS Centre Trust
**Acc No:** 4045374149
**Bank:** ABSA
**Branch:** Hillcrest
**Branch code:** 631126
**Swiftcode:** ABSAZAJJ

HACT is a registered Public Benefit Organisation in South Africa and all donations are therefore tax-deductible.

## Support our Adopt-a-Bed Campaign

Help us cover the essential operating costs of our Respite Unit by 'Adopting a Bed'! When you adopt a bed your donations will go directly towards helping us provide the very best treatment and care to our patients. This includes our patients' meals, medication, x-rays, blood tests and transport as well as the Unit's staffing costs, utility bills, maintenance costs, medical equipment, and security. The running costs associated caring for the patients who occupy each of our 24 beds are R6000 per month / R72 000 per year.

Your support will also ensure our patients have the very best chance of returning home to their families to lead full, healthy and productive lives.

## Join HACT's Hope Club

For as little as R50 a month, you can help us give hope to people impacted by HIV/AIDS through our many life empowering programmes.

## Shop at HACT

Purchase the ideal gift for that special someone in our Woza Moya shops or support our onsite Plant Nursery which is open Monday – Friday, 8am – 4pm and Saturday, 8am – 2pm.

## Book our Function Room

Hold your next function in our on-site Training Centre or book an HIV/AIDS presentation or Wellness Day.

Please contact us for more details about our talks and cost effective venue hire fees.

## Donate in-kind

Check out our online wish list – new or second-hand books, clothing, and household items are all gratefully accepted for use by our various economic empowerment projects and programmes.

## Leave a legacy

Help us build a legacy of hope. By leaving a bequest to HACT in your will, you can help us achieve our vision of an AIDS-free Valley of 1000 Hills for years to come.

## Get a MySchool Card

Swipe your MySchool/MyVillage/MyPlanet Cards and help raise much needed funds for our vital work.

## Join the Litres for Education Programme

For local supporters, HACT will receive 10c for every litre of fuel you purchase. Contact us for more information about participating service stations.

## Volunteer at HACT

HACT is always in need of the unique energy, skills and support that both local and international volunteers bring with them to our Centre.

For more information on the fundraising campaigns mentioned above and other ways you can get involved and support HACT, please visit our website: **www.hillaids.org.za** or contact our Marketing and Fundraising team on **+27 (0)31 765 5866 / fundraising@hillaids.org.za**

ADOPT-A-BED CAMPAIGN

THE HOPE CLUB

MySchool MyVillage MyPlanet

Litres for Education
Serious About Education

# THANK YOU TO OUR GRANT GIVERS

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
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| Zulu Aid | HCI foundation | NACOSA | GAGA Goodwill & Growth for Africa UK |
| Sibaya Community Trust | PEPFAR | Ackerman Pick n Pay Foundation | The Betty Lawes Foundation |
| The Archbishop of Sydney's Anglican Aid | AWDF African Women's Development Fund | Beckman Coulter | The Mercury Phoenix Trust |
| 31 Club | Donaldson Trust | GetOn Foundation (EPWP Youthbuild Programme) | Nemit Trust |
| Solon Foundation | The Victor Daitz Foundation | | |

# SPECIAL THANKS

Hillcrest AIDS Centre Trust would like to thank the following sponsors for their generous support in producing this Annual Report

HB | Verve!

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# PROVIDING UNCONDITIONAL LOVE AND HOPE FOR ALL IMPACTED BY HIV/AIDS...

## CONTACT DETAILS:

**Tel:** +27 (0)31 765 5866
**Fax:** +27 (0)31 765 8781
**Email:** info@hillaids.org.za
**Website:** www.hillaids.org.za

**Physical Address:** 26 Old Main Road, Hillcrest, KwaZulu-Natal, 3650, South Africa
**Postal Address:** PO Box 2474, Hillcrest, KwaZulu-Natal, 3650, South Africa

## SOCIAL MEDIA:

**Facebook:** Hillcrest AIDS Centre Trust
**Twitter:** @Hillcrest_AIDS
**Skype:** hillcrest.aids.centre.trust

**NPO Reg.No: 005-800**
**PBO Reg.No: 18/11/13/1231**

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Michael Mkhize, Sbusisiwe Myeni, Candace Davidson (CEO),
Revd Andrew Robinson, Revd Gary Thompson, Bishop Michael Vorster.