



Starfish®
GREATHEARTS FOUNDATION
LIFE, HOPE AND OPPORTUNITY



2023

Annual Report



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The Starfish parable

An old man had a habit of early morning walks along the beach. One day as he looked down the shore he saw a human figure moving like a dancer.



As he came closer he saw that it was a young woman and she was not dancing but reaching down to the sand, picking up starfish and very gently throwing them into the ocean.

“Young lady, why are you throwing starfish into the ocean?”

“The sun is up and the tide is going out, and if I do not throw them in they will die,” she replied.

“But there are millions of them, what difference can it possibly make?” he asked.

The young woman listened politely, paused and then bent down, picked up another starfish and threw it into the sea, past the breaking waves, saying “It made a difference to that one!”

Adapted from Loren Eiseley’s ‘The Star Thrower’





Vision

Children in South Africa are valued, protected and empowered to realise their full potential.

Mission

Starfish supports children orphaned or vulnerable in South Africa by working in partnership with community-based organisations.

Values

Starfish believes:

- In providing best practice holistic care to children orphaned or made vulnerable.
- In serving and being a voice for children in a manner that reflects professionalism, integrity, innovation and creativity.
- That every individual in our global community can make a positive contribution.
- In communicating to its donor base with transparency, integrity, professionalism, excellence and accountability.



**“Strength lies in unity;
we can achieve greatness
and transform lives.”**

Chairperson's report

Although Covid-19 is a distant memory for most of us, emerging from the backdrop of the pandemic continues to affect all South Africans as we constantly feel the economic impact.

No less so than the CBO's who work endlessly to ensure continued operational momentum to protect our vulnerable and orphaned children under challenging circumstances. Donors also continue to feel the pinch, which impacts the challenges faced by Starfish in its endeavours to protect the vulnerable.

Starfish SA experienced changes over the past year with the resignation of our Chairperson Sibusiso Mangele and our CEO, Matshepo Misibi. I was appointed as the Chairperson and Dr Amelia Hilgart, one of our board members, stepped in as temporary CEO to navigate the changes during our search for a new Operations Manager. Amelia, our techno guru, introduced new systems which energised the team and made operations more streamlined. We would like to thank Amelia for her dedication to this process and the incredible amount of time she dedicated to Starfish.

I would like to wholeheartedly thank the Starfish South Africa Team who immersed themselves in the daily tasks amid the changes to leadership, remaining dedicated to ensuring continued impetus for Starfish beneficiaries.



Our new Operations Manager, Poonam Dwarkaram, started in September 2023 and hit the ground running. She has not stopped since. Her energy and commitment to implementing the new Starfish strategies has already seen positive results.

We focus on three areas to achieve this:

- To increase access to health, education and child protection services to children
- To strengthen the capacity of CBOs to better manage support programmes to OVC
- To raise funds and mobilise resources to support community based organisations (CBOs) working with children



Chairperson's report (Cont)

Her national field trip in January 2024 gave her first-hand knowledge of the challenges experienced by the CBO's and she has implemented training to assist them in dealing with these challenges.

We also implemented initiatives to ensure continued improvements to the Starfish offering, which are aimed at making the lives of the CBO staff easier. Their enthusiasm to taking on new systems like Smart Start, Redcap and Starfish Way with innovative technology against the backdrop of further obstacles like load shedding has been an inspiration to us all. The new reporting methods will enable us to report to our stakeholders and ensure they can evaluate the impact of their efforts.

Starfish has also partnered with the Department of Health, which opens opportunities for Starfish to expand its footprint, aiding more beneficiaries in our communities.

I would like to thank our committed Board members who constantly give of their time and energy for the benefit of those less fortunate. We welcome the new members of the Board who have skills that are aimed to guide Starfish into a new chapter. A big thank you must go to Sibusiso (Sbu) Manqele for his many years of dedicated leadership and guidance as Chairperson. Sbu remains a steadfast supporter of Starfish. He leaves me with big shoes to fill.

A shout out must go out to our USA and UK partners for their continued collaboration with the South African Chapter. This alliance truly highlights the beneficial relationship we have in making the best impact.

Lastly, I would like to express our deepest gratitude to our donors for their valuable and continued support to Starfish, and who enable us to maintain our aid to vulnerable and orphaned children we support in the communities in which we operate.

“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.” - Helen Keller

Terry-Lynne Killops
Chairperson of the Board



Our work

Developing Outcomes - Focused Solutions

To be impactful, our programs must be grounded in evidence, supported by robust theoretical frameworks, and advocate practices that reliably yield positive outcomes for children.

At Starfish, we prioritise investments in innovative services and rigorous evaluation of our initiatives. By assessing the tangible effects of our programs on the children we support, we strive to establish a benchmark for effective child development frameworks. We are committed to sharing our findings widely to facilitate their replication on a larger scale.



Providing transformative services

Starfish believes in the unique power of relationships to increase children's resilience and overall well-being.

Beyond helping children achieve specific goals, Starfish's programs foster relationships, both with our team and community-based organisations – out of a belief that it's these relationships that will bring about lasting transformation. Through this approach, we come together to support centres and make a safer world for children.



Challenging society's response

Starfish recognises that society's inadequate response and systemic failures allow for the ongoing mistreatment of children.

In addition, social determinants and marginalisation put some children at higher risk, and result in the inequitable provision of services and justice.

Alongside beneficiaries and a movement of those committed to the same vision, Starfish works to address these issues in our communications, programmatic work, and efforts to advocate for broad-based responses that reduce children's vulnerabilities and uphold their rights and dignity.

One Starfish at a time!





A letter from the team.

As we reflect on the achievements of the past year, we are deeply grateful for your unwavering support and dedication to the Starfish Greathearts Foundation.

Your commitment has been instrumental in advancing our mission to empower vulnerable children in South Africa through Early Childhood Development, Nutrition, Health, and Social Services.

In 2023, we have continued to expand our impact through strategic partnerships with Community Based Organisations (CBOs). These collaborations have been pivotal in delivering holistic support to children and their families across various communities.

Through our joint efforts, we have strengthened Early Childhood Development programs, ensuring that young minds receive the nurturing care and educational foundation they need to thrive.

Nutrition remains a cornerstone of our initiatives. With your generous contributions, we have been able to provide nutritious meals and nutritional education to thousands of children, laying the groundwork for healthy futures. Our partnerships with local suppliers have enabled us to source fresh, locally produced food, supporting both children's health and economic sustainability.

Healthcare initiatives have also seen significant progress. By partnering with CBOs and local healthcare providers, we have expanded access to essential medical services, including immunisations, regular health check-ups, and treatment for common childhood illnesses. This year, we have prioritised mental health support, recognising its critical role in overall well-being.

Social services continue to be a cornerstone of our approach. Through partnerships with CBOs specialising in family support, counselling, and community outreach, we have provided vital resources to families facing economic hardship, domestic challenges, and other social barriers. By addressing these underlying factors, we aim to create a supportive environment where children can thrive.

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With heartfelt gratitude,

The Greathearts Team

Highlights

In 2023, the Starfish Greathearts Foundation achieved significant milestones and impacts in our mission to empower vulnerable children in South Africa. Here are some of the year's highlights.

1. Expansion of Early Childhood Development Programs:

We expanded our Early Childhood Development (ECD) initiatives, reaching more young children in underserved communities and enhancing the quality of early education. Our employees received comprehensive training in Grow ECD, and Play Box 1 methodologies, equipping them with advanced skills and knowledge to support early learning.

Armed with this training, our team conducted extensive training sessions for practitioners in our Community Based Organisations (CBOs). These sessions focused on effective teaching strategies, curriculum development, and child-centred learning approaches.

Additionally, our team provided in-house training to further empower practitioners, ensuring they are well-equipped to deliver high-quality ECD programs. This dual approach of external and internal training has significantly strengthened our educational impact and capacity.



2. Nutrition Initiatives:

Our nutrition programs saw substantial growth this year. We focused on providing nutritious and delicious meal options tailored to the needs of growing children. By supporting our partner Community-Based Organisations with essential resources, we ensure that children receive consistent, healthy meals.

These efforts have not only improved the physical health of the children but also educated about the importance of proper nutrition and healthy eating habits. Through our initiatives, we have seen significant improvements in the overall well-being of the children we support. Their increased energy levels and enhanced concentration in the centres are testaments to the positive impact of balanced nutrition.

We also emphasise the importance of sustainable practices in our nutrition programs.

3. Healthcare Advancements:

We strengthened healthcare services by partnering with CBOs and healthcare providers to expand access to essential medical care. This year, we focused on improving access to immunisations, regular health check-ups, and treatment for common childhood illnesses.

Recognising the importance of mental health, we introduced new mental health resources and support systems. These initiatives include counselling services, mental health workshops, and training for caregivers and educators on recognising and addressing mental health issues in children.

Our comprehensive healthcare approach aims to address both physical and psychological well-being, ensuring holistic support for the children we serve.



Highlights (Cont)

4. Social Services Support:

Through strategic partnerships, we expanded our social services support, offering critical resources to families facing economic hardship, domestic challenges, and other social barriers. This support includes family counselling, community outreach programs, and assistance with accessing social grants and other essential services.

By addressing these underlying socio-economic factors, we aim to create a more stable and supportive environment for children, helping them to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

5. Innovation and Impact Measurement:

We continued to innovate in our service delivery, exploring new methodologies and technologies to enhance program effectiveness. This year, we rigorously evaluated our programs' impact through comprehensive data collection and analysis with the monitoring and evaluation survey we use, REDCAP.

By measuring outcomes such as educational attainment, health improvements, and social well-being, we aimed to set new standards in effective child development frameworks. Our commitment to evidence-based practices ensures that our programs are both impactful and sustainable.

We are dedicated to sharing our findings widely, contributing to the broader field of child development and inspiring replication of successful strategies at scale.

6. Community Engagement and Empowerment:

Our commitment to fostering relationships with CBOs and local communities remained central to our approach. We believe that strong partnerships are key to creating lasting change. By working closely with community leaders, educators, and families, we have been able to tailor our programs to meet the specific needs of each community, fostering a sense of ownership and empowerment.

These partnerships have been instrumental in creating a supportive environment where children can thrive and grow, ensuring that our impact is both deep and widespread.



Highlights (Cont)



7. Support and Upliftment of Services:

We supported and encouraged the importance of child welfare and education through on going communication and updates to our centres. These efforts aimed to mobilise broader support for our mission and drive positive change contributed to improvement, that was noted through our M&E surveys.

Our advocacy work included online sessions to introduce new developments to the centres and collaboration with other NGOs and governmental bodies to support and encourage improvement of policies and governance in our centres.

By raising the profile of these critical issues, we aim to build a movement of support and action that will sustain our efforts and expand our reach.

8. Back to School Campaign

Investec CSI has partnered with My Walk made with Soul NPC to sponsor approximately 5,000 school shoes made from recycled oxygen masks and IV bags. Additionally, they have partnered with Sexy Socks to donate a pair of white and grey school socks for each pair of shoes. Investec staff are also encouraged to donate small stationery sets to be distributed along with the shoes and socks.

Starfish Greathearts Foundation is honoured to be one of the beneficiaries of this initiative again this year. At Starfish we have chosen 13 beneficiaries, ranging from 7 to 263 children per Community-Based Organisation (CBO), with the campaign conducted nationwide. A total of 938 school shoes, 685 socks, and 681 stationery packs were distributed to all Starfish beneficiaries.

As we look forward to the future, we are grateful for the continued support of our donors, volunteers, and partners who make our work possible. Together, we are building a brighter and more hopeful future for children in South Africa.



Operations Manager's report

As the Operations Manager there is a great deal of responsibility on my shoulders towards the community-based organisations that we work with, our Board members, funders and supporters, the team in the office, and last, but most important, to the children that we are focused on.

This new role has given me the opportunity to meet incredible people who run amazing organisations in different communities. It is inspiring to work with people who share the same passion and values, making my job even more enjoyable.

This has been a busy time with a much to do! We have experienced both successes and challenges with our community-based organisations (CBOs). Allow me to share some with you:

- **KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) Maternal Care CBO:**
I am so proud of our CBO in KZN, which provides essential maternal care. They have made tremendous efforts to ensure that mothers and babies receive care, guidance, and support through their first 1000 days and beyond. They have organised campaigns, awareness events, meetings, home visits, and training on topics such as breastfeeding and bonding with babies. One of their recent initiatives is a support group for the fathers, which is proving to be very successful. This initiative will ensure that fathers spend more quality time with their children.
- **Our Early childhood Development (ECD) centres:**
We have 12 ECD centres that we currently support, and they provide essential ECD services to the most vulnerable children in their community. The children receive nutritious meals daily, and the best possible care. The practitioners in the centres are receiving ongoing training and support and this in turn, allows for a better ECD Programme for the children.
- **Wellness Wagons:**
We currently support four Wellness wagons (WWs) and one stationed health & wellness clinic. The centres that operate these WWs are providing health and wellness services to those in need. The services include health screenings, TB testing, and HIV testing. It's wonderful to see people in the most rural areas now accessing these essential services.



We are incredibly proud of all the community-based organisations (CBOs) we support. Their hard work gives children a chance at a better, brighter future. With successes come challenges, and we faced a few in the past year. One of the most concerning was theft, with three different instances of items being stolen from our centres. Despite this, we have become more resilient and continue to rebuild and move forward. Covid taught us the importance of resilience, and by working together and supporting each other, we overcame difficulties more quickly.

Starfish has stood by the CBOs through good and bad times, and thanks to our amazing funders, we provide nutrition, health and wellness, social services, and essential ECD services to children in need. The journey is long, but it is not hard, because we all work towards the common goal of providing vulnerable children with opportunities they would not otherwise have.

We also extend our gratitude to our supportive partners: GROW ECD, SmartStart, WordWorks, Book Dash, Biblionef, Finding Thabo and Care for Education. A special thank you goes to Investec for your unwavering support and commitment to Starfish.

Thank you to our SA / US / UK Boards for their support and encouragement.

Before I close, I want to thank my amazing team members, who are behind the scenes, but working hard in ensuring our services reach the children. I am very thankful to them because, without them, there is no Starfish. We have a lot of work ahead of us, but the journey is easier with supportive people who share the same vision. I look forward to the future with a smile and a joyful heart, knowing that Starfish is making a difference, one step at a time. Every contribution made, helps a child in need.

Thank you to everyone who have supported us in any way!

Poonam Dwarkaram
Operations Manager

The need

Starfish supports children by partnering with community-based organizations to strengthen health, education, and child protection programs. In their own words, here is what your support means to the children in our care as they continue their education:

Current reality.

Children Orphaned or Vulnerable (OVC)

- Over 5.2 million children orphaned
- Over 26,000 children living in child headed households
- 56% children live below the poverty line
- 7/10 child deaths are preventable

Current reality.

Community Based Organisations

- Issues of sustainability and access to funding
- Lack of systems and processes
- Donor and programme reporting-finance, narrative, stats
- Limited accountability
- Limited management capacity

“We need to hold ourselves accountable and ensure that we are having the impact we intend to. We want to do what works. Rigorous evaluation will allow us to assess our impact, make improvements in our programming, and inform future efforts.”



Mpiliso Skosana
Programmes Coordinator

Our response

Wellness programme

To safeguard the physical, mental and social-emotional wellbeing of children, by improving access to health care services, food and nutrition.

- Mobile clinic
- Childcare services provided by care workers
- Distribution of material goods
- Complementary Programmes

Our response

CBO Capacity Development

To help strengthen the institutional capacity of CBOs.

- Due diligence and risk proofing
- Finance systems and training
- Monitoring, evaluation, reporting systems and training
- Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses (IMCI) - CBO/cluster-based training



“We strive to ensure our actions make a real difference. Through thorough evaluation, we can measure our impact, refine our programs, and shape future initiatives for greater success.”

Thuso Matsheru
Monitoring and Evaluation Officer

Starfish competencies



Starfish has an established monitoring, evaluation and reporting team with a database and survey able to gather, integrate, analyse and present data for all reporting requirements (RedCap).

This requires that each CBO submits a monthly statistical report, which records the number and type of services delivered per child, plus a quarterly narrative and financial report.



At the quarterly site visits with the CBO, we jointly review the results of the quarter, giving feedback on the reports, and developing an agreed action plan for continued improvement in the quarter ahead.



In this way, Starfish can ensure that the programme objectives, implementation plans and deliverables.

Our key strengths

Grant management

- Project management
- Capacity Development, through coaching (via phone, email, Zoom or Teams meeting and on - site support)

With over 22 years' experience we are:

- A leader in innovative, sustainable and cost-effective programmes
- A trusted custodian of donor funds with over 22 years' experience

- Demonstrates professional reporting and accountability, with established operating systems and processes
- Impact measures are established and monitored on a monthly/quarterly basis
- Starfish operates within a 20 (ops): 80 (programmes) cost ratio
- Creates shared value - social return on investment

Starfish value add

Pre-assessment

Starfish conducts a pre- assessment with each CBO, challenges are analysed and plans for improvement jointly developed. Focus areas include:

- Capabilities - skills and knowledge
- Systems and processes
- Stakeholders - staff, community and child participation
- Child health

Intervention

Starfish provides the following support:

- Funding
- Material goods
- Training, mentoring, on-site coaching
- Developing institutional systems and processes
- Building referral networks - linking CBOs to local services

Post-assessment

Starfish conducts a post-assessment on the following:

- Capabilities - skills and knowledge
- Systems and processes
- Stakeholders - staff, community and child participation

Desired reality (impact)

Children in South Africa are valued, protected and empowered to realise their dreams



Starfish value chain



Flagship programmes

The Wellness programme

The Wellness Programme aims to safeguard the physical, mental and social wellbeing of children to maximise their learning potential.

Key objectives include:

- To strengthen healthcare service delivery to children
- To increase the knowledge and skills of careworkers with a focus on primary healthcare
- To facilitate and strengthen local partnerships

The programme comprises five integrated parts:

1. Wellness wagon (mobile clinic)

The Wellness Wagon was initiated to address challenges in accessing healthcare, such as long queues at health facilities, inadequate staffing and resources, school absenteeism, and children unaccompanied by adults not being taken seriously by health officials.

This mobile clinic, staffed by a professional nurse and driver, visits schools and key points within our communities to provide services directly to children. It forms an integral part of the broader provincial Department of Health network and referral system.

2. Child care services provided by care workers

Health, education, and child protection services are delivered by dedicated care workers who receive a stipend for their invaluable contributions. These services encompass a wide range of support, including:

- Administration of ARV and TB medication to ensure effective treatment and management.
- HIV/AIDS adherence support to help individuals stay on their treatment regimens.
- Home-based care to provide personalised health services in a comfortable setting.
- Transport to school to ensure children can attend classes regularly and safely.
- Assistance with obtaining school fee exemptions to reduce financial barriers to education.
- Counselling services to address emotional and psychological needs.
- Help with accessing vital documents and grants to secure essential resources and benefits for families.
- These comprehensive care services are essential to the well-being and development of the children and families we support, ensuring they receive the necessary health, educational, and social assistance.

3. Distribution of material goods

Starfish provides essential material goods to support the well-being and development of children in need. These include:

- Blankets to keep children warm during colder months.
- Nutritious food to ensure they have regular meals and proper nourishment.
- School uniforms to enable them to attend school with dignity and pride.
- Educational resource packs containing books and toys that stimulate learning and creativity.
- These items are crucial in addressing immediate needs and promoting long-term growth and resilience among the children we serve.



Flagship programmes (Cont)

4. Complementary programmes

We prioritise food security through initiatives such as establishing community food gardens and delivering comprehensive nutrition education programs. These efforts aim not only to ensure immediate access to nutritious food but also to empower communities with the knowledge and skills needed to sustain healthy dietary practices. By promoting self-sufficiency and resilience, we contribute to long-term food security and improved well-being among vulnerable populations.

Intended outcome

Improved health and wellbeing of children.

Capacity development

The program aims to enhance the institutional capacity of Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) through a holistic approach encompassing training, mentoring, and on-site coaching services.

CBOs are selected based on specific criteria, including their location within the 18 priority districts identified by the Department of Health. Each CBO undergoes a participatory baseline assessment to jointly identify strengths and areas for improvement. A tailored capacity development plan is then crafted, guiding targeted training and support activities that are monitored on a quarterly basis.

Key objectives include:

- Developing focused action plans for learning in primary healthcare, finance, and monitoring and reporting.
- Identifying organisational risks and implementing mitigation strategies.
- Providing ongoing coaching support as needed, focusing on skill development opportunities.

Services provided directly by Starfish include:

- Training in finance management.
- Training in governance.
- Skills development of CBO team members.
- Capacitation of Parents.
- Establishment of monitoring, evaluation, and reporting systems.
- Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses (IMCI) training at the CBO or cluster level.
- Conducting due diligence and risk assessments through quarterly site visits using the Capacity Assessment Tool.

These initiatives are designed to strengthen CBOs' operational capabilities, ensuring they can effectively deliver essential services and support to their communities.



Our stories

A Story of Hope: Siphos Journey at the ECD Centre

In the heart of their village, where the sun rises over rolling hills and laughter echoes through the air, Siphos early years were shaped by the loving care of his family and the support of the Early Childhood Development (ECD) centre, supported by the Starfish Greathearts Foundation.

Siphos parents, Nomusa and Thabo, faced the challenges of providing for their young son in a community where resources were scarce.

They were overjoyed when they discovered the ECD centre, a nurturing haven that not only provided early education but also ensured Siphos received nutritious meals through the Nutrition program.

“When we first brought Siphos to the ECD centre, we immediately felt welcomed,” Nomusa recalls with gratitude. “The teachers and caregivers understood our struggles and embraced Siphos with warmth and love.”

At the centre, Siphos thrived under the guidance of dedicated educators who tailored learning activities to his developmental needs. “Siphos loved going to school,” Thabo says proudly. “He would come home excited, telling us about the stories he heard and the friends he made.”

In addition to education, the centre provided Siphos with nutritious meals that supported his growth and health. “The meals were nutritious and delicious,” Nomusa shares. “Knowing that Siphos was well-fed gave us peace of mind.”

Through the ECD centres support, Nomusa and Thabo also received valuable parenting guidance and workshops on nutrition. They learned about the importance of balanced diets and how to create a stimulating environment at home to support Siphos learning and development.

As Siphos grew older, his confidence blossomed, and he embraced learning with enthusiasm. “I want to be a doctor when I grow up,” Siphos says with determination. “I want to help people and make a difference.”

Today, Siphos continues to thrive, thanks to the foundation laid by the Early childhood Development, (ECD) centre and the support of Starfish Greathearts Foundation. Nomusa and Thabo are filled with hope for their sons future. “We are grateful for the opportunities Siphos has received,” Nomusa reflects. “The ECD centre has given him a strong start in life.”

Today, Siphos continues to thrive, thanks to the foundation laid by the Early childhood Development, (ECD) centre and the support of Starfish Greathearts Foundation. Nomusa and Thabo are filled with hope for their sons future. “We are grateful for the opportunities Siphos has received,” Nomusa reflects. “The ECD centre has given him a strong start in life.”



Our stories (Cont)

A Story of Hope: The Journey of Naledi.

Naledi was just seven years old when she was diagnosed with tuberculosis (TB). Living in a remote village in South Africa, accessing healthcare services was a challenge for her family. They struggled with long distances to the nearest clinic and limited knowledge about TB treatment.

However, everything changed when Naledi's family connected with the Community Based Organisation (CBO) supported by the Starfish Greathearts Foundation. The CBO, equipped with a mobile health clinic as part of the health and wellness program, visited their village regularly. Naledi received her medication from a caring nurse who also provided essential counselling and support.

"I remember feeling scared and weak," Naledi recalls. "But the nurse who came with the Wellness Wagon was like an angel. She explained everything to me and my family. She made me feel safe."

Over the next few months, Naledi's health improved steadily. The CBO not only ensured she received her medication but also provided nutritious food and encouraged her family to establish a small vegetable garden for ongoing nutrition.

"With the support from the CBO and Starfish, Naledi did not miss school anymore," her mother proudly shares. "She regained her strength and started playing with her friends again."

Today, Naledi is a vibrant teenager with dreams of becoming a nurse herself. She credits the CBO and Starfish for giving her hope and a future.

"The experience taught me that kindness and support can change lives," Naledi reflects. "I want to help others like they helped me."



Our stories (Cont)

A Journey of Hope: Lerato's Early Education

In a small village nestled among green hills, Lerato's early years were filled with curiosity and a thirst for learning. .

Born into a community where resources were scarce, her parents, Nomvula and Jabulani, dreamed of giving her the best start in life.

Their prayers were answered when they discovered the Early Childhood Development (ECD) centre supported by the Starfish Greathearts Foundation.

"Lerato was full of energy and questions," Nomvula fondly recalls. "We knew she needed a place where she could learn and grow." The ECD centre became that place—a nurturing haven where Lerato could thrive.

At the centre, Lerato found dedicated teachers and caregivers who understood the importance of early education. "They welcomed Lerato with open arms," Jabulani says with gratitude. "They saw her potential and encouraged her every step of the way."

Under the guidance of skilled educators, Lerato engaged in stimulating activities tailored to her developmental needs. "I loved playing with puzzles and learning new songs," Lerato shares with a bright smile. "The teachers made learning fun!"

Beyond academics, the ECD centre provided Lerato with a safe and supportive environment to explore her creativity and social skills. "I made friends and learned how to share," Lerato says proudly. "It's like having a second family here."

Nomvula and Jabulani also benefited from workshops and parenting sessions offered by the ECD centre. They learned about the importance of early childhood development and received practical tips on supporting Lerato's learning at home. "The centre taught us how to create a learning-rich environment for Lerato," Nomvula explains. "We saw her confidence grow each day."

As Lerato prepares for primary school, her parents are filled with hope for her future. "She is ready for the next step," Jabulani says confidently. "We are grateful to the ECD centre and Starfish Greathearts Foundation for giving Lerato a strong foundation."

Thanks to your support, children like Thembi can receive the proper HIV/AIDS treatment and nutrition that she needs.



Starfish footprint

OUR REACH

in 4 provinces

18 423

Children supported

1 366

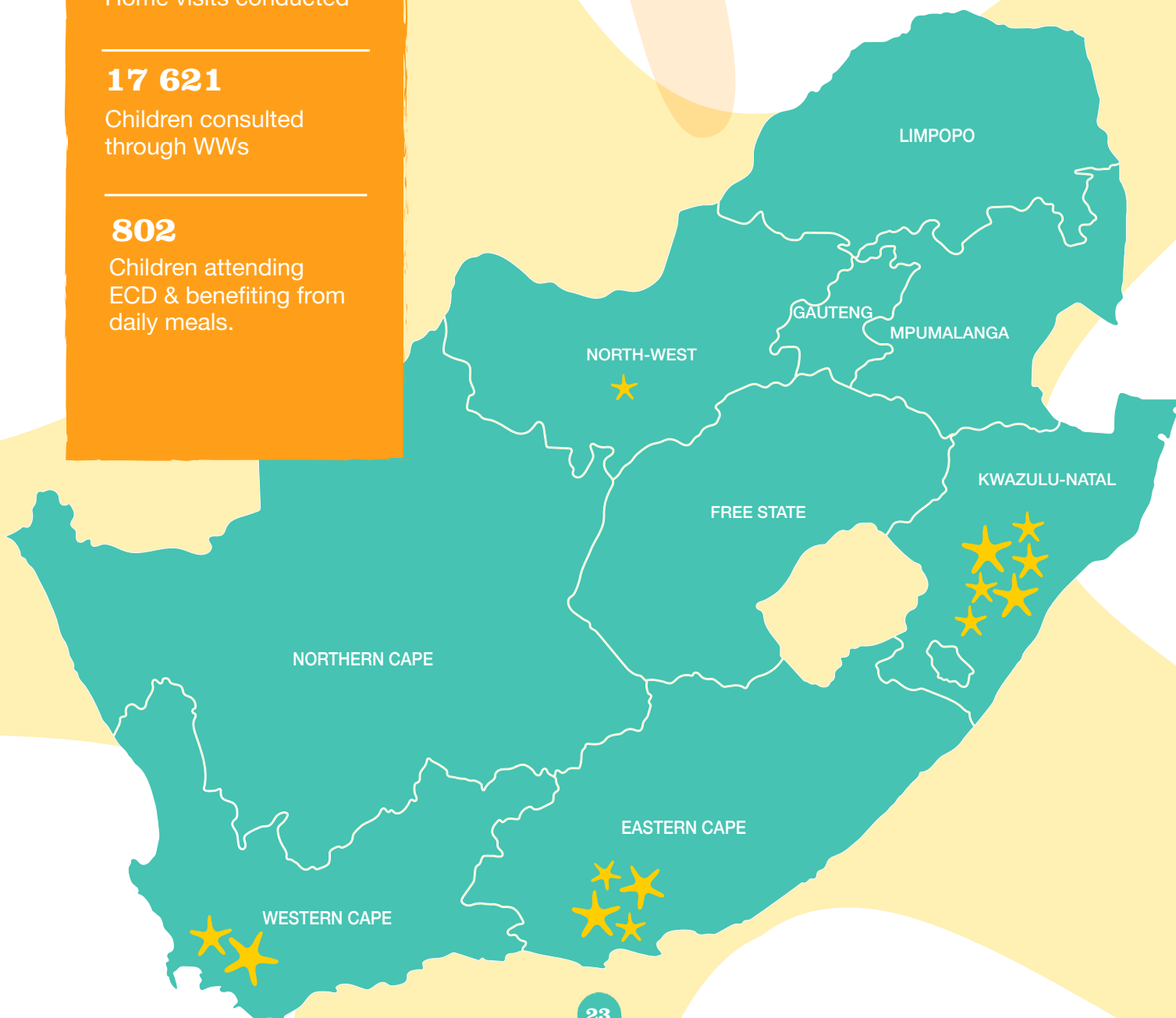
Home visits conducted

17 621

Children consulted
through WWs

802

Children attending
ECD & benefiting from
daily meals.



Area of focus

The Starfish Greathearts Foundation works with partner community-based organisations throughout South Africa to ensure all children, especially those orphaned and most vulnerable, are increasingly valued, protected and empowered to realise their full potential.

In a systemic approach, Starfish places the child at the centre: the child in a household; the household in a community; a community with the social capital, the resources, and the competencies to ensure every child in that community is:

- 1** Fully valued,
- 2** Protected from that which would cause her/him harm, and,
- 3** Finally, afforded every reasonable opportunity to thrive.

Always at the centre of our focus, we work to ensure every child's systemic environment addresses the five core domains for healthy development:

- Health – helping communities effectively interrupt health risks at all times
- Nutrition – ensuring communities have no children stunted in their development due to poor nutrition
- Responsive care – helping communities create interactive environments with healthy attachments and stimulation for their children
- Safety & security – helping communities eliminate children's exposure to adverse childhood experiences.
- Learning and stimulation – empowering the community to promote interactive communication and play between children and caregivers, develop competencies and model continual learning



Interim CEO's report

Dear Greathearts

As we reflect on the past year, I am filled with both pride and gratitude for the journey we have embarked upon together.

It is with great pleasure that I share with you our annual report, a testament to the unwavering commitment and dedication of our team, supporters, and partners in advancing our mission to support orphans and vulnerable children.

The COVID-19 pandemic left us, and many others, in a tough place. This year has been one of significant organizational change for us, marked by both challenges and triumphs. In the face of adversity, we have remained steadfast in our resolve to adapt, innovate, and evolve. Through strategic restructuring and streamlined processes, we have achieved remarkable operational efficiency, enabling us to maximise the impact of every resource entrusted to us.

Our journey has not been without its hurdles, but through perseverance and collaboration, we have emerged stronger and more resilient than ever before. We have embraced change as an opportunity for growth, continuously seeking ways to amplify our reach.

I am particularly proud of the strides we have made in the ECD space, where early intervention can have a transformative impact on a child's future. By investing in quality education, healthcare, and nutrition, we are laying the foundation for lifelong success and empowerment.



None of this would have been possible without the generosity and unwavering support of our donors, partners, volunteers, and staff. Your belief in our mission and your commitment to making a difference in the lives of others inspire us every day. Together, we have achieved remarkable results and created lasting change in the lives of thousands of children and families.

As we look to the future, we are filled with hope and optimism for what lies ahead. We remain steadfast in our commitment to serving those in need. With your continued support, I am confident that we will continue to make a profound and lasting impact on the lives of children in South Africa.

Warm regards,

Dr. Amelia Hilgart



Meet the team



Poonam Dwarkaram
Operations Manager



Lesego Mokoene
Projects Manager



Mpiliso Skosana
Partnerships &
Engagement Officer



Thuso Matsheru
Monitoring & Evaluation Officer



Sian Dhewnanan
Administrator and Events
Coordinator



Nthabiseng Makgabo
Finance Officer

Partners & donors

We continue to work towards more multi-year, large scale partnerships in the public and private sectors. We highly value the role partnerships play in achieving our mission. We therefore thank all the partners we worked with and who placed their trust in us.



NB! The identity of our partners/donors have been protected due to POPI Act.

Financial review

(Registration number 2003 / 002865 / 08)
Financial statement for the year ended 31 March 2022

Statement of financial position as at 31 March 2023

Figures in R	Notes	2024	2023
ASSETS			
Non-current assets			
Property, plant and equipment	2	191 666	96 346
		1 092	1 092
CURRENT ASSETS			
Inventories	3	181 175	79 002
Trade and other receivables	4	3 583 701	4 503 125
Cash and cash equivalents		3 765 968	4 583 219
Total assets		3 957 634	6 679 565
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES			
Equity			
Retained income		3 815 349	4 535 317
LIABILITIES			
Non-current liabilities			
Finance lease liabilities	5	118 316	118 316
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	6	-	-
Provisions	7	23 970	25 931
		142 285	25 931
Total liabilities		142 285	144 247
Total equity and liabilities		3 957 635	4 679 564

Board of Directors

Terry-Lynne Killops, admitted as an advocate in the High Court of South Africa in 1998, is a practicing Family Law Practitioner and a member of the Legal Practice Council and the Gauteng Family Law Forum.

She has served as an Acting Judge in the South Gauteng High Court and was appointed as an Expert in Family Law for Divorce in Australia.

Additionally, she has mediated family disputes for over 15 years.

A strong advocate for community service and child welfare, Terry-Lynne joined Starfish Greathearts Foundation as Deputy Chairperson, providing valuable advice on governance and law. She is now the Chairperson of the SA Board.

Since 2014, she has served as a Commissioner of the Small Claims Court and was a mentor in the South African Charter of the International Association of Women Judges Mentorship Program from 2018 to 2020. She has also been a radio guest presenter on various Family Law topics.

Terry-Lynne has served on several boards, including the Board of Governors of Dainfern College for 12 years. Outside of work, she enjoys cake decorating and traveling.

TERRY LYNNE KILLOPS (CHAIRPERSON):



Board of Directors (Cont)

Elsabe has nearly 21 years of experience as an HR Generalist, working at some of South Africa's biggest companies, including Santam, Investec, Alexander Forbes, and Anglo American.

Her career includes serving on executive boards and C-level positions, with a focus on supporting both local and international operations.

Despite her professional achievements, Elsabe remains grounded by her humble beginnings and diverse cultural background, which inspired her to join Starfish Greathearts Foundation. Known for her willingness to serve others, her background has shaped her compassionate view of people and life.



One of Elsabe's proudest accomplishments is forming partnerships with corporates and the South African Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETA) to create internship programs.

These programs provided students from disadvantaged communities with workplace training, kickstarting their careers and enabling them to support their families. Elsabe holds a BCom degree in HR Management and is a member of the South African Board for People Practices (SABPP).

ELSABIE KUBIE (NON-EXECUTIVE):



Board of Directors (Cont)

As the Product Success Manager for a rapidly growing IT company, Amelia excels in roles as a Business Analyst, Data Scientist, and Product Manager.

She moved to South Africa to pursue a PhD in molecular biology and fell in love with the country while studying plant resurrection phenomena.

Her passion for data and machine learning led her to the IT field, where she uses systems thinking to solve complex problems. She has worked with the South African Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries, and the Department of Science and Technology on projects like the National Climate Change Information System and the South African Risk and Vulnerability Atlas.

Amelia created REDCAP, a data collection and reporting system used at Starfish Greathearts Foundation and its Community-Based Organizations. She has extensive experience developing systems that aid health workers in providing better healthcare.

Amelia married into a South African family and enjoys the lively gatherings and a house full of people.

AMELIA HILGART (NON-EXECUTIVE):



Board of Directors (Cont)

Jessica is a clinician scientist currently in her second year of her pediatrics' specialisation and with a specific research interest in child mortality and child health policy.

Jessica completed her medicine degree at UCT graduating with distinction in 2014.

While at UCT she spent many years as part of SHAWCO (Student Health and Welfare Community Organisation) which ran mobile clinics around Cape Town, eventually serving as Vice President of SHAWCO Health for 2013-2014. She was selected as a Rhodes Scholar, completing her PhD at the University of Oxford, titled "Understanding why children under 5 years die at home in rural South Africa".

She has published extensively from her PHD and continues to work and publish on issues related to verbal autopsy and under-5 mortality as a research fellow at the Wits School of Public Health. Jessica has occupied leadership positions from a young age, serving as deputy mayor of the Junior City Council and head girl of her high school; at university she was elected as the UCT SRC Vice President External, representing students on the University Finance Committee, the Institutional Forum, the Academic Freedom Committee amongst others, and served as general secretary for the World Schools Debating Championship: Cape Town – an NPO set up to host an international debating tournament in South Africa in 2012. While at Oxford, she was cofounder of the Rhodes Incubator – a training and support programme for entrepreneurial Rhodes scholars and served as the graduate student representative in the Department of Primary Care Health Sciences.

Dr Jessica Price (NON- EXECUTIVE)



Board of Directors (Cont)

With over 20 years of HR management experience, Ambassador began her career in the UK and has worked for several multinational corporations.

She spent over six years as an entrepreneur and Executive Director of EPOD Global, an HR consultancy, where she successfully grew the company's revenue, year on year, and secured numerous blue-chip clients.

Currently, she serves as Executive Director of Crystal Consulting and has over six years of experience on an international board, where she has led various board committees.

Fourteen years ago, she founded a women's platform dedicated to the advancement of women. Ambassadors academic background includes a postgraduate business degree specializing in human resource management, as well as training and leadership development qualifications.



Ambassador holds an international business postgraduate degree with a specialization in HR and possess extensive experience in multinational corporations, having worked both in the UK and abroad. Her ability to operate strategically, coupled with strong communication skills, makes her a valuable asset to any management team.

Her six years as an entrepreneur have honed her skills in relationship building, business development, stakeholder management, and delivering on SLAs. She thrives as a business partner who understands and contributes to the strategic goals and growth of an organization, with a focus on leadership development and transformation.

Ambassador Prudence Mocumi (NON-EXECUTIVE)



Board of Directors (Cont)

Fhatuwani is an accomplished Finance Manager with a proven track record in the banking and insurance industries.

Her expertise encompasses a wide range of financial disciplines, including budgeting, planning, taxation, management, financial accounting, and reporting.

Fhatuwani holds a Bachelor of Commerce (BCom) Honours CTA in Accounting and an MBA from Wits Business School, underscoring her strong academic foundation and commitment to professional excellence. Her extensive knowledge and skills make her a formidable finance professional adept at navigating complex financial landscapes.

At Starfish, Fhatuwani brings her deep interest in strategy, processes, and operations, coupled with a fervent passion for community work and involvement. She is dedicated to leveraging her financial acumen to drive strategic initiatives and optimize operational efficiencies, all while making meaningful contributions to the community.

Her holistic approach to finance integrates strategic thinking with practical execution, ensuring that financial objectives align with the broader organizational goals. Fhatuwani's commitment to community engagement further enhances her role, as she actively seeks to foster positive social impact through her work at Starfish.

Fhatuwani Managa (NON-EXECUTIVE)



Board of Directors (Cont)

Nils matriculated from Maritzburg College in Pietermaritzburg and went on to earn a Bachelor of Commerce (BCom) Honours Degree in Business Administration from the University of Natal, Durban.

During his university years, he demonstrated leadership by heading several student organisations, most notably the charity fundraising and RAG (Remember and Give) organisation.

Nils has held various positions in sales and marketing across multiple industries, including FMCG, computer, footwear, and exhibitions, before joining Smith and Nephew in 1986. At Smith and Nephew, he contributed significantly to the development and marketing of products

such as Elastoplast and eventually led the Medical Marketing and Export portfolios. When Smith and Nephew unbundled in 2000, Nils transitioned to the newly formed BSN Medical organisation. There, he advanced to head the Africa and Middle East region, a position he held until his retirement in 2018.

Nils is happily married to his wife Janet, and they enjoy their retirement together. He brings his extensive experience in sales, marketing, and general management to the Starfish Greathearts Foundation. His diverse industry background and strategic leadership skills make him a valuable asset to the organization, where he continues to apply his expertise to support and enhance its mission.

Nils Von Klemperer (NON-EXECUTIVE)



Get involved...



Dinner of Hope
Host a dinner
of hope



Greatheart
Become a sporting
Greatheart



Secure my Future
Individual Giving
Corporate Payroll
Global Giving



**Corporate
Social Investment
(BBB-EE)**

To find out more:

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info@starfish.org.za

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Company No. 2003/002865/08
Non-Profit Organisation
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VAT Registration No. 4490217140

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2146

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Registration no 2003/002865/08
NPO number 039-447-NPO
PBO number 93000863
**Current board
of directors** T.L. Killops
F. Managa
E. Kubie
A. Hilgart
N. Von Klemperer
J. Prince
P. Mocumi



Starfish
GREATHEARTS FOUNDATION
LIFE, HOPE AND OPPORTUNITY

