



Starfish®
GREATHEARTS FOUNDATION
LIFE, HOPE AND OPPORTUNITY



25th
ANNIVERSARY

2025 - 2026
Annual Report

Transforming Lives, Strengthening Communities and Creating Lasting Change



25th ANNIVERSARY

“The true measure of our work is not only what we accomplish today, but the lasting difference it creates for tomorrow.”

Starfish Greathearts Foundation





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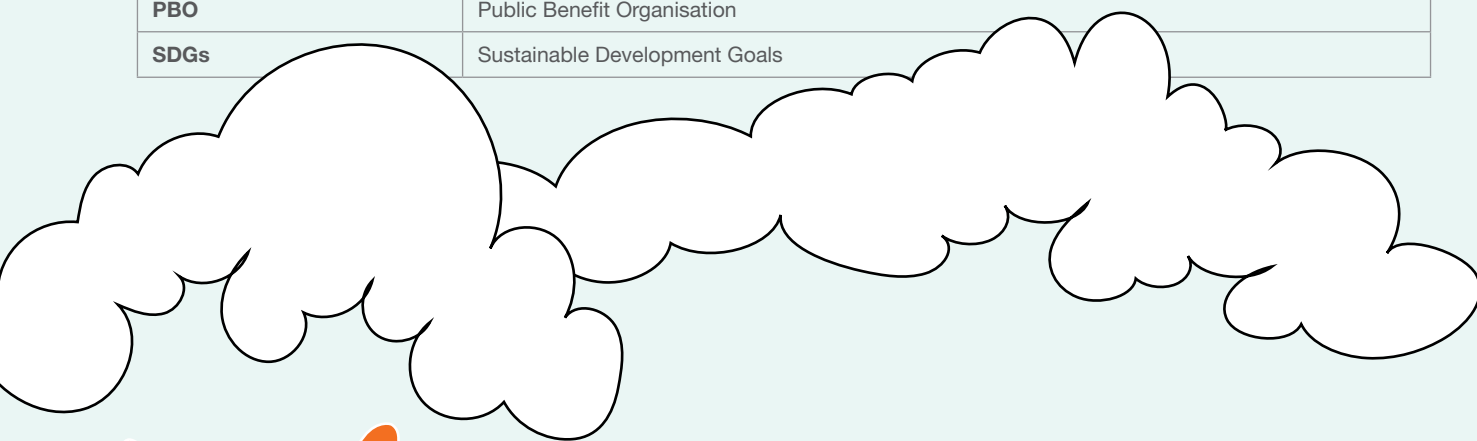
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Introduction

Glossary and Abbreviations

Term	Definition
CBOs (Our Partners)	Community-Based Organisations. Local partner organisations that work with Starfish to deliver programmes to children and communities.
OVC&A	Orphans, Vulnerable Children and Adolescents. Refers to children who have lost one or both parents.
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning. A framework used by Starfish to track programme performance, measure impact, and learn from implementation to improve future outcomes.
CSI	Corporate Social Investment. Investment by companies into social programmes and community development initiatives, including funding and partnerships with organisations like Starfish.
FY	Financial Year (1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026).
IMCI	Integrated Management of Childhood Illness. A globally recognised approach developed by WHO and UNICEF to improve child health by addressing the major causes of illness and death in children.
ECD	Early Childhood Development. Programmes that support children's cognitive, physical, emotional and social development from birth to school-going age, laying the foundation for lifelong learning and wellbeing.
REDCap	Research Electronic Data Capture. A secure digital platform used by Starfish to collect, manage and analyse programme data.
SGF	Starfish Greathearts Foundation
NPO	Non-profit Organisation
NPC	Non-profit Company
PBO	Public Benefit Organisation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals



A Reflection From One Of Our Founders

“ In the original parable, a young child walks along a beach throwing stranded starfish back into the sea, one at a time. Told she can’t possibly make a difference, she answers, ‘It made a difference to that one.’ Starfish began with little more than this belief, that an individual, choosing to act, can make a difference. For twenty-five years it has been our philosophy: one child, then another, then another, until it became 500,000. As we head into the coming decades, we are more certain of it than ever. ”

Anthony Farr





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The Starfish Parable

An old man walking along the shore noticed that millions of starfish had been washed up overnight. He noticed a young child picking up starfish and gently throwing them into the ocean.

"Child," he asked, "what are you doing?"

"The sun is coming up, the tide is going out, and if I do not throw them in, they will die." The child responded.

"Don't you see?" responded the old man, *"There are miles and miles of beach and starfish all along it? You cannot possibly make a difference."*

The young child listened politely, paused and then bent down, picked up another starfish, and threw it into the ocean, saying,

"It made a difference to that one."

**Adapted from the story, "The Star Thrower"
by Loren Eiseley**

For twenty-five years, this simple yet profound story has inspired Starfish Greathearts Foundation.

It reminds us that while no single organisation can solve every challenge facing South Africa's children, every act of compassion, every partnership, and every opportunity created has the power to change a life.

One child.

One family.

One community.

Together, these individual acts create enduring impact.



About Starfish Greathearts Foundation

Celebrating 25 years of Impact, Hope and Opportunity

2001 - 2005

Establish Starfish in the UK and SA created the chapter in the USA

2006 - 2009

Partnership with communities and government

2010 - 2012

Partnered with the Department of Social Development on the rollout of the home and community-based training programme reaching 44,540 children

2013 - 2015

Launch of the Wellness Wagons (mobile clinic)

2016 - 2019

Implemented antiretroviral treatment plan reaching more than 65,000

2020 - 2023

Delivered emergency food and support during the health crisis

2026+
Strengthening Communities and Shaping Futures

2024 - 2025

Supporting 25 schools and providing 301,350 meals

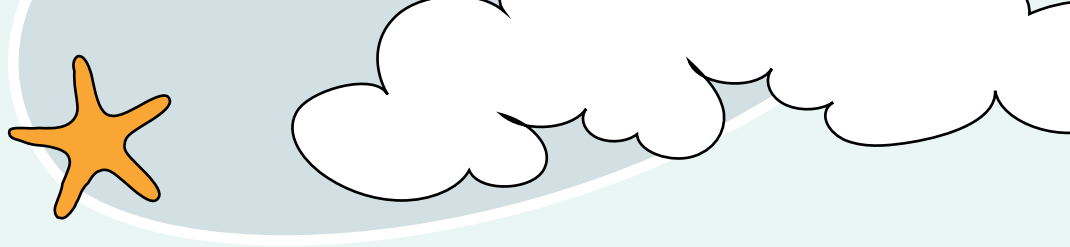
Did you Know?

Starfish was founded in 2001 by a group of young South Africans working in finance in London. Aware of the stark difference between the strength of the Pound and the Rand and deeply moved by the impact of the HIV pandemic on vulnerable children, they felt compelled to act. Gathering in a coffee shop, they began fundraising efforts, inspired by the Starfish story and a shared belief that even in the face of overwhelming challenges, individuals can come together to create meaningful change.

508,000

Children reached in 25 years

Helping orphaned and vulnerable children.
One Child at a Time



Starfish Greathearts Foundation is a registered South African Non-profit Organisation (039-447-NPO) and Public Benefit Organisation (PBO 930008639) dedicated to supporting orphaned and vulnerable children through holistic, community-based interventions.

The 2025–26 reporting period marks a truly significant milestone in the journey of Starfish Greathearts Foundation as we celebrate 25 years of transforming lives, strengthening communities, and creating opportunities for vulnerable children and families.

Founded on the belief that every child deserves the opportunity to reach their full potential, Starfish has spent the past quarter century partnering with community-based organisations to support sustainable, community-led solutions that address the challenges faced by children and families across South Africa. Through these partnerships, we have sought to create lasting impact by investing in local capacity, empowering communities, and ensuring that support reaches those who need it most.

Over the past 25 years, Starfish has remained guided by a simple yet powerful philosophy inspired by the Starfish Parable – the belief that while we may not be able to solve every challenge, we can

make a meaningful difference to one child, one family, and one community at a time. This principle continues to guide our work and serves as a constant reminder that every act of support has the power to change a life.

As we reflect on this milestone year, we celebrate not only the achievements of the organisation, but also the collective efforts and support which has enabled Starfish to remain a trusted partner in community development and child-focused programming for a quarter of a century.

This Annual Report reflects the progress, partnerships, achievements, and impact realised throughout the year. It is a celebration of what has been accomplished together, an acknowledgement of the challenges that remain, and a reaffirmation of our commitment to creating brighter futures for children and communities.

As we honour the legacy of the past 25 years, we look forward with optimism and determination to the years ahead. Together, we will continue to build on this strong foundation, strengthening communities, empowering children, and ensuring that hope, dignity, and opportunity remain at the heart of everything we do.

Today, Starfish supports thousands of children across Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape, Western Cape, and Northwest Province centred around four interconnected pillars that together create the conditions for children and communities to thrive:

Nutrition

Ensuring children have access to the nourishment they need to grow, learn, and develop.

Education

Supporting learning opportunities that enable children to reach their full potential.

Health & Wellbeing

Promoting preventative healthcare, healthy lifestyles, and access to essential health services.

Social Services

Supporting vulnerable children and families through integrated social services that promote child protection, psychosocial wellbeing, family strengthening, and access to essential community-based support, creating safe and nurturing environments where children can flourish.



An **eight faceted** approach to **ensuring orphans** and **vulnerable children** are **valued, protected** and **empowered** to reach their **full potential**



Sustainable Developing Communities



Trained Skilled Community Careworkers



Activated Learning from Antenatal to Adolescence



Responsive Caregiving



Family Strengthening Home-Visits



Income & Economic Strengthening



Safe Environments



Health & Nutrition

Outcomes-focused,
evidence-based
programmes that
improve children's lives.



Vision

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

We envision communities where children grow up healthy, safe, educated, and surrounded by opportunities that enable them to thrive. Through strong partnerships and sustainable community development, we believe every child can build a brighter future.

Mission

To support orphaned and vulnerable children in South Africa through partnerships with community-based organisations, ensuring access to education, healthcare, nutrition, protection, and opportunities for development.

We work with communities – building local capacity, strengthening partnerships, and investing in solutions that continue creating impact for generations to come.

Values

Compassion We serve with empathy, dignity, and respect.

Accountability We steward resources responsibly and transparently.

Integrity We uphold the highest ethical standards in all that we do.

Partnership We believe sustainable change happens through collaboration.

Excellence We strive for quality, innovation, and continuous improvement.

Child-Centredness Children remain at the heart of every decision we make.

Chairperson's Report



As Chairperson of Starfish Greathearts Foundation, it is both a privilege and an honour to reflect on a year that has been particularly significant in the life of our organisation. As we celebrate 25 years of service, we recognise not only the milestones achieved, but the countless lives that have been positively impacted through the dedication of our staff, Community-Based Organisations, volunteers, donors, partners and supporters.

This milestone provides an opportunity to reflect on the enduring vision upon which Starfish was founded—that every child deserves the opportunity to thrive. For twenty-five years, this vision has continued to guide our governance, strategic direction and commitment to strengthening communities through sustainable partnerships and evidence-based programmes.

The 2025–26 reporting period has once again demonstrated both the challenges and opportunities facing the non-profit sector. Increasing socio-economic pressures continue to place significant demands on vulnerable families and the organisations that support them. Against this backdrop, the Board has remained committed to providing strong governance, strategic oversight and responsible stewardship, ensuring that Starfish continues to operate with integrity, accountability and sound financial management.

It has been particularly encouraging to witness the organisation's continued growth and innovation during the year. The successful implementation of the Oral Health Outreach

Programme marks an important step in expanding Starfish's health initiatives and reflects the confidence that valued partners continue to place in our ability to deliver meaningful, measurable impact. Together with our ongoing investments in education, nutrition and social services, this reinforces our commitment to holistic child development and community strengthening.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to express our sincere appreciation to our entire Starfish team for their dedication, professionalism and unwavering commitment throughout the year. We also extend our heartfelt gratitude to our Community-Based Organisations, whose tireless work within their communities transforms strategy into lasting impact. To our donors, corporate partners, trusts, foundations, international chapters and volunteers, thank you for your continued confidence and investment in our mission. Your partnership enables us to create opportunities that change lives.

As we look ahead, we recognise that sustainability within the non-profit sector requires resilience, innovation and collaboration. The Board remains committed to strengthening the Foundation's governance, expanding strategic partnerships and supporting the organisation's long-term sustainability so that Starfish may continue creating brighter futures for generations of children to come.

Thank you for your continued trust and for walking this journey with us. Together, we will continue to create lasting impact.

Advocate Terry-Lynne Killops
Chairperson of the Board

"For twenty-five years, our greatest achievement has not been the programmes we have delivered, but the partnerships we have built and the lives that continue to be transformed because of them."

Starfish Greathearts Foundation



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Executive Director's Report

As I reflect on the past year, I do so with a deep sense of gratitude and excitement. Having joined Starfish during this milestone celebration, it has been both a privilege and an inspiration to become part of an organisation with such a rich legacy of service and impact. From my earliest interactions with the team, our Community-Based Organisations, donors, and partners, I have experienced first-hand the passion and commitment that have enabled Starfish to touch so many lives over the past 25 years.

This year marks the celebration of Starfish's 25th Anniversary – an opportunity not only to celebrate what has been achieved, but also to honour the many individuals, communities, and partners who have contributed to this remarkable journey. Reaching this milestone is a testament to the vision upon which Starfish was founded and to the enduring support of those who have walked this journey with us.

One of the highlights of the year has been the launch of our Oral Health Outreach Programme. This initiative represents an exciting expansion of our work and reflects our commitment to responding to the evolving needs of vulnerable children and communities. Through preventative oral health education, screening, and referrals, we are creating opportunities for improved health outcomes and ensuring that children receive the support they need to thrive.

At the heart of Starfish's impact are our Community-Based Organisations. Day after day, these dedicated organisations continue to provide hope, care, and support to children and families facing significant challenges. Their unwavering commitment, resilience, and compassion are truly inspiring, and we remain deeply grateful for the work they undertake within their communities. Through these partnerships, we are reminded that meaningful and sustainable change is achieved when communities themselves are empowered to be agents of transformation.

Personally, one of the aspects of Starfish that resonates most deeply with me is the story of the Starfish Parable. While the challenges facing our communities and country can often seem overwhelming, the reminder that we can make a profound difference to one child, one family, and one community at a time remains both humbling and inspiring. It is a powerful reflection of who we are and why we do what we do.

None of this work would be possible without the commitment and support of many people. I extend my sincere appreciation to our Board of Directors for their guidance and stewardship, to our staff for their dedication and professionalism, and to our donors, supporters, Chapters, and partners whose generosity makes our work possible. Your trust and belief in our mission continue to enable lasting impact in the lives of those we serve.

As we look ahead, we do so with optimism and renewed purpose. While the needs within our communities remain great, so too does the opportunity to continue growing from strength to strength. Together, we will continue building on the strong foundation established over the past 25 years, embracing new opportunities, strengthening partnerships, and ensuring that Starfish remains a beacon of hope for generations to come.

Thank you for being part of this journey. I look forward with great anticipation to all that we will achieve together.

Xelda Rohrbeck
Executive Director





Highlights Of The Year

Achievements and Milestones



25th

ANNIVERSARY

Celebrating 25 Years of Impact

Starfish Greathearts Foundation proudly celebrates its 25th anniversary in 2026, marking a quarter century of supporting vulnerable children, strengthening communities, and investing in sustainable community-led development initiatives across South Africa.

Starfish Greathearts Foundation began with a simple yet powerful belief: that one act of compassion can change a life. What started as a commitment to supporting vulnerable children has grown into a trusted organisation working alongside Community-Based Organisations across South Africa to strengthen families, improve access to education and healthcare, promote child wellbeing, and create opportunities for lasting development.

This milestone belongs not only to Starfish, but to every donor, volunteer, Board member, staff member, community partner, corporate supporter, Chapter, and child who has been part of this remarkable journey. Together, we have demonstrated that meaningful change is possible when communities are empowered and partnerships are built on trust, shared purpose, and a commitment to creating lasting impact.



Launch of the Oral Health Outreach Programme

Starfish successfully launched a new Oral Health Outreach Programme, expanding its impact into preventative healthcare through oral health education, screening, referral pathways, and the distribution of oral hygiene resources to school-going children.

SCAN
to watch



Showcasing the Impact Behind the Numbers

Starfish produced a special impact video highlighting the journey and success story of one of our beneficiaries. The video provides a powerful illustration of the transformative impact that can be achieved when communities, donors, and partners work together to create opportunities for vulnerable children and families.

By sharing this story, we were able to bring to life the human impact behind our programmes and demonstrate how individual lives are changed through the support of our Community-Based Organisations and supporters.



Strengthening Community-Based Organisation Partnerships

Starfish continued to support and strengthen its network of Community Based projects, enabling local organisations to continue delivering essential services and support to vulnerable children and families within their communities.



Continued Delivery of Services Despite a Challenging Funding Environment

Amid increasing pressure on the non-profit sector and funding constraints across the development landscape, Starfish maintained programme delivery, organisational stability, and support to its partner organisations.

Strengthened Governance and Organisational Leadership

The organisation continued to benefit from the guidance and stewardship of its Board of Directors while also strengthening operational leadership and positioning the organisation for future growth and sustainability.

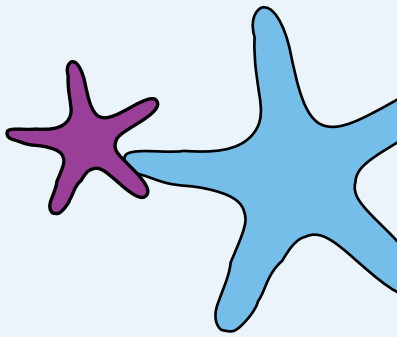
Expanded Stakeholder and Government Engagement

Starfish continued to build and strengthen relationships with key stakeholders, funders, community partners, and government departments to enhance collaboration and maximise programme impact.



Increased Focus on Sustainability and Funding Diversification

Recognising the importance of long-term sustainability, Starfish actively pursued opportunities to expand its donor base, strengthen corporate partnerships, reconnect with historical supporters, and identify new funding opportunities to support future growth.



Continuing to Change Lives One Child at a Time

At the heart of every programme, partnership, and initiative remains Starfish's commitment to making a meaningful difference in the lives of vulnerable children and families. Through the collective efforts of donors, staff, Community-Based Organisations, Chapters, volunteers, and partners, the organisation continues to embody the spirit of the Starfish Parable by creating lasting impact one child, one family, and one community at a time.



World Food Day

Food parcels were distributed to vulnerable households during the Festive Season, helping alleviate food insecurity and supporting vulnerable families.



Enduring Impact: Investing in educators today strengthens learning outcomes for generations of children tomorrow.

Awards and Recognition

Starfish was recognised through the **Shelley O'Carroll Award for Early Literacy**, an award that celebrates individuals, organisations and teams whose research or practice meaningfully advances early literacy for young South African children – particularly those in under-resourced contexts, underrepresented language groups, and non-traditional literacy spaces. It honours excellent work that often goes unrecognised, especially in partnership with ECD practitioners.

Starfish successfully completed Early Literacy Training and celebrated all participating community partners receiving certification.



New Partnerships

Keeping children safe: Partnership with SCSA

We look forward to the partnership between **Save the Children South Africa (SCSA)** and **Starfish Greathearts Foundation** in 2026 to strengthen child safeguarding systems, promote child protection capacity building, safety and wellbeing of children reached through Starfish Greathearts Foundation.

Save the Children South Africa is a leading child rights organisation providing comprehensive child safeguarding services including training, policy development, and systems strengthening.

Through this partnership we will:

- Strengthen child safeguarding systems within Starfish's partner organisations and projects.
 - Build the capacity of staff, volunteers, and community stakeholders on child protection and safeguarding practices.
 - Develop and implement child safeguarding policies, procedures, and reporting mechanisms.
 - Enhance advocacy and awareness on child protection and rights through a collaborative, participatory approach, whereby each organisation engages in and supports the other's initiatives where mandates align.
- 



Building Healthier Futures: Strategic Partnership with Sasol

One of the most significant milestones during the year was the establishment of a new partnership with **Sasol** to implement an **Oral Health Outreach Programme** aimed at improving oral health awareness, prevention, and access to care for children in communities within Sasol's areas of operation.

This partnership represents an exciting expansion of Starfish's work and reflects our shared commitment to promoting the health and wellbeing of children through preventative and community-based interventions.

The programme focuses on delivering oral health education, conducting school-based oral health screenings, identifying learners requiring further dental care, facilitating referrals to local healthcare facilities, and distributing oral hygiene resources to promote healthy habits from an early age.

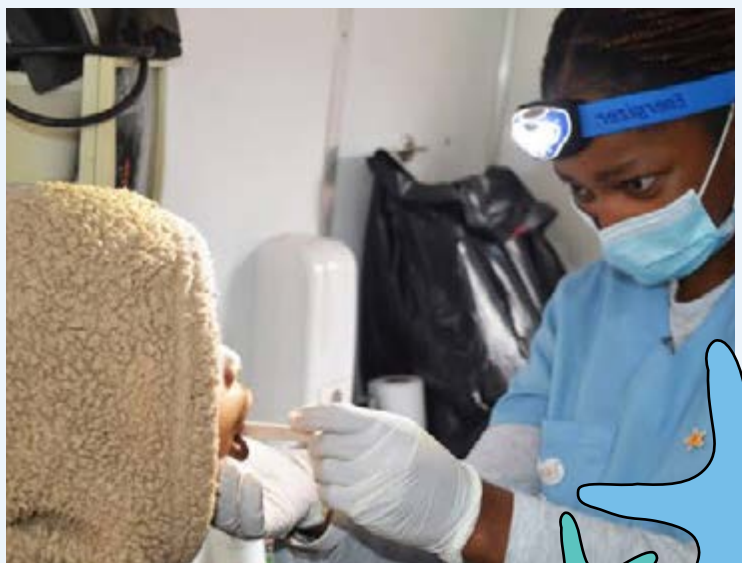
Following an extensive planning and mobilisation phase, implementation commenced successfully during the reporting period. We are pleased to report the successful completion of activities within the first implementation region, where learners received oral health education, screenings, referrals where required, and oral hygiene kits to support improved oral health practices.

Beyond the immediate outputs, the programme seeks to create long-term impact by increasing awareness of oral hygiene, encouraging preventative health behaviours, supporting early identification of oral health concerns, and improving access to healthcare services for children who may otherwise not receive timely intervention.

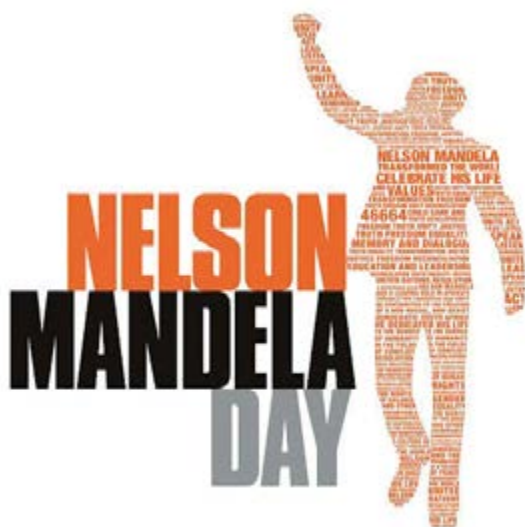
This partnership is particularly meaningful as it demonstrates the power of collaboration between the corporate and non-profit sectors in addressing critical health challenges affecting children and communities. By combining resources, expertise, and a shared vision, we are able to extend our reach and create sustainable impact.

As implementation continues, we look forward to expanding the programme into additional regions, reaching more schools, supporting more learners, and strengthening oral health outcomes within the communities we serve.

We extend our sincere appreciation to Sasol for their trust, partnership, and commitment to investing in the wellbeing of children. Together, we are helping to build healthier futures, one child at a time.



Events and Campaigns



Mandela Day Impact

Mandela Day supported improvements to community centres, strengthening safe and functional spaces for children and families.

On the day family, friends, and colleagues spent time with beneficiaries, bringing food and sweets and engaging in painting, play, threading, and reading activities. These meaningful interactions added joy and care, while reinforcing the importance of nurturing environments for children.

Together, these efforts contributed to enduring impact by combining improved infrastructure with enriching, child-centred experiences.

Beer Mile Run – The Pirates Club



The Pirates Club hosted the Beer Mile Run in support of Starfish, raising funds while promoting awareness through a fun, community-driven sporting event that supports sustained impact for children.

Quiz Nights – Hosted by Nicole Sutton-Pryce



Two Quiz Nights brought supporters together to raise vital funds and strengthen engagement, contributing to Starfish's enduring impact through continued community involvement.



World Aids Day

To commemorate World AIDS Day, Starfish Greathearts Foundation sold commemorative badges to raise funds while promoting HIV awareness and education. Every badge purchased represented a meaningful contribution towards supporting vulnerable children and strengthening community-based health initiatives.

Christmas Teddy Bear

In partnership with **Fourways Crossing**, the **Christmas Teddy Bear Campaign** brought comfort and joy to children by collecting and distributing teddy bears during the Festive Season. This heartwarming initiative demonstrated how small acts of kindness can create lasting memories and enduring impact.



School Shoes Drive

Through our valued partnerships with **Investec CSI**, **MyWalk**, and **Design Quarter**, the **School Shoes Drive** helped over a thousand children from vulnerable communities begin the school year with dignity, confidence, and a renewed sense of belonging. By providing school shoes, socks, and essential stationery, the campaign removed barriers to learning and ensured that children were equipped to step into the classroom with pride. Together, these partnerships gave children more than school essentials—they gave them hope, opportunity, and meaningful steps towards brighter futures, proving that every child deserves the chance to thrive against all odds.



Our Impact at a Glance

Over **16,500** Children reached through
14 Community Partners in **5** provinces

Demographics



9,975
Female
(includes mothers reached)



7,958
Male

Race



17,805
Black
(includes mothers reached)



128
Coloured

Home Visits



Over
1,200
conducted

Books



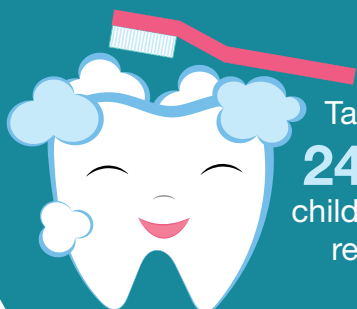
Over
3,000
distributed

School Shoes



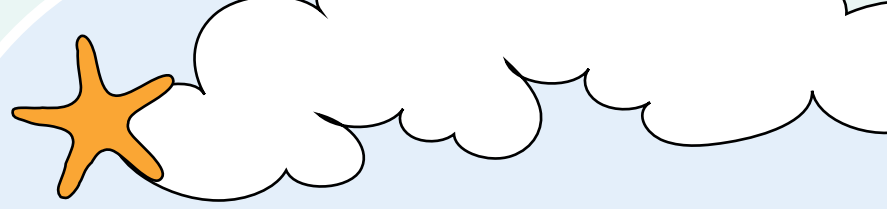
Over
1,000
distributed

Oral Health Project



Target of
24,000
children to be
reached

Every number represents
a child whose future
looks brighter because
someone cared.



Our Shared Purpose

Every donor. Every volunteer. Every partner. Every educator.
Every healthcare worker. Every Community-Based Organisation.

Together creating Enduring Impact.

Wellness That Reaches Communities

More than **14,000** children received healthcare consultations through the Wellness Wagon programme, bringing essential services closer to vulnerable communities.

Nutrition That Changes Futures

Over **350,000** meals were distributed (to **715** children in ECD centres), helping children access the nutrition needed for healthy development and learning.

Supporting Women and Girls

More than **20,000** sanitary pads were distributed, ensuring dignity and improved school attendance for girls and women.

Strengthening Families

Over **1,300** mothers received support through maternal health initiatives designed to improve outcomes for mothers and babies.



Our Impact Framework

Starfish's approach to impact is built on the belief that sustainable change is achieved through strong partnerships, community ownership, and evidence-based interventions. By investing in Community-Based Organisations and supporting programmes that promote health, education, and wellbeing, we create pathways for vulnerable children and families to thrive.

Through a combination of funding, capacity strengthening, partnership development, and programme implementation, Starfish works to achieve measurable outcomes that contribute to healthier children, stronger communities, and greater opportunities for future generations.

Our impact contributes directly to several United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Zero Hunger (SDG 2), Good Health and Well-being (SDG 3), Quality Education (SDG 4), Reduced Inequalities (SDG 10), and Partnerships for the Goals (SDG 17).



Funding
& Partnerships



Community-
Based
Organisations



Programmes
& Services



Children
& Families



Long-Term
Community
Impact



Programme Performance

For 25 years, Starfish has remained committed to improving the lives of vulnerable children and strengthening communities through sustainable, community-led development.

Our work is founded on the belief that lasting impact is achieved by empowering local Community-Based Organisations to deliver responsive, high-quality services that address the unique needs of their communities. By investing in local capacity, fostering strategic partnerships, and promoting evidence-based programme delivery, we continue to create opportunities that enable children and families to thrive.

During the 2025–26 reporting period, our programmes continued to make a meaningful difference across the communities we serve.

Alongside our ongoing support to Community-Based Organisations, we successfully launched new initiatives, strengthened existing partnerships, and expanded our health-focused interventions through the implementation of the Oral Health Outreach Programme.

While every programme has its own objectives and activities, they all contribute towards a shared vision of healthier children, stronger families, empowered communities, and sustainable development by taking a holistic approach to child vulnerability, addressing health, early childhood education, nutrition, and child protection. Through strong partnerships we provide support that is sustainable, contextually relevant, and tailored to the unique needs of children and families.



Twenty-five years after Starfish was founded, the needs of vulnerable children and families remain significant.



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Responding to the Needs of South Africa's Children

While South Africa has made important progress in expanding access to education, healthcare, and social protection, many children continue to experience the effects of poverty, inequality, food insecurity, limited access to quality healthcare, and barriers to educational success. These challenges are often interconnected, with poor health, inadequate nutrition, and social vulnerability impacting a child's ability to learn, develop, and reach their full potential.

According to UNICEF's *Situation Analysis of Children and Adolescents in South Africa (2024)*, many children continue to face multiple and overlapping deprivations affecting their health, nutrition, education, protection, and overall wellbeing. The report highlights that children living in vulnerable communities are disproportionately affected by poverty and unequal access to essential services, reinforcing the need for integrated, community-based responses.

Starfish's Response

At Starfish, we believe that sustainable change begins within communities themselves. Rather than delivering services in isolation, we partner with Community-Based Organisations that possess a deep understanding of the local challenges and opportunities within the communities they serve.

Through these partnerships, Starfish supports a holistic approach to child wellbeing by strengthening programmes that address the interconnected needs of vulnerable children and families.

Education

We support initiatives that improve children's access to education, encourage school attendance, strengthen early childhood development, and provide learning opportunities that enable children to achieve their full potential.

Nutrition

Recognising that nutrition is fundamental to healthy growth and learning, our Community Based Projects support children and families through nutrition programmes and food security initiatives that contribute to improved health and educational outcomes.

Health and Wellbeing

Starfish promotes preventative healthcare and improved wellbeing through community based health initiatives, health education, referrals to essential services, and the implementation of programmes such as the Oral Health Outreach Programme, ensuring that children receive early intervention and support where needed.

Social Support and Child Protection

We provide safe, nurturing environments where children and families can access psychosocial support, community services, and opportunities that promote resilience, dignity, and long-term wellbeing.

Creating Lasting Impact

By working alongside communities, government, corporate partners, and donors, Starfish continues to strengthen local capacity and create sustainable pathways for change. Our approach recognises that children do not experience challenges in isolation; therefore, our response is equally integrated supporting their educational development, health, nutrition, protection, and overall wellbeing.

As we celebrate 25 years of impact, we remain committed to ensuring that every child has the opportunity not only to survive, but to thrive. Together with our partners, we continue to make a meaningful difference—one child, one family, and one community at a time.

The Need	Starfish's Response
Educational barriers	School support, learning programmes, CBO partnerships
Food insecurity	Nutrition and food support initiatives and programmes
Limited access to healthcare	Health promotion, oral health education, screening and referrals
Psychosocial vulnerability	Family support, child protection and community care
Community inequality	Strengthening local Community-Based Organisations
Rising transport costs	Deploying mobile outreach programmes that bring essential health and social services directly to hard-to-reach communities, improving accessibility and continuity of care.
Limited ECD spaces	Offering infrastructure support

The Starfish Difference



Community Partnerships

Working through trusted CBOs



Evidence-Based Impact

REDCap and strong MEL systems



Good Governance

Strong Board oversight



Child-Centred Approach

Every child matters



Strategic Partnerships

Government, corporate and donor collaboration



Sustainable Development

Building long-term community resilience



Innovation

New programmes such as Oral Health Outreach



25 Years of Trust

A proven legacy of community impact

Stories Of Transformation

The gift of discovery – Ayanda’s Story

Ayanda’s early years were marked by silence—not from lack of potential, but from lack of opportunity. In her rural Eastern Cape community, early learning resources were limited, and structured stimulation was almost non-existent. Her journey shifted when she joined a Starfish supported Early Childhood Development programme. What began as simple exposure to books, songs, and guided play became something far greater: a foundation for lifelong learning.

Over time, Ayanda’s development was carefully nurtured through consistent, structured support. Her vocabulary expanded, her confidence grew, and her curiosity became a daily habit. Today, Ayanda is not only preparing for formal schooling—she is thriving within it. Her story reflects enduring impact: when early investment in a child’s development is consistent and intentional, it does not only prepare them for school—it shapes the trajectory of their entire future.

From hunger to stability – Zinhle’s Story

For Zinhle, hunger was not an occasional challenge—it was a daily barrier to learning, growth, and participation in school life. Through the Starfish nutritional programme, she gained access to consistent, nutritious meals that addressed both immediate need and long-term development.

Over time, the change became deeply visible. Her attendance stabilised, her concentration improved, and her confidence returned. With sustained nutritional support, she was finally able to focus not on survival, but on learning and growth.

Today, Zinhle is progressing steadily in her education journey. Her story reflects enduring impact: when nutrition is consistent and sustained, it strengthens not only a child’s body, but their ability to learn, grow, and thrive over time.

Healing that lasts – Karabo’s Story

Karabo’s illness did not begin suddenly, and neither did his recovery. For weeks, his condition went unnoticed until Starfish’s Wellness Wagon reached his community. Through early detection, he was referred for urgent medical care and supported through every step of his treatment journey. But the intervention did not end at diagnosis. Ongoing follow-ups, caregiver education, and nutritional support ensured that his recovery was sustained, not temporary.

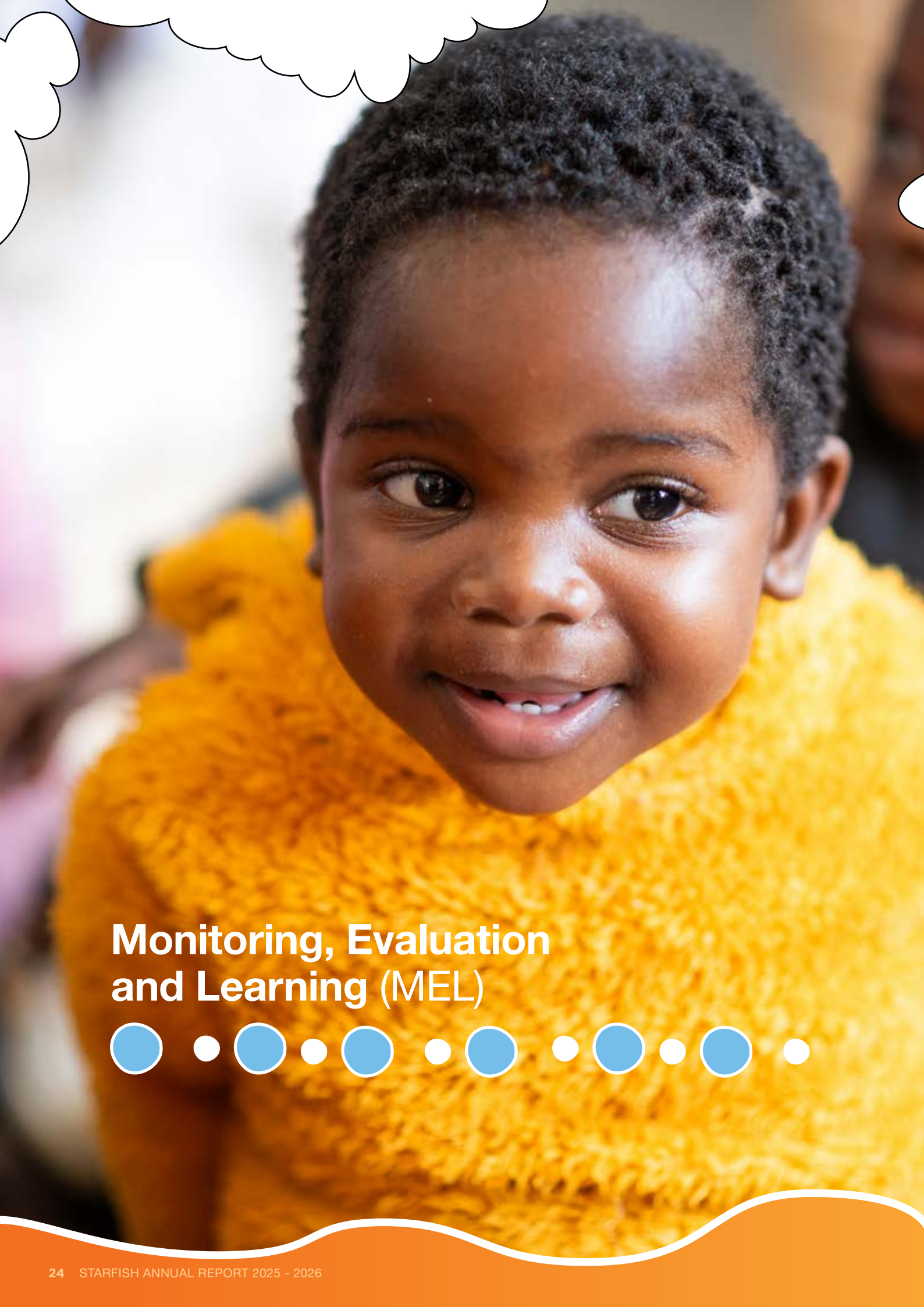
Gradually, Karabo regained his strength, returned to school, and resumed daily life with renewed energy. His story demonstrates enduring impact in action: when healthcare is accessible, continuous, and community-based, it does more than treat illness – it restores long-term wellbeing and prevents future vulnerability.

A name that secures a future – Themba’s Story

For the first years of his life, Themba existed without formal recognition. Without a birth certificate, he remained outside of systems that provide protection, education, and healthcare. Through Starfish’s Social Services support, his caregiver received guidance to navigate and complete the documentation process. This was not a one-step intervention, but a structured process of sustained support and follow-through.

Once registered, Themba’s access to essential services became consistent and secure ensuring that his rights were no longer dependent on circumstance. Today, he is formally recognised and fully included in systems that support his development. His story reflects enduring impact: when social systems are strengthened and access is sustained, a child’s future is no longer uncertain—it is secured.

**Names changed to protect the identity of children and families*



Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL)



At Starfish, we recognise that meaningful impact is achieved not only through programme delivery, but also through the ability to effectively measure, evaluate, and learn from our work. A strong Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) framework enables us to track progress, assess outcomes, strengthen accountability, and continuously improve the quality of our programmes and partnerships.

To support this process, Starfish utilises REDCap (Research Electronic Data Capture), a secure and robust data management platform that enables the collection, storage, management, and analysis of programme information across our initiatives and Community-Based Organisation network.

Through REDCap, we capture programme outputs and outcomes in a consistent and structured manner, providing valuable insights into the reach, effectiveness, and impact of our interventions. The system supports real-time data collection, strengthens data quality and integrity, and enables evidence-based reporting to donors, partners, and stakeholders.

The information collected through our MEL systems assists Starfish in identifying trends, monitoring performance against objectives, measuring impact, and informing strategic decision-making. It also ensures that we remain accountable to the communities we serve and to the supporters who invest in our work.

As we continue to grow and evolve, our commitment to learning and continuous improvement remains central to our approach. By leveraging data and evidence, we are better positioned to understand community needs, strengthen programme delivery, and maximise the impact of every investment made in the lives of vulnerable children and families.

ECD Learner Assessment Outcomes (2025–26 Cycle)

Starfish continues to strengthen evidence-based programme delivery through its Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) framework, enabling the regular assessment of child development, health and wellbeing across participating Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres.

The 2025–26 ECD learner assessment cycle demonstrated overall improvements in developmental outcomes across participating centres. Positive progress was observed in cognitive, motor, language and socio-emotional development, alongside increased learner participation and broader programme coverage. The 2026 cycle also reflects stronger implementation of structured assessment

tools and increased educator confidence in the assessment process, resulting in improved data quality, greater consistency and more effective tracking of learner development over time.

Complementing the learner assessment process, Starfish utilises the Ideal ECD Framework during routine site visits to monitor programme quality, assess compliance with key Early Childhood Development standards, and support Community-Based Organisations in strengthening service delivery. The framework provides a structured approach to evaluating learning environments, programme implementation and organisational practices, while informing ongoing mentorship, quality improvement and capacity building to ensure intended programme outcomes are consistently achieved.

Assessment findings continue to reinforce the importance of early identification and intervention, enabling educators and programme staff to identify developmental needs sooner and provide more targeted support. Through REDCap, educators monitor each learner's individual progress and developmental milestones, contributing to improved school readiness, increased learner participation and greater confidence within the classroom.

Recognising the close relationship between nutrition and early childhood development, monitoring extends beyond developmental assessments to include children's overall health and nutritional wellbeing. As part of the nutritional programme, biannual height and weight measurements are undertaken to monitor growth trends and assess the impact of nutrition interventions over time. This data provides valuable insight into children's growth and wellbeing, supporting the early identification of nutritional concerns and informing appropriate interventions and referrals where required.

Across the broader health and wellbeing programmes, programme data also demonstrates the value of integrated service delivery. Maternal health services continue to strengthen parenting confidence and emotional wellbeing, while wellness outreach initiatives support the early detection of health concerns and improve referral pathways to appropriate healthcare services.

Collectively, these findings demonstrate the value of Starfish's integrated approach to education, nutrition, health and social support. By using high-quality programme data to guide decision-making, Starfish continues to strengthen programme quality, improve child outcomes and ensure that interventions remain responsive to the evolving needs of children, families and communities.

Thank you to
our donors
and supporters:

Corporate donors



Partnerships & Stakeholder Engagement

At Starfish, we recognise that meaningful and sustainable impact is achieved through strong relationships and collaborative partnerships. Stakeholder engagement remains a cornerstone of our work, enabling us to better understand community needs, strengthen programme delivery, and maximise the impact of our collective efforts.

Throughout the year, we continued to engage with a diverse network of stakeholders, including our Community-Based Organisations, donors, corporate partners, government departments, schools, Starfish Chapters, volunteers, and supporters. These relationships provide valuable opportunities for collaboration, shared learning, and the development of innovative solutions that support vulnerable children and communities.

A key focus during the year was strengthening engagement with our Community-Based Organisations through regular communication, programme support, monitoring activities, and collaborative planning. These interactions ensure that community voices remain central to our work and that programmes continue to respond effectively to local needs and priorities.

We also deepened relationships with existing donors and funding partners while actively pursuing new partnerships to support the long-term sustainability of the organisation. This included engagement with corporate partners, philanthropic supporters, and individuals who share our commitment to creating positive change.

The year also saw increased engagement with government stakeholders and community structures, particularly through the implementation of new initiatives such as the Oral Health Outreach Programme. These engagements have been instrumental in facilitating programme delivery, strengthening referral pathways, and fostering collaborative approaches to community development.

As we celebrated Starfish's 25th anniversary, we were reminded of the importance of the many individuals and organisations who have contributed to our journey. We remain deeply grateful to our Board of Directors, staff, Chapters, donors, partners, and supporters whose continued commitment enables us to fulfil our mission and expand our impact.

Looking ahead, we remain committed to nurturing existing relationships, building new partnerships, and creating opportunities for greater collaboration in support of vulnerable children and communities.





ONE MISSION. MANY PARTNERS. STRONGER TOGETHER. GREATER IMPACT

Our Team

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors provides strategic direction, oversight, and stewardship to ensure that Starfish remains accountable, sustainable, and focused on its mission. Through their diverse skills, expertise, and commitment to the organisation, Board members play a critical role in guiding Starfish's growth and long-term success.

We extend our sincere appreciation to the Board for their continued leadership, support, and dedication throughout the year. We thank Elsabe Kubie, Ambassador Prudence Mocumi and Fhatuwani Managa for their dedication and service as Board members and welcome Valerie Hammond and Dave van der Merwe to the Board.



Advocate Terry-Lynne Killops
Chairperson, South African Board
(Non-Executive Board Member)

Advocate Terry-Lynne Killops is a seasoned Family Law practitioner and High Court advocate with extensive mediation experience. Occasionally sitting as an Acting Judge, she is passionate about child welfare and community upliftment. Initially Deputy Chairperson, she now leads the Starfish South African Board with dedication and vision.



Dr Amelia Hilgart
(Non-Executive Board Member)
Dr Amelia brings expertise as a Business Analyst, Data Scientist, and Product Manager. With a PhD background in molecular biology, she has worked on national projects such as the National Climate Change Information System and the South African Risk and Vulnerability Atlas. At Starfish, she developed the REDCap data collection and reporting system, enhancing programme monitoring and healthcare delivery across community-based partners.



Nils Von Klemperer
(Non-Executive Board Member)
Nils brings over 30 years of strategic leadership in sales, marketing, and general management across multiple industries. He holds a BCom Honours in Business Administration from the University of Natal, Durban, and demonstrated early leadership through various student organisations, including the RAG charity group. His career spans FMCG, computing, footwear, and healthcare, notably at Smith & Nephew and BSN Medical, where he led the Africa and Middle East region. At Starfish, Nils leverages his extensive industry experience and strategic insight to support the Foundation's mission to uplift vulnerable children and families.



Dr Jessica Price
(Non-Executive Board Member)
Dr Jessica is a clinician-scientist and paediatrics specialist-in-training, with a research focus on child mortality and health policy. A Rhodes Scholar, she completed her PhD at the University of Oxford, studying under-5 deaths in rural South Africa, and continues her research at Wits School of Public Health. Actively engaged in leadership from her university days through to co-founding the Rhodes Incubator, Dr Jessica's expertise and commitment to child health closely align with Starfish's mission to ensure every child survives, thrives, and succeeds.



Dave Van Der Merwe
(Non-Executive Board Member)
A Chartered Accountant and brings more than 35 years of experience in both industry, as a CFO, and in management consulting. He has strong leadership skills, strategic thinking capability and a strong strategy execution ability. Dave has a passion for leadership development and executive effectiveness. At Starfish, Dave advises on financial, commercial and strategic matters.



Valerie Hammond
(Non-Executive Board Member)
Valerie brings experience in generalist as well as specialist Human Resources and Industrial Psychology within the corporate as well as the consulting environments. Valerie's goal is to make a difference in the lives of people she works with.



Staff Team

Our staff are the driving force behind the implementation of Starfish's programmes and partnerships. Through their professionalism, compassion, and commitment, they ensure that organisational resources are translated into meaningful support and opportunities for vulnerable children and communities.

During the year, the team continued to demonstrate resilience, innovation, and a shared commitment to excellence, contributing significantly to the organisation's impact and growth.

Organisational Structure

South African Board



Xelda Rohrbeck
Executive Director



Absalom Sibuyi
Project Manager



Nthabiseng Makgabo
Finance Officer



Sian Dhewnanan
Admin and
Events Coordinator



Mpiliso Skosana
Partnership &
Engagement Officer



Thuso Matsheru
M&E Officer

Letter from the Greathearts

This year reminded us of an important truth:

Hope grows when people come together.

Across the communities we serve, children continued to face significant challenges. Poverty, food insecurity, unemployment, and limited access to essential services remain daily realities for many families.

Yet amidst these challenges, we witnessed something extraordinary.

We saw children discover the joy of reading through books they could finally call their own.

We saw mothers receive the support they needed to give their babies a healthy start in life.

We saw families gain access to healthcare services through the Wellness Wagon.

We saw community partners strengthen their capacity and extend their reach to those who need it most.

These successes belong not only to Starfish but to every donor, volunteer, partner, supporter, and community member who shares our vision.

Your support has helped create opportunities where barriers once existed.

Your generosity has restored hope where it was fading.

Your partnership continues to create impact that will be felt for generations.

Thank you for believing in children.

Thank you for believing in communities.

Thank you for helping us create enduring impact.

The Greathearts Team

Financial Review

by Nthabiseng Makgabo, Finance Officer



It is a pleasure to present the financial overview for the 2025-26 fiscal year. Despite a challenging economic environment characterised by rising costs and donor fatigue, the Foundation has maintained a strong and stable financial position, reflecting prudent financial stewardship and disciplined resource management.

Financial Highlights

Total donations received R8 943 728

was secured through a diversified funding base, including corporate partners, philanthropic trusts, individual donors, and grant funding. This diversification continues to strengthen financial resilience and programme sustainability.

Expenditure

R6 756 905 was allocated directly to programme delivery across Early Childhood Development, Nutrition, Health & Wellness, and Social Services, ensuring that the majority of resources reached beneficiaries.

Operational Costs

R2 579 443 was carefully managed and allocated to essential organisational functions, including staffing, monitoring and evaluation, compliance, and capacity building – ensuring effective and accountable programme delivery.

Programme Expenditure

Programme expenditure remains the Foundation's primary focus, reflecting our commitment to delivering meaningful and lasting impact for children and communities.

Financial Sustainability

We remain focused on strengthening financial systems, expanding and diversifying income streams, and exploring innovative funding models to support long-term sustainability. We extend our sincere gratitude to our donors and partners for their continued trust and support. Your investment enables Starfish Greathearts Foundation to reach over 16 500 children across South Africa and create enduring impact that transforms lives and strengthens communities.

Financial Governance and Accountability

The Foundation continues to uphold strong financial governance in partnership with independent auditors, ensuring compliance with South African accounting standards and donor requirements.

Key controls include:

- Detailed budgeting and forecasting
- Monthly financial reporting and variance analysis
- Internal controls
- Transparent donor reporting

The latest reviewed annual financial statements confirm the Foundation's strong financial health and commitment to transparency and accountability.

Administration Costs

Administration costs are carefully managed to ensure strong governance, compliance, and organisational efficiency. These costs support essential functions such as financial management, human resources, monitoring and evaluation, and reporting.

This investment ensures that Starfish maintains high standards of accountability, transparency, and operational effectiveness while maximising the proportion of funding directed toward programme delivery.

31%
Nutrition

47%
Health & Wellness

22%
ECD



Statement of Financial Position

Starfish Greathearts Foundation
As at 31 March 2026

	NOTES	31 MAR 2026	31 MAR 2025
Assets			
Non current assets			
Property, Plant and Equipment	1	41,880	8,958
Total Non current assets		41,880	8,958
Current Assets			
Inventories	2	1,092	1,092
Trade and Other Receivables	3	684,602	438,170
Cash and Cash Equivalents	4	4,003,662	3,701,697
Total Current Assets		4,689,356	4,140,959
Total Assets		4,731,236	4,149,917
Equity and Liabilities			
Equity			
Share Capital		8,357,954	8,357,954
Retained Earnings		(4,481,973)	(4,352,692)
Total Equity		3,875,981	4,005,262
Liabilities			
Non-Current Liabilities			
Finance lease liabilities	5	-	118,316
Total Non-Current Liabilities		-	118,316
Current Liabilities			
Provisions	6	27,222	26,339
Trade and Other Payables	7	828,033	-
Total Current Liabilities		855,255	26,339
Total Liabilities		855,255	144,655
Total Equity and Liabilities		4,731,236	4,149,917

Looking Ahead: Building Enduring Impact

As we celebrate this milestone year and reflect on 25 years of impact, we do so with both gratitude for what has been achieved and optimism for the opportunities that lie ahead.

The needs facing vulnerable children, families, and communities across South Africa remain significant. At the same time, the funding environment within the non-profit sector continues to be increasingly competitive and uncertain. Like many organisations, Starfish faces the ongoing challenge of securing sustainable funding to maintain existing programmes, strengthen our Community-Based Organisation network, and expand our reach to communities where support is most needed.

In response, we remain committed to strengthening our organisational sustainability through the diversification of our funding base, the cultivation of new donor relationships, and the development of strategic partnerships that align with our mission and values. We will continue to engage with corporate partners, foundations, individual donors, government stakeholders, and our international Chapter network to ensure that we are well-positioned to meet both current and future community needs.

Building on the successful implementation of the Oral Health Outreach Programme, we are excited by the potential to expand our education and nutritional initiatives into additional regions and communities. Through existing and emerging partnerships, we see opportunities to broaden access to preventative health services, strengthen community wellbeing, and further support children in reaching their full potential.

We also remain committed to strengthening the capacity and sustainability of our Community-Based Organisation partners. These organisations remain at the heart of our impact, and we recognise that investing in local leadership and community-driven solutions is essential to creating lasting change.

As we look to the future, our focus will remain on innovation, collaboration, accountability, and impact. We will continue to leverage data and evidence through our Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning systems, strengthen stakeholder engagement, and ensure that every investment entrusted to us delivers meaningful outcomes for the communities we serve.

While challenges undoubtedly lie ahead, we enter the next chapter of Starfish's journey with confidence and determination. Guided by our mission, supported by our partners, and inspired by the resilience of the communities we serve, we remain committed to creating opportunities, strengthening communities, and making a difference—one child, one family, and one community at a time.

Together with our donors, partners, Community-Based Organisation partners, volunteers, and supporters, we will continue building on the legacy of the past 25 years. As we enter this next chapter, we remain steadfast in our commitment to creating opportunities for every child to thrive, strengthening resilient communities, and delivering enduring impact for generations to come.



Starfish
GREATHEARTS FOUNDATION
LIFE, HOPE AND OPPORTUNITY

CONTACT DETAILS

Contact Mphiliso Skosana

E-mail: media@starfish.org.za / info@starfish.org.za

Banking Details:

Standard Bank (Current Account)

Acc #: 022690867 Branch code: 051001

www.starfish-greathearts.org



Get Involved

For 25 years, Starfish Greathearts Foundation has demonstrated the extraordinary impact that is possible when people come together with a shared purpose. Every child supported, every community strengthened, and every life transformed has been made possible through the generosity, commitment, and partnership of individuals and organisations who believe that lasting change is possible.

As we look towards the future, the need remains great—but so too does the opportunity to make a meaningful difference.

There are many ways to become part of the Starfish journey:

Make a Financial Contribution

Your financial support enables us to strengthen Community-Based Organisations, respond to emerging community needs, and continue delivering sustainable programmes that improve the lives of vulnerable children and families.

Donate Goods or Services

Whether through educational resources, products, nutritional support, professional expertise, or other in-kind contributions, your donation can make a tangible difference where it is needed most.

Partner With Us

We welcome opportunities to collaborate with corporates, foundations, trusts, government institutions, schools, and like-minded organisations that share our commitment to improving the lives of children and strengthening communities.

Volunteer Your Time and Expertise

Professional skills, mentorship, advocacy, and volunteer support all contribute to building stronger organisations and creating greater community impact.

Champion Our Cause

Help us amplify our message by sharing our work, participating in awareness campaigns, introducing us to potential partners, or becoming an ambassador for Starfish within your own network

Every contribution – whether financial, practical, or through the gift of your time – helps create opportunities for children to thrive and communities to flourish.

Together, we can continue building on the legacy of the past 25 years and create an even brighter future for the next generation.

Together, we can make a difference – one child, one family, and one community at a time.



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