

SUPPORT EYE CARE FOUNDATION

- *PROJECT ACCOMPLISHMENT REPORT*
- *07 DECEMBER 2024*



As we arrived at Sithandiwe Disability Care Centre, we were greeted by the warm and welcoming Mrs. Lucy Maebela, the administrator and facilitator. Her kind demeanor set the tone for what was to be a truly heartwarming experience. Having prepared for this visit well in advance, we had been in communication with Mrs. Lucy to understand their needs and coordinate the best time for our visit. We agreed on Saturday, December 7th, 2024, and eagerly looked forward to this day.

Nestled in the heart of Lombardy, the centre operates out of a home owned by Mrs. Thandi Ndlovu, who was fortunate to receive assistance from South African Airways (SAA) to bring her vision to life. Sithandiwe serves as a beacon of hope for disabled children across South Africa. Many of the children are referred by social workers and find a safe haven here where they are cared for, nourished, clothed, and given access to basic education. While modest, the education they receive opens doors to light opportunities and invaluable experiences.





Mrs. Lucy graciously gave us a tour of their spacious facility, which shelters 37 children, each with unique needs and abilities. Among them are children with blindness, autism, and cerebral palsy (CP). Seeing their resilience and the unwavering dedication of the staff was nothing short of inspiring.

Our visit was fueled by the desire to bring joy and spread cheer this festive season. To that end, we brought Christmas buckets filled with delicious food and snacks, a small gesture to make their holidays brighter. Additionally, with guidance from Mrs. Lucy, we learned of their need for a microwave to help with warming food; something they often struggled with. We were delighted to provide one, knowing it would make a tangible difference in their daily lives.



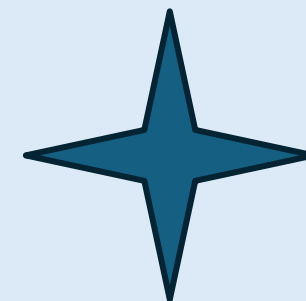


As we toured the Sithandiwe Disability Care Centre, we took the time to learn more about the children and the stories that brought them to this safe haven. Each story Mrs. Lucy shared with us painted a vivid picture of resilience and hope, but one story, in particular, stood out and touched our hearts deeply; Chloe's story.

Chloe, a bright and bubbly 13-year-old from Boksburg, has faced unimaginable challenges. Tragically, she lost her parents to drugs, leaving her without a stable home. Social workers stepped in to ensure her safety and brought her to Sithandiwe, where she has since flourished under the care and support of the staff and community. Despite her difficult past, Chloe radiates a vibrant energy and a caring spirit that is truly inspiring. She goes out of her way to assist those who are unable to help themselves and is known for her obedient and nurturing nature.

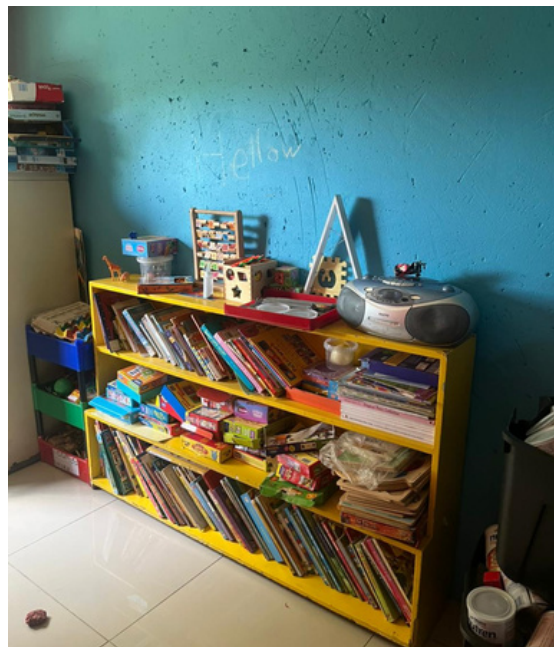
Hearing about Chloe and seeing her interact with the other children reminded us of the incredible mission of the centre. At Sithandiwe, their goal goes far beyond simply providing shelter and care, they are dedicated to raising these children to become responsible, kind-hearted, and well-rounded adults, despite the challenges of their disabilities, many of which are profound.

Chloe's story is a testament to the resilience of the human spirit and the transformative power of love and guidance. It's clear that Sithandiwe is not just a place of refuge, but a home filled with hope, dignity, and a vision for a brighter future.





Were amazed by the many opportunities and programs the centre offers to its children. As we chatted with Mrs. Lucy, she shared the centre's efforts to provide enriching learning experiences despite the unique challenges the children face. She mentioned an exciting initiative supported by the government, encouraging caregivers to undergo Early Childhood Development (ECD) training. This would equip them to teach the children basic lessons, such as identifying colors, understanding calendars, and learning the months of the year, etc.



While these lessons are important, the centre places a strong emphasis on stimulation to support the children's growth and focus. Through sounds, music, and interactive activities, they enhance concentration and create an engaging learning environment tailored to children who are not typical learners. We even had the privilege of visiting the stimulation room; a space filled with tools and activities designed to bring joy and development to the children.



Mrs. Lucy also guided us through other areas of the centre, showing us where the children sleep and where the caregivers cook. We learned that children with cerebral palsy (CP) are accommodated in special cottages to ensure their safety as they sleep, as they may struggle to contain themselves and could fall. It was touching to see the care and thoughtfulness that go into every aspect of their well-being.

There was so much to take in, and every moment reminded us of the courage and strength these children embody. Their determination to thrive despite their challenges, paired with the unwavering dedication of the caregivers, left us truly inspired and in awe of the incredible work being done at Sithandiwe.



The time spent at Sithandiwe Disability Care Centre was heartwarming and inspiring. Supporting their mission and seeing the joy on the children's faces reminded us of the beauty of kindness and community. We're grateful to have brightened their festive season.

