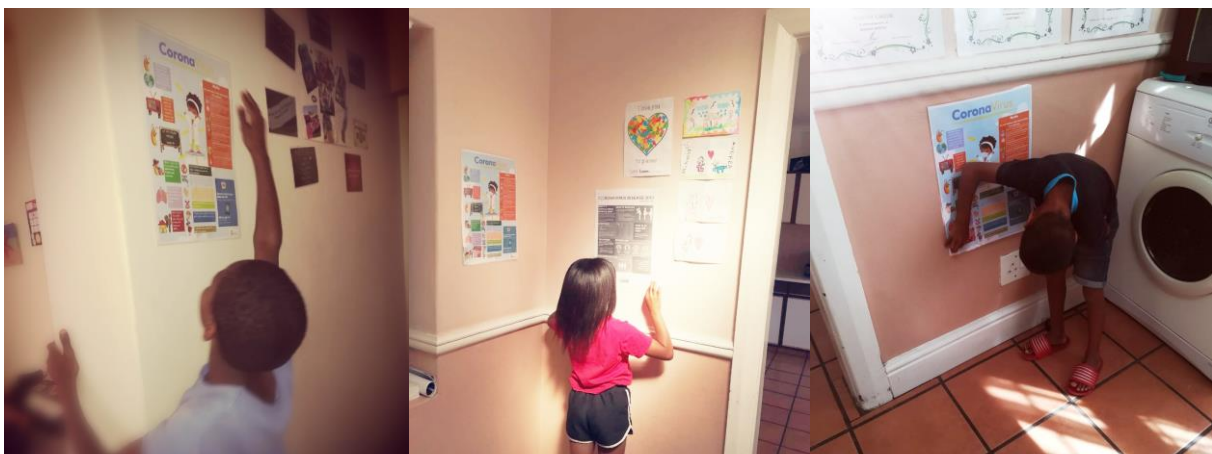


HFH COVID-19 response 2 – Info sharing with Foster Families

25 March 2020

Since the initial shock last week of our president calling a national disaster because of COVID-19, we have seen the substantial increase in known infections in SA and this culminating in a total lockdown being implemented for Thursday this week. Although this is all scary and quite overwhelming, it has been truly refreshing to have our presidential leadership being decisive and responsive and we at HfH are fully behind all these measures taken.

I want to also acknowledge our HFH team that has not hidden behind the good reasons to self-protect, and thus avoid the responsibility of our work. Although there has been every right from individuals with different personal circumstances and levels of risk, to abdicate their responsibility, the whole team has stepped forward to say, we need to do what is in the best interest of the children. We know the infection situation in this country is going to get far worse before it gets better and our foster families are going to be exposed and get infected with the virus. The team has therefore realised how important it is to use this opportunity, where the infection rates are a little lower, to ensure that there is sufficient information sharing with each of the homes. As there is little if any electronic connectivity at our homes, our Social Workers and Social Auxiliary Workers have decided to go out to each home doing face to face education and information sharing. These visits to the homes have involved information sharing, practising safeguarding behaviours and distributing sanitizers and other goods to support them during the lockdown. The initial feedback from these visits have shown how important actual visitation has been, where a number of our children and Foster Mothers have had inaccurate beliefs about the seriousness of this epidemic. This feels like a crucial intervention from our team in ensuring that our foster families are given the best opportunity at being protected. Of course there will need to be telephonic follow-up on a regular basis for some time, but I have found our team's response to be inspirational. So often people pay only lip-service to the well-used motto of our field, *"Act in the best interests of the child"*, but I feel proud that our team has *"walked the talk"*!



The children were given the responsibility of putting up their information posters in the homes after they were all educated on COVID-19

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Even though we are going to be in lockdown, our team was certainly not going to allow for Easter to be cancelled! Many happy faces when we delivered the Easter eggs early this year!

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