



Home from Home Covid-19 Response – Planning beyond Lock down 14th April 2020

Having managed the last few weeks of lockdown successfully and now moving into the expected extension of this period until the end of April, we are becoming more aware of the disruptions to the rest of the year that we will need to be dealing with. South Africa's response to slowing the infection rate down and 'flattening the curve' has been globally the most effective, which has given our country more valuable time to prepare. What we do know however, is that we will not be able to avoid the eventual exponential increase in infections. The 'storm' will come! We must just ensure that we use the extra 'quiet' time, to actively prepare.

So far our foster mums and the families have adapted so very well to the lock down in the houses. You can see from our website and Facebook posts how active they have been in organising a variety of activities to be busy with. From the additional hygiene practices, doing house chores and homework, to reading, drawing, dancing and exercise routines, our foster homes have been abuzz with creativity in keeping busy. Also, our foster parents had committed to work throughout the lock down in order to strengthen the social distancing practiced in our homes and we believe that this discipline has been important to creating the healthy Covid-19 habits in our homes (to date no staff or children have been infected).

Here we want to acknowledge the public and our loyal supporters for responding so quickly and enthusiastically to our special needs. The donations of hand sanitizer and teams of ladies sewing face masks has been amazing where we have been able to supply for all of our homes. The financial contributions made through our appeal for 'Care Packages' for our families has ensured that we were able to provide additional groceries and medical supplies; that we bought extra indoor games and provided more data for the foster parents cell phones to keep us well connected. Many of our loyal supporters have engaged us in adapting their funding restrictions to better suit our current priority needs and some have even offered additional support. This remarkable response to support our work has been inspiring to the HfH team and emboldened our commitment to 'win the war' against covid-19.

We do however know that with the extension of lock down, more pressure will be brought to bare on our homes/families. The boredom and frustration will begin to build and our foster mums will need a break from the 24/7 commitment. The inevitability of some of our children and families becoming infected will require additional help. We do have excellent assistants who will come in to relieve, but we will need to reinforce this with more help than we currently have.

The disruption to our children's education is already significant and with the likelihood of school's closure beyond the extended lock down, creative measures will be needed. None of our homes have sufficient Wi-Fi and computer access and this will be a particular challenge.

In the longer term we are realising that the economic impact is going to be far more reaching than a lockdown period and that planning for this is also crucial. Already there have been funders that have had to limit and even reduce their funding, because of this pressure on their financial situations. We need to expect that this will increase into the future and our planning will need to focus on securing the core of our work. Going 'back to basics' in securing the funding for each of our homes and limiting the 'nice to haves', will need to be a focus.

Our HfH team has been busying ourselves with putting plans in place for the above eventualities and although sometimes daunting and overwhelming, it is important to remember the following: HfH's work started as a dream from our two founders, to create loving families for the most vulnerable foster children and this has grown into

73 Main Road, Plumstead, Cape Town, South Africa

Tel: +27 21 761 7251 • E-mail: info@homefromhome.org.za • Website: www.homefromhome.org.za

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Managing Trustees: Prof. Andrew Dawes (Chairperson) • Anna Vayanos (Vice Chairperson)

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the wonderful reality where 36 homes are currently providing this for nearly 200 children. We need to have faith in this miracle and so ensure that it continues.

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