



www.startingchance.org.za

2 May 2020

Dear Friend of Starting Chance

COVID-19 – Flattening the curve of poverty and hopelessness – “May we change Lives.”

Thank you for your ongoing support and concern for the wellbeing of our schools and their staff.

An update:

South Africa has moved from Level 5 to level 4 from today. But for the schools we support this doesn't change a thing. The schools are still not allowed to operate. The parents can't or won't pay fees. The 164 teachers across the 30 schools won't receive any salaries in May.

In April, Starting Chance focused on:

- Ensuring 164 teachers received a COVID-19 subsidy of R1500 each thanks to your generous financial help
- Creating WhatsApp groups for the TTinT principals
- Collecting and disseminating information on how government support can be accessed
- Planning for when we do go back to the new normal way of operating.
- Ensuring our principals and ed team were on line by providing routers and sim cards

In May we want to focus on 3 main areas:

- **Mental health** – our staff, the principals and teachers are taking strain and we are committed to helping to support them. To this end we are setting up:
 1. **A Starting Chance Support Team (SCST)** which will include a social worker, an occupational therapist, human rights specialist, early childhood specialist, special needs specialist, and our fieldworkers. This team will be available to teachers and principals (and through them parents) to seek one-on-one WhatsApp or telephonic advice/support.
 2. **A COVID-19 Wall of Sharing and Caring** – an opportunity for any of our family of Starting Chance to share writings, drawings or a mixed media expression of how they are feeling or thinking and words of encouragement for fellow colleagues and team members
 3. **Mental agility** – a chance to upskill in areas hitherto untried. Our teams do not have the resources to join online commercial platforms for courses etc so we are using in-house skill sets to offer virtual upskilling. In May our intern, Tessa, is offering “World of Word 1” – a short course on editing tools in Word, our fieldworkers are offering online conversational Xhosa, helped by Tessa to create online notes etc, Tessa is offering conversational Dutch – which will help when we get Dutch volunteers who come to do builds with us.
- **Digital Connection and Sharing Platform** – in April we set ourselves the goal of bringing our principals and fieldworkers online. Now, everyone is keen to learn how to use digital platforms to connect more regularly.
 1. **Principal connection-** Tessa will be coaching our principals on how to download, install and use different connection apps like google hangouts etc and we plan to connect weekly as a team and invite a guest speaker to join us virtually every 2nd week
 2. **Teacher connection** – our field worker team will be connecting each week with teachers from all of the schools and will be passing on hints and suggestions as to what they can be doing at home
 3. **Parent Connection** – we will be encouraging our parent rep team to connect with their parents through WhatsApp and ensure that they are coping at home

Starting Chance Trust Registration No IT002472/2015

NPO Reg No 164-217 • PBO No 930051444 • VAT Registration No 4450272614

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4. **Ed team Connection** – weekly meetings will continue but we will also have our mental agility courses starting next Tuesday
 5. **Using the digital platforms to share cultural highlights** – share your favourite recipe, prayer, song etc and get to know each other better.
- **Financial Wellbeing** – our teachers and principals are really battling to survive in the COVID-19 environment. Hunger prevails, people riot over food access and there is a feeling of hopelessness.
 1. **Support Principals to tap into possible sources of financial relief** – we are providing support and ideas that the principals can use to try and access whatever government support is available – sadly very little is appropriate for these schools.
 2. **Facilitating connections** – Non-profits seeking to provide food and financial assistance are contacting Starting Chance and we are actively facilitating connections to school principals
 3. **Proposal writing** – we are offering online support through our digital platforms on how to write proposals to try and get financial support
 4. **Fundraising** – we would really like to be able to pay the **COVID-19 subsidy of R1000** this month

Many of you are asking: “How can we help?” (Please don’t feel pressure to donate if you have already – but help us to connect with others)

Here are some suggestions:

- **“Adopt a teacher” Campaign** – we need 164 people to adopt a teacher each in order to be able to pay the COVID-19 subsidies for May – **you can help by spreading the campaign** to friends, colleagues and organisations and encouraging them to “adopt a teacher.”
- **Covid 19 Wall of Sharing and Caring** – you can help encourage by **sending contributions of encouragement messages, ideas for children etc with a photo** to belinda@startingchance.org.za – we will share these with our teachers and principals so they can see they are not alone and people do care
- **Skills** – if you would like to be a guest speaker at one of our virtual meetings to share some useful knowledge – contact ali@startingchance.org.za

*In the words of an Mfuleni teacher: **“Now we can take another step in the page of our lives”***
Jambase Mfuleni teacher

Please help us to make this come true in May.

Thank you for your help, words of encouragement and support – without you we can do nothing – with you we can give these incredible people a “start on the COVID-19 journey.”

Kind regards

Trustees of Starting Chance, Mfuleni community and our Ed team.

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