



One of the greatest factors in any child's success in life, especially involving education, lies in the support they receive from their families. A strong, supportive, nurturing family environment encourages and empowers a child to strive for success and to reach his or her goals. The reality in South Africa, however, is that most orphaned and vulnerable children (OVC's) have limited to no parental support available. There are often no parents who ensure that their physical, educational and emotional needs are met. Recently, the city of Cape Town revealed that 50.2% of 20+ year-olds have not completed and passed their Matric exams, revealing just how stark the need for caring NPO involvement is.

Since OVC's do not often have the safe, stable, nurturing environment that creates opportunity for educational success, they have one of the highest academic attrition rates. OVC's often need to provide food, clothing and safety for themselves, which puts them in high risk, survival-focused situations. OVC's are at the greatest probability levels of falling into gangs and criminal activity as a means to replace the security of a family. They often become sexually active early in life, which leads to greatly increased risk of HIV infection and teen pregnancies, and they are extremely vulnerable to sexual abuse. OVC's are often widely exposed to drugs and alcohol as a means of survival and compensation for lack of food and safety. They often get lost in township schools that are overcrowded and overburdened and generally have an attrition rate of up to 80% across South Africa.

Why are we sharing this with you?

Because we want to invite you to join the stories of hope that comes when we offer our unique solution to these problems...

Bridges of Hope South Africa Trust (NPO) seeks to develop and empower those most affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic - the orphaned and vulnerable children of South Africa.

At Bridges of Hope, we believe in empowering and developing individuals who will be able to make a tangible contribution of hope and change to the communities they come from. We have a multi-layered approach to supporting and empowering OVC's to become whole, successful, contributing citizens of South Africa.

First, we run an ongoing community development training (Community Health Education or CHE) aimed at empowering the community members themselves to identify and address their community's greatest felt needs. Our trained community members (called CHEs) identify OVC's through home visits and create self-sustainable solutions for their communities through self-initiated projects.

Secondly, Bridges runs an After School Program (ASP) that teaches Life Skills, English and Leadership Principles to children in 4 local primary schools. Many OVC's are identified by teachers or ASP leaders and invited to Bridges of Hope support groups.

Thirdly, we run weekly OVC physical & emotional support groups in 4 communities. These groups offer a safe environment of support and care. We offer a small, nutritious lunch at each gathering and provide each OVC with a monthly food parcel as a means of lessening the child's burden on the family member who has taken him or her in. We also provide support and education to the caregivers of these OVCs, who themselves often feel overwhelmed by the needs of the children they've taken in.

Finally, we offer OVC's who are part of the support group network the opportunity to receive a quality private secondary education in a unique boarding school called Bridges Academy. Our Academy not only offers small teacher/student ratios, it also provides a safe and supportive boarding home environment that greatly stabilizes the OVC over time. We provide healthy meals to enable students to concentrate and grow healthy lifestyles while pursuing their Matriculant degrees. Bridges Academy boasts a 100% Matriculant pass rate, and many of our students go on to further their studies in local universities with full bursaries.

Now that you have a bit of the bigger picture, we would like to invite you to
join hands with Bridges Academy...

The vision for Bridges Academy arose in 2005 when founding directors, Dennis and Susan Wadley, along with their South African community development leaders in the Cape Flats, began to take note of the growing number of Orphaned and Vulnerable Children (OVC).

To provide a safe and nurturing environment for orphans,
While enriching them with mentoring and a world class education,
Equipping leaders who will strengthen their communities and
Bring about positive change in their nation

And so the Bridges Academy vision was born. It is this vision that sparked Bridges of Hope to raise the funds needed to purchase our beautiful 5.1-hectare farm in Franschoek in 2006 and launch Bridges Academy Boarding School for Orphans in January 2008.

What makes Bridges Academy such a special place for orphaned and vulnerable children to receive their education?

Bridges Academy is designed to meet the unique needs of our OVC students. First, we are a boarding school, which provides a safe and nurturing learning environment for OVCs to pursue their secondary school education. Secondly, we focus on providing a quality education, with a small student-teacher ratio. This allows teachers to give personalized, individual attention since each learner has come from different and often inadequate educational backgrounds. Thirdly, Bridges Academy seeks to empower their students to pursue further studies, with a number of our Matriculant going on to tertiary education. Bridges Academy is proud of the fact that since our inception we have had a 100% matric pass rate. Finally, we seek to develop our students holistically by caring for their physical, emotional and spiritual needs. We provide a diverse after school program with various opportunities for their physical and social development. We provide much needed counseling for our student's unique emotional needs. Our hope is to have 20 students per grade, making the student body a total of 100 students from Gr. 8 - 12.

What we do:

- Provide housing & food for the entire school year to 55 students.
- Provide a quality Secondary School Education, as outlined by the Western Cape Education Department.
- Provide vital social & life skills through various after school programs (4 different sports, performing arts, Fine arts and crafts).
- Provide emotional & trauma counseling to students as needed.
- Provide vital career guidance for each student, including individual mentors for each student.
- Provide full sponsorships for each student attending Bridges Academy. .
- Provide all uniforms to all of our students.
- Employ 16 South African Staff.
- Host 6 international volunteer teachers and administrative staff on a full time basis.
- Enable students to participate in community service projects in the vicinity of the Academy.

How much it costs:

It costs R3800 per month per student to attend Bridges Academy.

How can you be part of changing the lives of orphaned and vulnerable children?

Why not become part of our sponsorship program! The student sponsorships are on a year-to-year basis running from January to December. There are several ways to sponsor a student at Bridges Academy:

1. **Financial Contribution to Kilimanjaro Climb** → “See attached the Sponsor Letter”
2. **Full sponsorship:** This is a monthly contribution of R3800 towards one specific student's fees.
3. **Partial sponsorship:** This is a monthly contribution of ANY amount that in combination with other donors goes toward specific students fees. This is also a great way for a small group or family to pool together through partial sponsorships to sponsor one child.
4. **Once off contribution:** This will go towards the general operations of the school.

We are not only grateful for your financial contribution, we also would like to offer you the choice of if and how you'd like to correspond with your sponsored child. There are two options:

You can be a **Silent Sponsor** who wants to contribute financially but does not want to correspond with the child directly, OR

You can be a **Corresponding Sponsor** who communicates with your sponsored student via email at the rate that is comfortable for your both. The sponsored students LOVE receiving emails and photo's from their sponsors and proudly display them in their rooms. If you choose this option you will receive a letter from Bridges of Hope with all the information needed to begin an enjoyable dialogue with your sponsored student.

If you would like to become a sponsor please feel free to contact;

Di Babb,
Academy Director
082.053.5880
DiB@bridgessa.org
www.bridgesworldwide.org



Thank you so much for choosing to become a part of the Bridges Academy story!