

Guardians of the National Treasure:

Supporting Cape Flats & Lavender Hill
communities through the Covid-19 pandemic
and beyond



A summary of our impact in 2020



“We help fight poverty for children and families everyday in some of the most under-served communities in Cape Town.”

– Guardians of the National Treasure

More from GNT on YouTube

Lavender Hill Residents Desperate for Peace – [SABC News](#)

Mandela Monday Hero: The Guardians of the National Treasure – [Expresso Show](#)

Part 1: Guardians of the National Treasure – [Afternoon Express](#)

Part 2: Rising Soccer Stars off to Barcelona – [Afternoon Express](#)

“The light is this way” – [In Place of War](#)

The Guardians of The National Treasure – [Cape Flats Upliftment Project](#)

Lavender Hill Gang Leader Threatens MEC Dan Plato – [SABC News](#)

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An outbreak of hope

A foreword from our Founder, Ralph Bouwers



A journey of one thousand miles begins with a single step – or in our case: a single pot of food on a fire.

Before the Covid-19 pandemic and the lockdown that followed it, the Cape Flats and Lavender Hill communities were already fighting a war: against despair, negativity

and violence. Guardians of the National Treasure was working hard with community leaders and our wonderful children to build positivity through community cohesion projects in the form of sports, arts and education. As a registered Non-Profit Organisation, our aim was simple: to do

everything within our power to uplift our community and provide a better future for the next generation of children.

And then, with little notice, we had another fight on our hands.

This time it was a fight against a virus that had the potential to land another heavy blow on a community that had already suffered more than its fair share of hardship. Forced to the very foundation of our community's hierarchy of needs – food – we began our first Feeding Hub in the form of a single pot of food on a fire. Our work was fuelled by hope: not that everything was going to be okay, but that we had within our power the ability to reduce the suffering of people in our community. Our hope came from every life we could save and every belly we could fill.

We were fighting an uphill battle. The scale of the need was huge and the trauma, unemployment and despair already embedded within the Cape Flats made the work even harder. But our secret weapon was lying in plain sight: the people of our community and the generosity of their spirit.

We have kind hearts feeding the hungry masses in their corner of

the Cape Flats. Through local networks and local knowledge, over the course of 2020 – in the most challenging of circumstances – we turned something so scary and so painful into something beautiful. In this report you will find more details of how our work has helped to not just ease hunger, but to ease pain, hardship and abuse for young and old in our community, where almost 80% of children come from dysfunctional households.

On the backdrop of this bleak statistic and of the painful reality of territorial gang warfare we carved out a space for a new contagion: hope. Our single pot on the fire spread and multiplied into a network of Feeding Hubs which didn't just provide folks with vital nourishment but also as sources of local wisdom and information. Our positive energy caused an outbreak of motivated individuals committed to transforming their community through our Giving Wings project. Youth Pet Care volunteers, our Elders Care collaboration and our Youth Entrepreneur Scheme provide us with further hope that we can create a long lasting herd immunity to despair within this beautiful and broken community.

In 2020 we:



With your help, in 2021 we can:



Food

Our network of Feeding Hubs grew from one pot on a fire, and now provides vital support and nutrition for countless families.

The Feeding Hubs provide the foundations for the work of The Guardians of the National Treasure. What started out as a single pot on a fire – with the sole aim of reducing the hunger and desperation of people on the Cape Flats – gave birth to an ecosystem of hope. The catalyst to change.

As it has across the globe, the Covid-19 pandemic changed our world. A lot of our work pre-Covid was focused on sport, community and well being, but the pandemic forced us to refocus our efforts on the basics. We began to receive countless calls from people across our community who were anxious about where their next meal would come from. From this need the Feeding Hubs – and the “feeding angels” who made them possible – were born.

In response to this looming hunger crisis, we were able to expand our single pot to eight strategically located Feeding Hubs throughout the community. Early on, the Feeding Angels, who were in charge of managing their



own hubs, were not just providing food to their community but were also able to monitor the wellness of the children who were regularly attending the hubs. This local knowledge provided the foundation for our network of

support and helped us to offer care to our community throughout the pandemic.

Within a month – thanks in part to local coordination on social media – these eight hubs had grown to 20, which in total were handing out 6,000 meals a day, providing tragic proof that our work was meeting a desperate need in our community. With this small step came hope that our hubs could go some way to breaking the territorial divides that have traumatised our community with gang violence.

Throughout the rest of the year our hubs went from strength to strength. By the end of the year we'd provided over 430,000 meals to the community, with 20 regular Feeding Hubs, serving each session 13,500 meals. A real highlight of the year came on Christmas Day, where we served over 10,000 meals, with our hubs cooking roast chicken, flame grilled chicken, and the hubs lucky enough to be supported by the Rastafarian community got lemon flavoured chicken. We're very excited about the capacity these Feeding Hubs have to act as vital points of contact for

vulnerable children and to provide education on healthy eating and lifestyles.

Every meal served represents just goodness. We're incredibly proud of all we have achieved in this very difficult year, but we're acutely aware of the scale of this challenge to rebuild a united, safe community here in the Cape Flats and Lavender Hill. With more investment, we could expand our feeding programmes to comprehensively cover every family in need. Most importantly, however, we thank our volunteers – because they are the lifeblood of our work and any positive future that lies ahead for our community will be built together.



Contribution and care

We've made it our mission to give members of our community the chance to create a better world.

Giving Wings

Enlisting fellow members of our community in creating more positive spaces in our immediate environment is essential in healing the trauma that these neighbourhoods have lived through. The Giving Wings project, launched in September of this year, provided individuals with the chance to volunteer – assisting in the transformation of our environment – in return for food to feed their families.

The project went live on 13 September 2020, with 6 locations under development – planting trees, plants, flowers and vegetables – and a handful of volunteers offering two to three hours of work, two to three times a week. By the end of the year we had an army of 80 volunteers from across the community, who'd received a total of 256 food hampers from GNT for their efforts.

As we kick back into gear for 2021, our main focus will be on using these green spaces to help bring about more peace and healing throughout our community.



Elder's Care

In the midst of a pandemic, which is disproportionately affecting older people, it's even more important for GNT to make sure that older members of our community are safe, secure and healthy. This is all the more vital as grandmothers and elder family members often provide the foundation “support” for the family unit. By improving and maintaining the good health of these important parts of our community ecosystem, the benefits trickle down to every corner of the Cape Flats and Lavender Hill.

In October we held our first meeting with our new partners at Timeless Care and the Department

of Health in one of our community Feeding Hubs to discuss how we could combine our local expertise and networks with their logistics and healthcare facilitating to ensure that our elders have access to vital health care in our community.

At our first health exposition in November, we were able to profile 20 elders, who are now receiving continued support while we work hard to expand our capacity for the many others on the waiting list. In 2021, our aim is to have a seniors` club at each of our feeding hubs, allowing us to expand our capacity to 400 elders.

Youth Pet Care

To disrupt the cycles of pain and violence in our community, it's important for us to make positive interventions with our youth as early as possible in order to tip the balance towards growth and flourishing.

The project began in October with just four teenagers who wanted to make a contribution and came together to offer care for local stray dogs. The group's founder enrolled in the local South Africa Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) to learn more about animal care, and the group got straight to work, feeding, dipping against fleas and parasites and caring for the local strays.

Across the four events the teenagers held – and all of the work they did in between – they managed to dip 300 dogs and feed over 600. Our aim for 2021 is to expand this programme greatly to provide monthly support amounting to 150 dog dips and 300 dog feeds.

Community areas

The growth and improvement of our community is not just measured in the number of meals we distribute but also in our community wellness and the number of happy faces we see around us every day, the number of people volunteering in our vegetable gardens and cleaning and beautifying our surroundings.

Many of the community's previous traumas lie in the spaces we inhabit every day, and so we've been working with an Earth Artist who has helped us cultivate our Peace Garden and vegetable garden.

In 2021 we will be continuing this work with our new partners the Rondevlei Uprising Movement who will continue to help us focus on negative spaces to bring life and positive messages to our community. Our first project will be to start a new garden at one of our Feeding Hubs, helping the local Pastor create a safe and welcoming space to attract more young people to his services.

Empowerment

Giving people the tools they need to build a more sustainable and hopeful future.

Economic Empowerment Initiative

Our Feeding Hubs provide a vital lifeline for many in our community – but food is not a recipe for long-term sustainability. People don't just need food, they need power and control over their own lives.

The Economic Empowerment Initiative is designed to make this happen. Thanks to GNT's contacts in the community we've been able to buy basic ingredients – rice, dahl, beans, soup mix, lentils, bread, fish oil and meat – at a low cost. These goods are supplied to the Feeding Hubs, allowing them to sell them for a small profit.

For example, the retail price outside the community for a kilo of rice, on average, is around R25. GNT, thanks to our local knowledge, is able to help families running the Feeding Hubs to source rice at R8 per kilo. The hubs sell this on to local residents at a much more affordable price of R10, splitting the R2 profit on each kilo with GNT for overhead costs. This way we provide affordable food to the



community and we help the families running the Feeding Hubs to make a profit. The positivity that comes with this increased financial empowerment then spreads to every corner of their lives and goes

a long way to improving not just their health but their wellbeing.

A case study: Van Royens family

The Van Royens family run one of our local Feeding Hubs. After enrolling in the Economic Empowerment Initiative, the progress they made each week was astounding:

- **Week 1 (Profit: R230):** The family is stronger, the children are munching away and are visibly happier and more playful.
- **Week 2 (Profit: R300):** Mr Van Royen looks less stressed and the overall self-worth of the family is growing. He's already starting renovations on their home.
- **Week 3 (Profit: R330):** The house renovations are starting to really take shape – and they look amazing.
- **Week 4 (Profit: R350):** Sales are healthy with 50% of families attending the hubs taking food for the entire month.

These Feeding Hubs are still on the journey towards complete self-sustainability, and we are working on some of these steps with our simple, comprehensive family feeding packs rolling out throughout 2021.

Youth Entrepreneur Scheme

In November we started work on a teen intervention project, to try to interrupt the cycle of desperation that leads youths into gang and drug culture with messages of hope and support. As a community we are completely under-resourced but we are driven and determined in our search for interventions that can save them from the fear and



trauma brought about by what they see around them.

The plan is to recruit 20 young people at all the hubs and to run a series of workshops with them, helping them develop ideas for small businesses that could thrive in our community. We are pleased to say we have finalised a partnership with Limitless Legacy and that over the course of 2021 we aim to roll this programme out across all of our Feeding Hubs, taking the total number of 12–16 year olds enrolled in the initiative to 400 across the community.

How we made it happen

Our work wouldn't be possible without the support of our funders, partners and volunteers.

Thank you to our Partners:

- Biomeroux Dragonfly Africa
- Cape of Good Hope Lions Club
- Cape Herb & Spice
- Cape Town Mayor's Office
- Charl Asia
- City of Cape Town
- Classic Meat Emporium
- Earth Artist Jenny Louw
- Food For Life SA
- Fredeline Stain
- Gabriel Aghulas
- Green Route Africa
- In Place of War
- Karen Sparrow (UK)
- Kirsh Foundation and the Kirsh Family
- KPMG
- Kevin and Ann Davenport (UK)
- Lewis Stores
- Living Hope Foundation
- Longbeach Breweries
- Maya Rollnick
- Moshal Scholarship
- MI & Beyond
- Peninsula School Feeding Association
- PicknPay
- Priscilla Nunda
- Prudential Investment Management
- Retreat Seven Day Adventure Church
- Rondevlei Uprising Movement
- Shoprite
- Stefan Rollnick
- ThinkWifi
- Tokai Lions Club
- Where Rainbows Meet
- Woodstock Breweries
- Woolworths