



YEAR-END UPDATE

APRIL 2025 TO MARCH 2026



Organisational Update



The 2025/26 financial year has been one of meaningful growth, strategic refinement, and significant transition for Thandanani Children's Foundation.

Central to this year's work has been the intentional refinement of our Family Strengthening Programme, with a sharper focus on building caregivers' practical capacity to actively respond to and meet the material, physical, cognitive, and emotional needs of the children in their care. While this shift required adaptation across staff teams and programme structures, early outcomes strongly affirm that the refined model is improving caregiver engagement and strengthening our long-term impact.

Across six communities in the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands, the programme supported **510** households and directly benefited **1,281** children through home visits, support groups, food garden development, grant facilitation, health interventions, educational support, and emotional resilience-building activities. Particularly pleasing was the graduation of **103** households from the programme — families who have built the stability and self-reliance to provide meaningfully for the children in their care.

Our Zenzele Youth Entrepreneurship Programme also continued to demonstrate the transformative power of youth empowerment, equipping young people with the business, life, and financial skills they need to move towards economic independence. While our Home-Based ECD work and advocacy through the Families4Children partnership has further positioned Thandanani not only as a service provider, but increasingly as a national voice for parent-centred early learning within the home.

Our staff and fieldworkers deserve enormous credit for this year's results. Despite a year of change and uncertainty, they remained deeply committed to the children and families they serve, and as Director, I am profoundly grateful for their dedication.

Financially, despite significant uncertainty with regard to some donor commitments and funding levels during the year, we still balanced our books. With an income of **R7.78** million and expenditure of **R7.81** million, we closed the year with a minor net deficit of just **R30,691**, which will be covered by our reserves.

However, current global economic conditions demand both caution and wisdom as we move forward. In response, we are intentionally scaling down the reach and staffing of our Family Strengthening Programme to ensure that costs remain within the limits of available funding in the years ahead, and, to expand our international fundraising capacity, we have launched the **Friends of Thandanani Foundation** in the United States - a strategic move aimed at allowing us to engage the South African diaspora and the broader US philanthropic community.

At the same time, we are implementing a structured succession plan in anticipation of my retirement as Director in late 2028. The deliberate development of existing staff into more senior management roles is progressing well and is aimed at ensuring a seamless transition when the time comes.

This year also brought the retirement of Agnes Mkhize, after more than thirty-three years of extraordinary service. Agnes' contribution to Thandanani's history, identity, and impact simply cannot be overstated. Her legacy lives on in the thousands of children and families whose lives she touched, and her wisdom, experience, and compassion will be deeply missed.



So while 2025/26 has involved significant change, none of it has been reactive. It has been strategically intentional and forward-looking. As we move ahead, our commitment remains unchanged: to strengthen families, empower caregivers, protect children, and build pathways out of vulnerability towards full and meaningful lives.

For all of this, we remain profoundly grateful to our donors, partners, board, staff, fieldworkers, and communities for walking this journey with us. Together, we continue to build hope, dignity, and opportunity for the children who need it most.

Sincerely,

Duncan Andrew
Director

Farewell to Agnes

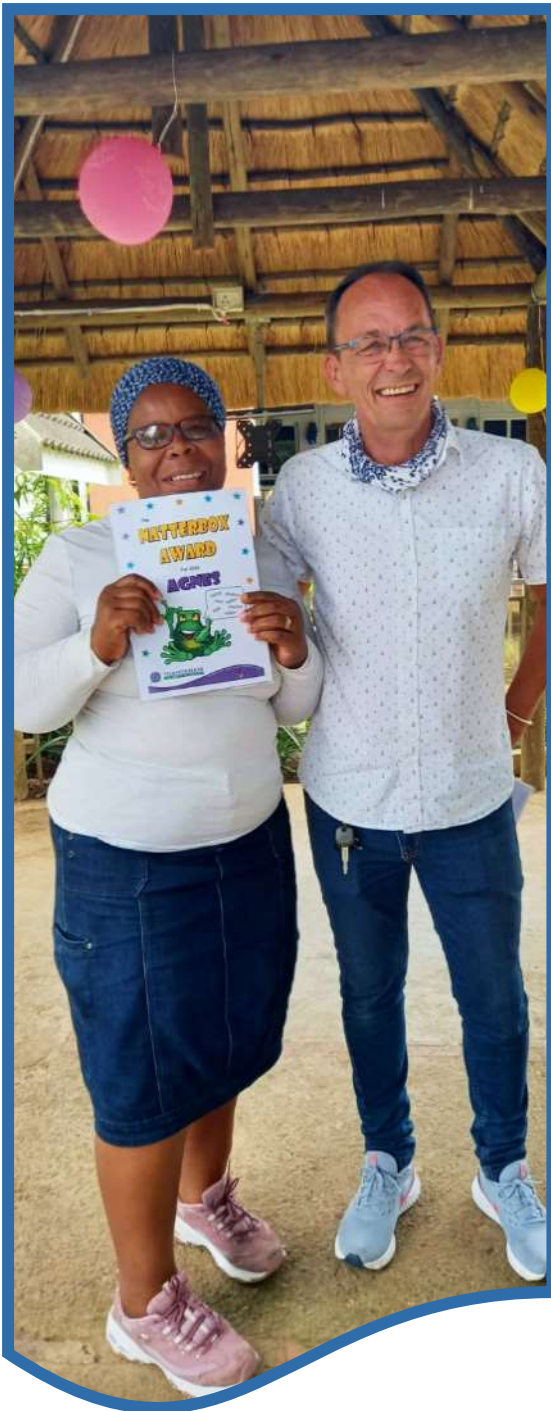
A Tribute to Thirty Years of Love & Commitment in Action

This past year brought a moment that was both deeply joyful and quietly bittersweet - the retirement of Agnes Mkhize, who served Thandanani Children's Foundation with extraordinary dedication for more than thirty-three years.

Agnes joined Thandanani in 1992, when vulnerable children, abandoned at Edendale Hospital, were in much need of love and care. With extraordinary gentleness and determination, she helped turn those children's wards into places of warmth, learning, and dignity. She played and laughed with the children, comforted those who were frightened or sick, and helped ensure each one felt seen, cared for, and loved. She even went so far as adopting one of the children herself, modelling fostering and adoption at a time when this was not a very common practice in many communities.

As Thandanani evolved and moved its work into communities, Agnes not only adapted with grace but also played a critical role in shaping the organisation and its programmes. Even through difficult periods, including the financial crisis of 2004, her commitment never wavered. Over the course of her career, she:

- Supported and facilitated 'make-overs' at numerous Early Learning Centres, schools, and crèches.
- Helped build brand new houses for families.
- Delivered thousands of household items to families, and school uniform items to children.
- Coordinated Memory Work, Caregiver Support, Children's Support & Life-skills programmes for hundreds of beneficiaries.



- Worked with Community Child Care Committees, volunteers, and, more recently, fieldworkers, and represented Thandanani at numerous WAR room meetings, community gatherings and events.
- Intervened in emergencies and provided support and comfort to hundreds of children and family members experiencing trauma, neglect, or abandonment.

In this process, Agnes walked thousands and thousands of kilometres to visit families and support children, volunteers and fieldworkers - always with deep respect, compassion, and an unwavering commitment to caring for and improving the lives of others.

Agnes also mentored colleagues and served as a trusted voice of wisdom and institutional memory. She was never afraid to speak up when it mattered - not from ego, but from an unwavering commitment to Thandanani's values and the children at the centre of our work.

Agnes didn't just do the work - she embodied it. Her legacy does not live in reports or job titles. It lives in the children who were comforted, the families who were strengthened, and an organisation whose soul she helped shape and protect and for this, we as Thandanani will always be grateful.

Agnes, as you step into a well-deserved retirement, please know that you carry with you the deep gratitude of everyone at Thandanani and the love of all those whose lives you touched. Go well and enjoy your much-earned rest!



Friends of Thandanani in the US



From the
USA to SA



New Chapter - Thandanani Reaches Across the Atlantic

This year marks a significant milestone in Thandanani's 35-year history, opening an important new chapter in our ability to serve the children and families at the heart of everything we do.

During the course of the year, we registered and proudly launched the **Friends of Thandanani Foundation (FoT)** – a US-based 501(c)(3) non-profit organisation (EIN: 99-3888888) established specifically to mobilise US support for Thandanani's work.

The decision to establish Friends of Thandanani (FoT) was both strategic and deeply personal. The United States is home to one of the world's largest South African diaspora communities, particularly along the East Coast in cities such as New York, Boston, Washington DC, Atlanta, and Miami. Many South Africans living abroad remain deeply connected to their homeland and understand the challenges facing vulnerable children in communities like those we serve in the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands. Many have long sought a trusted, accountable, and tax-efficient way to make a meaningful difference. Friends of Thandanani now provides that opportunity, offering US donors a dedicated donations platform with all contributions being 100% tax-deductible.

This commitment to South Africa is embodied by our two founding Board Members: Bob Haswell, son of one of Thandanani's founding members, the late Penny Haswell, and Kim Ward, a long-time 4Kids Champion and Thandanani supporter. Both are now resident in the US yet remain deeply committed to South Africa and, above all, to its children. It is this enduring loyalty – which we believe is widely shared across the diaspora – that motivated the launch of FoT.

In the short term, FoT's goal is straightforward: to build awareness of Thandanani's work among the US South African diaspora community and US-based businesses with ties to South Africa, and to convert that awareness into financial support that directly strengthens our programmes on the ground. Though a fundraising partnership with internationally renowned photographer Matthew Willman, seed funding has already been secured (See page 21), our US website is live, and our social media presence is growing.

Looking further ahead, FoT will seek to engage US corporates with South African operations, philanthropic foundations with an African focus, and the wider American public through compelling storytelling and strategic partnerships – building a sustainable funding stream that permanently strengthens Thandanani's capacity to serve more children across the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands.

So, if you are based in the US, please visit our website and consider becoming a Champion 4Kids.

If you are based in South Africa, please share this initiative with your friends, family, and colleagues in the US and, together, let's build a South Africa where every child has the opportunity to thrive.

SHOP 4KIDS

Website: us-4kids.com

Facebook: [@FriendsofThandanani](https://www.facebook.com/FriendsofThandanani)

Instagram: [@FriendsofThandanani_US](https://www.instagram.com/FriendsofThandanani_US)

DONATE 4KIDS

Our Family Strengthening Project



Thandanani's Family Strengthening Project (FSP) supports vulnerable children and youth by empowering the families that care for them through a holistic, 3-year package of support that strengthens their capacity to respond to and provide for the basic needs of the children in their care.

During the course of 2025, Thandanani began phasing in a modified Family Strengthening model with a more intentional focus on building caregivers' capacity to proactively respond to and provide for the material, physical, cognitive, and emotional needs and rights of the children in their care.

Accompanying this shift, the provision of food vouchers and household equipment was phased out, food garden development was prioritised, alongside Self-help Group participation, to strengthen economic self-reliance; Caregivers Support Group sessions were structurally integrated into the existing two-year Self-Help Group (SHG) process with participation in both now being compulsory; monthly Children' Support Groups sessions - extending over two years - were introduced; and home visits were revised to reinforce Responsive Care practices.

Despite the fact that this transition required a period of adjustment and facilitation adaptation, and some minor initial implementation challenges were encountered, feedback suggests that the changes have been well received. We have seen strong overall family engagement in the programme and notable shifts in practice in many households.

Material Well-Being

To improve the material well-being of families and their children, we capacitate caregivers to prioritise the needs of their children and assist in increasing the family's resources through improved grant access, self-help group participation, food garden development, and even income generation activities. While children are engaged in their family's efforts to provide for their needs and are encouraged to practically contribute to and support these efforts through actions like assisting with the maintenance of the food garden, helping maintain a clean and hygienic household, and understanding the importance of resource conservation. Together, these efforts facilitate more nurturing, cooperative and responsive home environments where the basic material needs and rights of children are prioritised.

In the last 12 months, we have:

- Conducted **4 246** household support visits (106% of our target)
- Processed **242** grant applications (96% of our target) and secured court approval for 198 grants
- Conducted **3 843** visits involving grant usage monitoring (107% of our target)
- Established **125** new food Gardens (104% of our target) with **326** children benefiting from these gardens (101% of our target)
- Supported **9** Self-help Groups (SHGs) with a total of **101** members (75% of our target) and **209** children benefiting from adult participation in the SHG (69% of our target). These groups have accumulated a combined total of **R16 896** in savings and have recycled this in the form of loans to members to the value of **R5 390**.



Cognitive Well-Being

Our cognitive well-being interventions empower caregivers to be proactive in the early stimulation and development of their younger children and practically support the formal education of their school-aged children.

In parallel, through their participation in support groups and life-skills workshops, children learn the value of education, set personal academic goals, and are encouraged to collaborate with their caregivers and educators to achieve these goals. We also provide school uniform vouchers for school-aged children and regularly monitor their school performance and attendance.

For caregivers with infants and toddlers, we facilitate a home-based Early Childhood Development programme providing them with knowledge and skills to support their children's early learning within the home environment.

In the last 12 months, we have:

- Conducted **1 197** School Attendance & Performance monitoring visits (95% of our target), with **820** school-going children benefiting through this process.
- Facilitated Home-based ECD sessions with **45** Caregivers from our FSP (107% of our target), with **59** Children under the age of 6 benefiting through the programme (108% of our target)
- Provided school uniforms to **253** children across our areas of operation

Emotional Well-Being

Thandanani's Family Strengthening Project strengthens the emotional well-being of families and children through regular monitoring visits, facilitating support groups for caregivers and younger children, and life-skill workshops for teens. These groups provide a safe space for family members to share their challenges, receive support, and build resilience. Thandanani also engages families in memory work, helping them to document their family history, fostering a sense of identity, belonging and emotional security, particularly for children. These activities strengthen relationships and emotional bonds within families, creating a more nurturing and resilient environment for children.

In the last 12 months, we have:

- Conducted **3 958** visits involving Emotional Well-being monitoring (110% of our target)
- Conducted Life-Skills groups with **133** teens (95% of our target)
- Conducted Children's Support groups with **196** children (106% of our target)
- Conducted Caregiver Support groups with **98** caregivers (89% of our target)
- Completed Memory Work with **151** families (101% of our target), with **355** children participating (88% of our target)
- Investigated 22 child protection reports and formally intervened in 14 of these, involving a total of 15 children

Physical Well-Being

To strengthen the physical well-being of children and families, we provide health screening, education, and testing services within the privacy of their own homes. When health concerns are identified, we ensure families take appropriate action by visiting clinics or accessing other appropriate health services. We then continue to monitor their physical well-being through regular home visits, educating families on any health issues that arise, and ensuring they follow up with necessary care. Through these efforts, Thandanani educates and empowers families to identify and respond proactively to the health needs of the children in their care.



In the last 12 months, we have:

- Provided health education to 124 families (123% of our target)
- Conducted health assessments with 305 children (112% of our target) and 274 adults (130% of our target)
- Conducted 3 966 Physical well-being monitoring home visits (110% of our target)

Overall Impact

Over the last twelve months, Thandanani has provided support to a total of 1 281 children, 510 caregivers, and 1 087 family members from 510 households across 6 historically disadvantaged communities. A breakdown of these beneficiaries is provided in the table below.

	Total Beneficiaries Supported: Apr 2025 – Mar 2026			Active Beneficiaries as at: 30 Mar 2026		
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
Caregivers	7	503	510	2	352	354
Children	659	622	1281	453	445	898
Other Adults	563	524	1087	401	338	739
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
Children 0 - 5	176	143	319	128	103	231
Children 6 - 10	204	181	385	135	130	265
Children 11 - 15	200	224	424	138	161	299
Children 16 - 18	79	74	153	52	51	103
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
Caregivers 18 - 35	3	113	116	1	68	69
Caregivers 36 - 55	3	249	252	1	184	185
Caregivers 56+	1	141	142	0	100	100
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
Other Adults 18 - 35	352	349	701	250	234	484
Other Adults 36 - 55	157	110	267	118	65	183
Other Adults 56+	54	65	119	33	39	72

In line with our staged model of support aimed at moving families from vulnerability to increased stability and self-reliance over three years, 156 households exited the programme during this reporting period, while 56 new households joined the programme. The net effect is that the number of active households supported by Thandanani decreased from 454 on 1 April to 354 by 31 March 2026.

Of the households that exited the programme during this period, 103 (66%) graduated from the programme and are now more stable & self-reliant and better able to respond to and provide for the material, physical, cognitive, and emotional needs of the children in their care; 12 (8%) left the programme as a result of their securing employment or being otherwise unavailable to continue; 14 (9%) relocated outside of the geographical areas in which we work and so could not continue on the programme, and 27 (17%) households were uncooperative and dropped out of the programme.

Case Studies



MATERIAL WELL-BEING

Food Gardens

The Shange family, a household of six caring for three vulnerable children, had access to land for gardening but lacked the infrastructure needed to make it productive and sustainable. As beneficiaries of our programme, the family were provided with proper fencing materials, enabling them to secure and protect their garden space.

With support from our Fieldworker, the entire household worked together to establish the garden, with both caregivers and children actively involved in preparing the soil, planting seedlings, and maintaining the crops. The children, in particular, took great pride in caring for the garden, learning responsibility while contributing directly to the family's food security.

Despite ongoing water challenges, the family adapted by harvesting rainwater, allowing them to sustain production even during shortages. The garden now provides an important, reliable source of nutrition while also strengthening the family's sense of resilience and self-reliance.

The caregiver reflected, "This garden has helped us a lot. The children are proud of what they have planted, and it is teaching them responsibility. Even when things are difficult, we know we have something to rely on."

Self-Help Groups

Established in April 2025, the Buhle Bezwe Self-Help Group brought together 11 caregivers committed to improving their families' futures. Through their participation in the group, members have accumulated savings, gained access to low-interest loans, developed financial literacy and established a safe and encouraging environment where participants share challenges, build confidence, and support one another emotionally. Although still in the early stages of their journey, participants are already applying some of the strategies they have learned to improve their living conditions and better support their families.

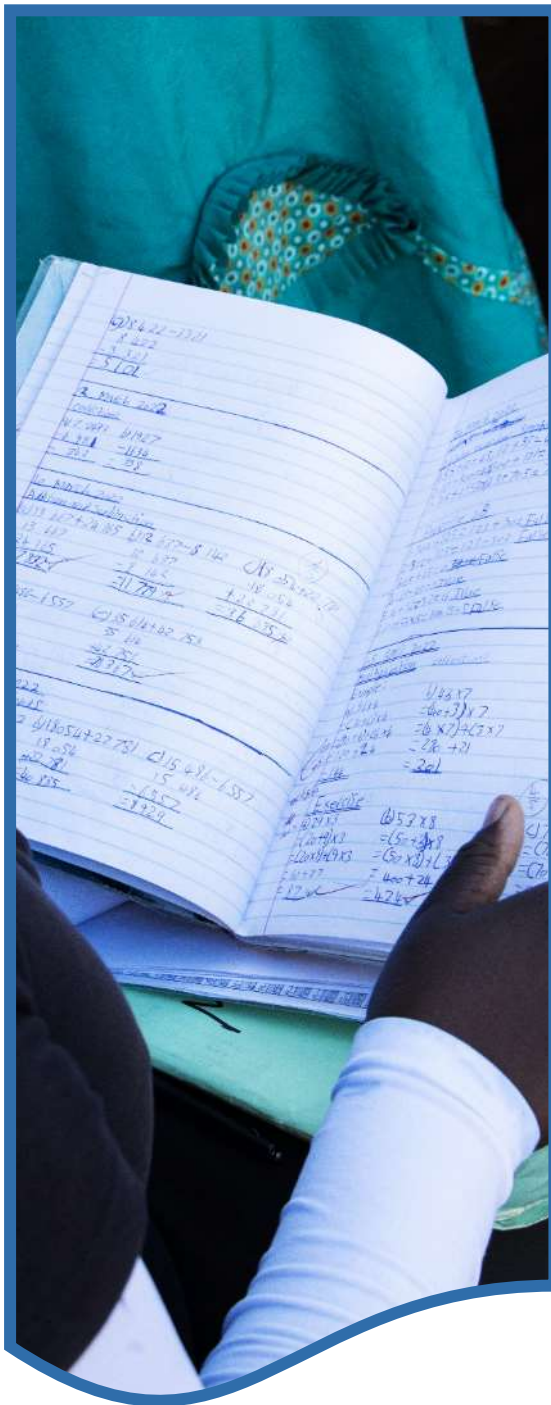
One member shared, "Before joining the group, I felt alone with my problems. Now I have people who support me and encourage me. Even though we are still saving, I feel hopeful because I know we are building something for our future."

This group demonstrates how collective support, practical skills, and structured savings can lay the foundation for long-term economic empowerment.

Responsive Care – Resource Management

For the Mazibuko family, financial strain was placing significant pressure on their ability to meet basic needs, with school transport consuming a disproportionate share of household income.

Through guidance received during Caregiver Support Group sessions, the caregiver was empowered to reassess household priorities and chose to transfer her children to a closer school within walking distance.



This practical decision significantly reduced monthly expenses, freeing resources for other essential household needs while maintaining the children's educational stability. The caregiver reported that the input and strategies discussed in the Caregiver Support Group sessions helped her make wise decisions on the use of her often-limited resources.

PHYSICAL WELL-BEING

Health Monitoring

During a routine home visit, a Thandanani fieldworker identified serious health concerns affecting MaZuma, a caregiver who had defaulted on her HIV treatment and was experiencing health challenges.

Through compassionate discussion and targeted health education, it became clear that MaZuma did not fully understand the importance of treatment adherence. The fieldworker provided practical information about HIV management and encouraged her to seek medical assistance.

With this support, MaZuma returned to the clinic and resumed treatment. She now reports a far better understanding of her condition and is committed to managing her health consistently.

This case highlights how home-based health monitoring and education can empower family members to take appropriate action, improving both their own well-being and their capacity to care for their children.

Ibhayi Lengane

When Nokuzola joined Thandanani's Ibhayi Lengane Programme during her pregnancy, she was emotionally overwhelmed, unsupported, and struggling to come to terms with her unplanned pregnancy.

Through structured home visits, she received guidance on maternal attachment, emotional regulation, and positive parenting. Family sessions also helped improve communication within the family, gradually reducing conflict and building support around her.

Following the birth of her child, Nokuzola's confidence as a mother grew significantly, her family became more involved, and her child is now thriving.

Reflecting on her journey, Nokuzola shared, "*The programme helped me accept my baby and believe in myself as a mother.*"

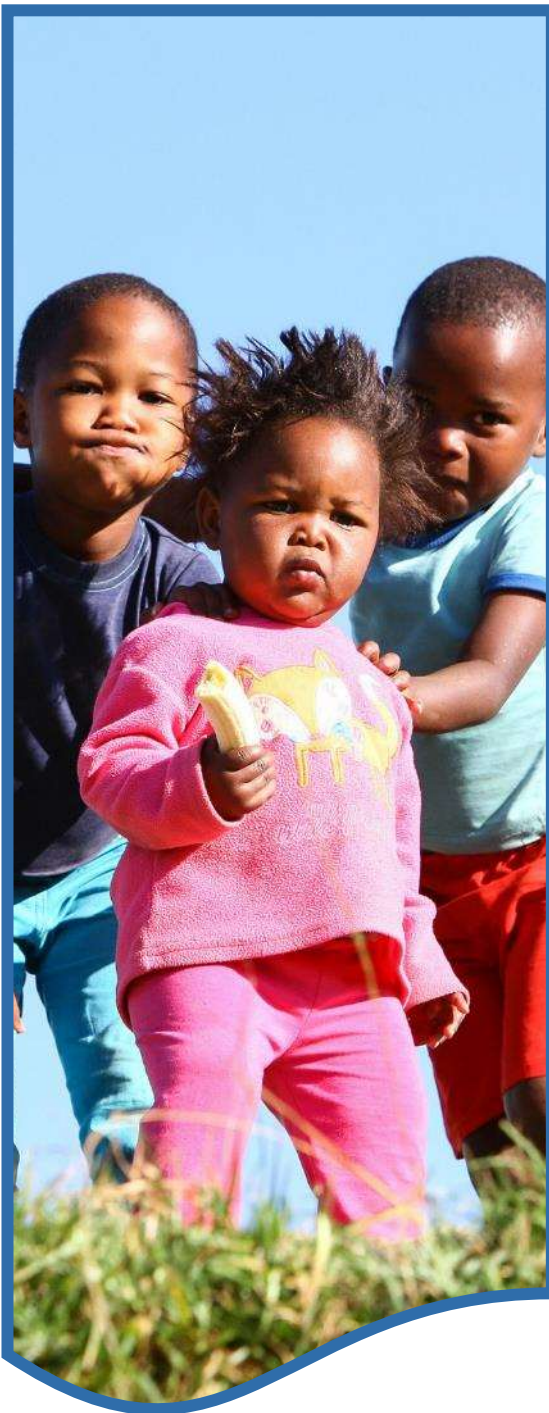
Child Protection

Thandanani's child protection work often involves responding to family crises where children's safety is at risk. In one case involving four children experiencing neglect, a social worker conducted a joint investigation with child protection authorities.

Although intensive psychosocial support, parenting interventions, and monitoring were initially provided to the caregiver, persistent substance misuse continued to place the children at serious risk.

When it became clear that the home environment remained unsafe, the children were removed and placed in protective care. They are now safe, attending school, and receiving appropriate support.

This case reflects Thandanani's commitment to working to support caregivers whenever possible, but not at the expense of children's safety.



COGNITIVE WELL-BEING

School Attendance & Performance Monitoring

For the Ngobo family, the inability to afford school uniforms was undermining their child's school attendance, confidence, and sense of well-being & belonging. Following an assessment, Thandanani provided the family with school uniform vouchers, enabling the caregiver and child to shop for the uniform and stationery they needed. This relatively small but critical intervention restored the child's confidence, improved school participation, and reduced stress within the household. The caregiver expressed deep gratitude, sharing that the support had lifted a significant burden and renewed her child's enthusiasm for school.

EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

Memory Work

Nokuthula had lovingly cared for young Thandi following the death of her biological mother. Over time, the relationship deepened, but difficult questions about identity and family history remained unresolved. During a Memory Work session, Thandi began asking questions about her biological mother. With sensitive support from our fieldworker, Nokuthula was able to navigate this emotionally complex conversation honestly and compassionately. Although emotional, the process strengthened trust, deepened Thandi's understanding of her family history and identity, and reinforced the bond between her and Nokuthula.

Caregiver Support Group

During a Caregiver Support Group session, Noluthando shared how she and her teenage son, Sihle, often argued with each other and how Sihle always seemed to misbehave and get into trouble. Over the course of several group sessions, Noluthando explored calmer, more effective parenting strategies in the hope that these might help her relationship with Sihle. Over time, Noluthando said communication has improved, tensions have been reduced, and the family environment has become more stable and nurturing. Sihle also reflected on these changes, saying "I feel like my mum understands me better now and we don't fight all the time anymore."

Children's Support Group

During one of our Children's Support Groups, 14-year-old Zinhle expressed frustration with her relationship with her mother. During the course of the programme and its various exercises, Zinhle was able to explore and better understand these challenges and her role in them. In this process, she developed greater emotional awareness, recognising that many of the difficulties she was experiencing with her mother stemmed from her own attitude and behaviour. As a result, Zinhle chose to apologise to her mother and has since shown meaningful behavioural improvements, strengthening family relationships and emotional well-being.

Life-Skills

When he first joined Thandanani's Life-Skills Programme, 15-year-old Lwandle had been doing odd jobs and weekend work to help support his family, who were struggling financially. During the course of the programme, participants received input on financial literacy, basic entrepreneurship, and practical skills in things like planning, budgeting, and saving. As a result of this input, Lwandle now started seeing his efforts to support his family not just as survival necessities but as opportunities with business potential. He subsequently began generating income through more targeted and strategic entrepreneurial activities that still allowed him to contribute to his family's well-being but were less time-consuming and demanding on him. Lwandle shared, "The programme showed me that I can do something for myself and also help my family."

Our Youth Entrepreneurship Development Project



Thandanani continues to implement its Zenzele Programme, aimed at equipping, empowering and supporting young people aged 18 to 25 years with the personal, social, and economic tools they need to move from vulnerability toward self-reliance.

In 2025, we received 102 applications for participation in the programme; all these applicants were invited to a selection Boot Camp in February, with 68 of those invited actually participating. On completion of the Boot Camp, 64 applicants were shortlisted and individually interviewed for possible participation, resulting in the final selection of 57 individuals to start the programme.

These participants completed the Team Building, Personal Development, and Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH) components of the programme in March and April. They then attended a mid-year camp where gains from the personal development and SRH components were consolidated, and the Micro Enterprise component of the programme was introduced. By Mid-June, 48 participants (120% of our target) completed the theory-based sessions on Micro-Enterprise Development and were then each provided R200 to purchase and sell goods in their local community. This exercise provided 41 participants (103% of our target) with practical experience in the costing and pricing of goods, marketing & selling, record-keeping, and money management. During the course of the exercise, Participants incurred R8 200 in expenses and generated income of R12 401, resulting in a net return of R4 201.

Following the selling exercise, participants presented their business ideas to a panel at a 'Lion's Den' to secure their share of the R133 000 that was available as start-up capital. All 35 who presented (88% of our target) secured start-up capital for their enterprises. Awards ranged from R2 475 to R6 334, with the average being R4 042. With seed funding secure, 33 enterprises (83% of our target) were started - two of which were joint ventures.

The 33 enterprises are listed below. Two of these were joint ventures with 2 partners in each.

- Zanokuhle Fast Food & Veg
- Slindokuhle's Fast Food
- Beauty Plants Veg Store
- Siyakhula Fresh Vegetables
- Sondela Beauty Studio
- Burn Bright Candle
- Mpilo's Fish Shack
- Inkazimulo Yesamkelo
- Prime Cuts Meat Care
- The Game Garage
- Amy's Fruitful Delight
- Sizophila Crack & Bake
- Zee's Internet Connection
- Philanabantu Fast Food
- Ntungwa Elihle Cosmetics
- Q's Farm
- The Label Lab
- Fuzelihle's Hair Salon
- Pixie Crowns
- Dixon Car Wash
- Kwandi's Wear House
- Pat's Chicken
- The Egg Parlour
- B/S Beauty Co. Salon (Joint Venture)
- Lisa's Nail Spa
- Fast BiteFix
- Sisters' Bakery Shop (Joint Venture)
- Inyama Yasekhaya
- Hair by Lethokuhle
- Ntusi's Poultry
- Vacuum-Powered Roof Cleaners
- Love & Peace
- Kuhlekonke Laundry



Through the remainder of the project, mentoring sessions provided participants an opportunity to report back on their progress & challenges and receive guidance and support from project staff and mentors in the establishment and maintenance of their enterprises.

In addition, participants were supported in the organisation & hosting of Market Days within their local communities, aimed at creating a “retail space” for participants to sell their goods and services and showcase their enterprises. A total of 10 market days (Five per community) were organised with over 377 community members attending between April 2025 and March 2026.

Of those attending, 152 were fellow youth aged 14–25. All attendees were exposed to SRH messaging, and 110 (126% of target) made use of health education, screening and/or testing services at the markets. The Dambuza Ward Councillor donated entertainment equipment for the October 2025 market, significantly boosting community attendance and trading opportunities for the young entrepreneurs.

Given a combined total of R133 381 in start-up capital, these enterprises incurred R139 444 in expenses and generated income of R201 064 over the remainder of the year. This is a gross return of R61 620 (44%) between the end of July and the end of November 2025.

Entrepreneurs utilised R14 328 (26%) of this income for personal remuneration. Generating a monthly average of R117 in additional income for themselves. When other changes to personal income are taken into account, the average monthly personal income increased from a reported R347 at the start of the project (February 2025) to R1 050 per month by November 2025. This is an average increase of R703 per month per participant.

The programme concluded with participants attending a Graduation Ceremony held on 6 December 2025. In total, 46 family members, 2 community stakeholders, 8 mentors, 4 Thandanani staff and 25 of the 27 graduating youth attended.

Of the 35 participants who completed the Micro-Enterprise component, 27 (68% of our target) met the full programme criteria and received graduation certificates: 11 received Honours Certificates, 4 received Certificates of Excellence, and 12 received Certificates of Attendance.

Four participants, two from each community, received “Entrepreneur of the Year” certificates and an award of R1,000 each in recognition of their achievements and the success of their enterprises.

Case Studies



Dixon Car Wash

When Al-Hakeem joined Zenzele, Dixon Car Wash was little more than a side hustle - no records, no planning, no long-term vision. Through the programme's workshops, group sessions, and business training modules, that changed. He now tracks all income and expenses, understands his profit margins, reinvests strategically, and treats Dixon Car Wash as the scalable enterprise it is becoming.

His entrepreneurial spark traces back to helping his mother wash cars at home - small experiences that planted the seed. His parents, who long encouraged him to take his work seriously, now witness those lessons in action. Zenzele gave that spark structure and direction.

Since joining Zenzele, Al-Hakeem keeps detailed records of all income and expenses, understands his business costs and profit margins, plans with intention, and consistently reinvests for growth. He no longer sees Dixon Car Wash as just a hustle, but as a platform with real potential and a clear future.

Perhaps the most powerful change is in how Al-Hakeem sees himself. He has grown into a confident young entrepreneur - someone who plans for the future, saves with intention, and is building not just a business, but a bigger vision for his life.

Sondela Beauty Studio

At just 21 years old, Thandiswa has turned her passion into a thriving beauty business through the Zenzele Youth Project. Offering weave installations, eyelash extensions, and fashion accessories to her local community, Thandiswa is building a sustainable livelihood and a brighter future.

When she joined Zenzele, Thandiswa had big dreams but few resources. With training, mentorship, and support from her mentor, Mr Hlophe, she gained the confidence and guidance to take her next steps.

Recently, she secured a small piece of land to build her own business space, a milestone made possible through her mentor's encouragement and practical assistance.

"Zenzele has shown me that I can make my dreams come true. Now, I'm not just working for myself, I'm helping my family and inspiring others too," says Thandiswa.

Her growing business now supports her household, and she proudly purchased a new bed for her grandmother - a simple act symbolising the hope and dignity restored in her family.

Thandiswa's story reflects the heart of the Zenzele Youth Project: empowering young people with the skills, confidence, and support to transform their lives and contribute meaningfully to their families and communities.

Our Home-Based ECD Project



In South Africa, 65% of children between the ages of 0 and 4 do not attend any form of preschool, crèche, or playgroup - and of those children, 82% are already falling significantly behind their core developmental milestones. The consequences of this gap are profound, not only for the individual children affected but for the country as a whole. It is this reality that drives Thandanani's commitment to parent-centred early childhood development (ECD), expressed through two interconnected strands of work: our Play Mat programme and our role as a founding partner in the Families4Children advocacy partnership.

The Play Mat Programme: Parents as First Teachers

The Play Mat programme is built on a simple but powerful insight: parents and caregivers are a child's first and most important teachers. Developed in partnership with partner NGOs, dlalanathi and Singakwenza, the programme works directly with caregivers to deepen their understanding of early childhood development, equip them with the knowledge and confidence to support their children's growth, and enable them to engage their children through intentional, play-based learning at home. Caregivers learn about developmental milestones, explore practical ways to stimulate their children's cognitive, language, and socio-emotional development, and discover that the most powerful early learning environment a child can have is an engaged, nurturing caregiver - not a classroom.

In 2025/26, [126](#) caregivers and [157](#) children participated in the Play Mat programme. Notably, [45](#) caregivers (36%) and [59](#) children (38%) came from families also participating in Thandanani's Family Strengthening Programme, reflecting the natural and important overlap between early childhood development and broader family well-being. For these families in particular, the Play Mat programme forms part of a more holistic package of support that addresses the multiple, interconnected challenges they face.

Families4Children: Advocating for Systemic Change

Reaching individual families is vital, but Thandanani recognises that meaningful change for the millions of South African children currently falling through the gaps requires systemic change at a policy level. This is why we are a founding partner in Families4Children (F4C) - an advocacy partnership between Thandanani, dlalanathi, and Singakwenza dedicated to placing parents and families at the centre of South Africa's ECD system.

Over the next three to four years, working alongside a growing network of civil society organisations, F4C will advocate within the ECD sector and to government for the integration and resourcing of parent-centred ECD programming - like the Play Mat programme - as a necessary and core component of national ECD policy and practice.

Looking Ahead

We believe that parent-centred ECD is not simply a programme approach - it is the most practical, cost-effective, and scalable means of ensuring that every South African child, regardless of where they are born or what resources their family has, is provided the opportunity to develop their full potential. The families we work with every day remind us of what is at stake: children who, with the right support at the right time, can thrive - and caregivers who, when equipped and empowered, become the most powerful force for change in their children's lives.



This is why we remain so deeply committed to both the Play Mat programme and the broader advocacy work of the Families4Children partnership. The two are inseparable: one provides the evidence, the stories, and the proof of concept; the other works to ensure that what we know works is adopted, resourced, and delivered at the scale that South Africa's children deserve.

Case Studies

Caregiver Reflection Driving Change

On 11 March, caregivers from Copesville, Dambuza, Nxamalala, Snathing, Upper Noshezi, and Willow participated in a Waste to Toys Workshop session focused on holistic early childhood development (ages 0–5). The session encouraged caregivers to reflect on their children's aspirations and the role of parental support in shaping cognitive and emotional growth.

A pivotal moment emerged when one caregiver shared her personal experience of being discouraged from pursuing her childhood dream of becoming a doctor. From as young as five, her ambitions were dismissed as unrealistic. Over time, this eroded her confidence and belief in her abilities. Although she completed matric, she did not achieve the results needed to pursue her goal, an outcome she attributes to a lack of encouragement rather than a lack of potential.

Through the session, she recognised that she had been unintentionally repeating this pattern with her own children by dismissing their dreams. This realisation marked a turning point. She expressed a clear commitment to change, choosing to listen, affirm, and actively support her children's aspirations.

From Secrecy to Support, A Journey of Connection

When Thandanani fieldworker Thulisile began working with a pregnant teen in her community, she quickly discovered the depth of the challenge ahead. The teen had concealed her pregnancy from both family and community, bound by the weight of tradition and fear of disapproval. Despite this isolation, she agreed to engage with Thulisile in private sessions through the *Ibhayi Lengane* home-visiting programme.

During one of their early sessions, focused on the mother as her child's first source of comfort and protection, Thulisile sensitively introduced the idea that, just as a mother shelters her child, a mother herself needs a circle of support. While she was careful to emphasise that family involvement was not compulsory, the message resonated deeply.

At their next visit, she arrived to find a close family member present. The teen explained that she had reflected on their conversation and made the courageous decision to disclose her pregnancy, first to a trusted relative, and then to her immediate family. Though the initial response was difficult, she no longer felt alone.

Subsequent sessions were attended by supportive family members, and the teen gave birth in December. She called Thulisile to express her heartfelt gratitude and to request that postnatal visits resume after three months, in keeping with the family's cultural tradition of welcoming visitors only once the baby is settled.

Thulisile's work demonstrates how skilled and sensitive fieldwork can gently bridge personal vulnerability and family connection, creating lasting support for both mother and child.

Special Project - Crèche Make-Over



Crèche Make-Over in Partnership with Epworth Girls High & Maritzburg College

Thandanani once again partnered with Epworth Girls High School and Maritzburg College for their annual Crèche Make-Over, a well-established special project.

The project mobilises learners and staff to physically transform crèches in historically disadvantaged communities in the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands, such as painting and decorating interior and exterior walls, repairing structures, donating resources, and personally engaging with the toddlers and teachers who use the facilities daily.

With boys and staff from Maritzburg College again joining forces with the learners and staff from Epworth, this year's project involved the make-over of both the Inqoba Pre-School and Machibisa Crèche in Dambuza.

The transformation of these facilities, from dull and dreary to colourful, vibrant and fun places for the more than 130 toddlers who regularly attend these crèches, was quite remarkable.

As always, we are extremely grateful to Epworth High and Maritzburg College - their learners, staff and numerous donors & sponsors, who made this incredible transformation possible.



Special Project - Sanitation Systems for Families



Eco-Sanitation Systems for Families in Partnership with Community Chest & Innisfree Trust

In 2025/26, Thandanani Children's Foundation, with support from the Pietermaritzburg Community Chest and InnisFree Trust, implemented a special sanitation initiative in the Upper Noshezi area of Pietermaritzburg in KwaZulu-Natal. The project replaced unsafe open pit latrines with eight state-of-the-art EaziSplit™ eco-sanitation systems across eight of Thandanani's households within the Family Strengthening Project.

Through this project:

- 16 children, along with 15 adults, across 8 households benefited from increased Health & Safety, as a result of the installation of hygienic, odour-free, enclosed flush toilets on their properties - reducing disease risk and fall hazards.
- They also benefited from increased Food Security through the establishment of integrated dual-zone vegetable gardens at every household, sustained by nutrient-rich urine diversion from the sanitation systems. In the process, they also learned about water conservation and basic food garden management.
- 6 local youth were employed for 2 weeks, giving them basic construction skills and experience.

In combination, this project addressed a double challenge faced by many of the families Thandanani works with – poor sanitation and food insecurity – and, in the process, strengthened both family well-being and caregiver capacity.

Caregiver Voices

Caregivers who have benefited from the sanitation project have voiced their gratitude over what they have received over and above the normal garden that all beneficiaries get. They have developed a skill where experiences and daily activities are shared amongst themselves and grow together.

To our funding partners: Pietermaritzburg Community Chest & InnisFree Trust

On behalf of the board, management, staff, and most importantly, the families and children involved, Thandanani Children's Foundation would like to extend its sincerest appreciation to you for generous support of this initiative.

Your investment has done far more than fund infrastructure. It has restored dignity, secured the health of the family members, and deepened the reach and impact of our Family Strengthening Programme – Thank You!

Provisional Income & Expenditure Report

Provisional Statement of Accounts - 1 April 2025 - 31 March 2026

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INCOME	R
OVC FAMILY STRENGTHENING PROJECT	4,944,619
4Kids Fundraising Income (Individual Donors)	57,028
Community Chest	50,000
Community Chest - Special Project (Sanitation Installations)	320,480
Department of Social Development	400,569
Epworth School for Girls	14,000
IQRAA Trust	60,000
Isibuko Development Planners	120,000
Kindermissionswerk (Die Sternsinger)	396,620
Kindernothilfe	2,345,802
NSYMS Pty Ltd	350,000
Old Mutual Staff Giving & Foundation Funds	621,556
Small Corporate & General Donors	41,565
Special Project - Matthew Willman Photography	32,000
Starfish Greathearts Foundation	135,000
ZENZELE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROJECT	1,355,402
Terre Des Hommes Schweiz	1,355,402
HOME-BASED ECD PROJECT	1,020,980
BMZ	1,020,980
INVESTMENT AND OTHER INCOME	454,393
Investment Income	251,587
Sundry Income	32,000
VAT Refund	170,806
TOTAL INCOME	7,775,394

EXPENDITURE	R
FAMILY STRENGTHENING PROJECT	5,429,704
Staffing (Director)	557,903
Staffing (Finance & Admin Manager)	292,651
Staffing (Programme Manager)	156,580
Staffing (Database Administrator)	157,981
Staffing (Sponsorship Administrator / Receptionist)	108,123
Staffing (Project Coordinator)	296,337
Staffing (Social Workers)	425,574
Staffing (FS Facilitators)	440,354
Staffing (SHG Facilitator)	216,768
Staffing (FG Facilitator)	218,912
Staffing (Driver)	79,609
Staffing (Snr SHG Fieldworker)	75,234
Staffing (FS Fieldworkers)	715,237
Material Well-Being (FG Development)	300,233
Material Well-being: Emergency Relief Fund	1,735
Material Well-being: Self-Help Groups	13,170
Material Well-Being (Full Birth Certificates)	275
Cognitive Well-Being & Development (School Uniforms)	38,231
Emotional Well-Being (Household Memory Work)	12,097
Emotional Well-Being (Life Skills)	12,287
Emotional Well-Being (Caregiver Support)	3,525
Emotional Well-Being (Children's Support)	8,977
Physical Well-Being (Health Service Supplies)	2,537
Caregiver/Child Travel Refunds & Subsidies	639
Sunfield Home	89,205
Special Projects (School Makeover)	14,000
Sanitation Installations (Special Project - Community Chest)	262,200
Buildings & Equipment	231,033
IT & Telecommunications	174,927
Database Development & Management	40,800
General Office Administration	58,696

Audit (Full Organisational)	37,724
Audit (KMW Specific)	35,000
Finance & Accounting Charges	31,487
Transport (Vehicle Fuel & Maintenance)	174,144
Staff Development	53,413
Marketing & Fundraising	92,106

ZENZELE YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROJECT	1,355,402
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ME Start-Up Capital	187,381
Venue Hire Events	8,070
Marketing Business Stakeholder Engagement	2,443
Mentor Gratuity	33,390
Participant Travel	9,640
Retail Items - Selling Exercise	10,862
Camps (Accommodation & Meals)	41,969
Catering	20,367
Markets: Marketing & Logistics	14,320
Zenzele International Youth Network (IYN)	21,931
Staffing (Director)	165,455
Staffing (Finance Manager)	88,218
Staffing (Receptionist/Administrator)	10,302
Staffing (M&E Coordinator)	22,437
Staffing (Programme Manager)	74,673
Staffing (Driver)	8,721
Staffing (Youth Facilitators)	418,832
Staffing) Zenzele Interns	45,000
Building & Equipment	74,038
IT & Telecommunication	45,809
General Office Administration	16,408
Auditing	12,700
Finance & Accounting Charges	8,859
Transport (Fuel & Maintenance)	13,581

HOME-BASED ECD PROJECT	1,020,980
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Venue Hire	8,400
Catering	42,915
PlayMats & Stationery	21,650
Travel Refunds (Caregivers)	27,798
Advocacy- TCF Participation	10,180
Staffing (Project Coordinator)	218,597

Staffing (Senior ECD Fieldworker)	107,073
Staffing (ECD Fieldworkers)	163,741
Staffing (Director)	95,544
Staffing (Programme Manager / Advocacy Representative)	117,035
Staffing (Finance Manager)	53,994
Staffing (Finance Assistant)	14,512
Staffing (Database Administrator)	24,021
Buildings & Equipment Maintenance	48,313
IT & Telecommunication	21,384
Database Development & Management	16,132
General Office Administration	11,735
Auditing	6,102
Finance & Accounting Charges	4,852
Transport (Fuel)	4,727
Transport (Vehicle Maintenance)	2,274

TOTAL EXPENDITURE:	7,806,085
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PROJECTED ORGANISATIONAL SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	
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OVC Family Strengthening Project Surplus/(Deficit)	-485,085
Zenzele Youth Entrepreneurship Development Project Surplus/(Deficit)	0
Home-Based ECD Project Surplus/(Deficit)	0
Investment And Other Income (Non-Contractual)	283,587
VAT Refund	170,806
NETT SURPLUS/(DEFICIT):	-30,691

Note: The expenditure reflected above is inclusive of VAT

Friends of Thandanani – Fundraising Update



From the
USA to SA



Our inaugural fundraising efforts in the United States have laid an encouraging foundation for what we believe will become a vital and growing source of support for Thandanani's work.

A highlight of this early phase was a meaningful partnership with renowned South African photographer [Matthew Willman](#), whose extraordinary images have long captured the soul of our country and its people. Matthew generously made a collection of his works available for sale in the US, with up to 60% of all proceeds donated directly to Friends of Thandanani. Through this initiative, we raised over **\$10,000** (approximately R165,000) - funds now being deployed as seed funding to drive our 2026 fundraising efforts.

Equally significant has been the generosity of those who helped establish FoT's legal and operational foundations. Leading US law firm [Holland & Knight](#) LLP facilitated the formal registration of Friends of Thandanani as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organisation (EIN: 99-3888888) entirely on a pro-bono basis - a contribution whose value extends far beyond the considerable legal fees involved. Founding Board Member [Bob Haswell](#) also personally assisted with the costs of opening our US bank account and submitting our first Annual Report Filings in Delaware. We are deeply grateful to both Holland & Knight and Bob for helping us take these vital first steps.

Friends of Thandanani is now fully equipped to receive donations directly through our US website, www.us-4kids.com. Our fundraising platform of choice is [Zeffy](#), which uses [Stripe](#) - one of the world's most trusted and secure global payment gateways - to process all transactions. Critically, Zeffy's unique model means that 100% of **every dollar donated reaches Friends of Thandanani**, with no platform or transaction fees deducted whatsoever.

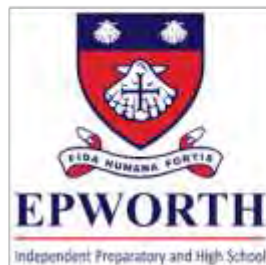
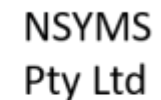
Giving is simple, quick, and completely secure - donors can contribute once-off or set up a recurring monthly gift in just a few clicks, and a full tax receipt is issued automatically upon payment. **All donations are 100% tax-deductible** for US taxpayers. Since going live on Zeffy at the start of 2026, we have already raised a further **\$525** - an early but genuinely encouraging result, made all the more pleasing by the fact that the majority comprises recurring monthly contributions. Recurring giving is the lifeblood of any sustainable non-profit, and the fact that donors are already choosing this option speaks volumes about the trust our early supporters have placed in us.

Looking ahead, several exciting fundraising campaigns are currently in the planning stages. For rugby enthusiasts, we are exploring the possibility of offering a limited number of tickets to the [Springboks vs the All Blacks](#) at M&T Bank Stadium in Baltimore, Maryland, on Saturday, 12 September 2026 - the fourth and final test of the celebrated "[Rugby's Greatest Rivalry](#)" touring series. The opportunity to witness two of the sport's greatest nations compete on American soil promises to be truly unforgettable.

We are also hoping to extend our partnership with [Matthew Willman](#) through a series of exclusive fireside evenings at which Matthew will showcase iconic imagery and share the stories behind each piece in his uniquely compelling style. As before, up to 60% of proceeds from works sold at these events will be donated directly to Friends of Thandanani - making attendance both a memorable cultural experience and a meaningful act of giving.

Follow us on Facebook for updates on all of this and more: [@FriendsOfThandanani](#)

Current Donors & Supporters



Organisational Details

As a Non-Profit Company, Thandanani is governed by an independent Board of Directors.

Thandanani's current Board comprises:

Diane Carson	Chairperson	Registered Nurse & Community Clinic Manager
Moiria Filmer	Deputy Chair	Educator
Lisa Strydom	Treasurer/ Secretary	Social Worker & NGO Manager
Sipho Radebe	Director	Retired Agricultural Professional & Small Business Owner
Asande Zuma	Director	Self-Employed
Malusi Khanyile	Director	Community Works Programme Site Administrator

Thandanani's current staff comprises:

Management & Administration:

1. Duncan Andrew	Director
2. Richard Moodley	Finance Manager
3. Celani Cwera	Programme Coordinator
4. Sthe Ngubane	Database Administrator
5. Philisiwe Mdunde	Receptionist & Sponsorship Administrator

Programme Staff:

6. Thokozo Ncobe	FS Project Coordinator
7. Ntombiyenkosi Nzimande	Family Strengthening Facilitator
8. Busisiwe Madonda	Family Strengthening Facilitator
9. Bheki Dladla	Self-help Group Facilitator
10. Thabani Ndlovu	Food Garden Facilitator
11. Thandani Gumede	Social Worker
12. Ziphora Ngubeni	Social Worker
13. Nonhlonipho Mnguni	ECD Project Coordinator
14. Ngibonile Ziqubu	Snr ECD Fieldworker
15. Ndumiso Malunga	Zenzele Youth Facilitator
16. Samukelisiwe Q Ndlovu	Zenzele Youth Facilitator
17. Nicholas Nene	Driver

18. Barbara Maningi Buthelezi	ECD Fieldworker
19. Eunice Thoko Tshoba	ECD Fieldworker
20. Nompumelelo Spencer	ECD Fieldworker
21. Sanelisiwe Memela	ECD Fieldworker
22. Thubelihle Nxele	ECD Fieldworker
23. Thulisile Zuma	ECD Fieldworker
24. Nokwazi Mary-Jane Ntuli	Food Garden Fieldworker
25. Nombulelo Jescah Methethwa	Food Garden Fieldworker
26. Nondumiso Fortunate Gcumisa	Food Garden Fieldworker
27. Sanisha Nozombile	Food Garden Fieldworker
28. Sipiwe Petros Dlamini	Food Garden Fieldworker
29. Thabile Gwala	Food Garden Fieldworker
30. Londeka Gwala	Home Care Fieldworker
31. Mandisa Wendy Moloi	Home Care Fieldworker
32. Nompumelelo Philisiwe Chiya	Home Care Fieldworker
33. Nomthandazo Dlamini	Home Care Fieldworker
34. Nonhlanhla Mwel	Home Care Fieldworker
35. Nonkululeko Happiness Ngcobo	Home Care Fieldworker
36. Nontokozo Dlamini	Home Care Fieldworker
37. Nosamkelo Nkala	Home Care Fieldworker
38. Sesethu Jozana	Home Care Fieldworker
39. Sibongile Duma	Home Care Fieldworker
40. Siboniso Mnikathi	Home Care Fieldworker
41. Sithabile Nxele	Home Care Fieldworker
42. Smangele Lydia Zondi	Home Care Fieldworker
43. Thandazile Beauty Goge	Home Care Fieldworker
44. Thembeke Happiness Dlamini (Mlaba)	Home Care Fieldworker
45. Wendy Phungula	Home Care Fieldworker
46. Lungile Precious Mthethwa	SHG Fieldworker
47. Nokubonga Gwala	SHG Fieldworker
48. Nomusa Nkala	SHG Fieldworker
49. Philile Cynthia Hadebe	SHG Fieldworker
50. Zinhle Thabsile Sokhela	SHG Fieldworker
51. Sindiswa Monica Sibisi	SHG Fieldworker

Auditors:

Colenbrander Chartered Accountants (SA) Registered Auditors
 Phone: 27 (0) 33 343 0800
 Fax: 27 (0) 33 343 0811
 Postal Address: PO Box 456, Hilton, 3245
 Physical Address: 28 Hilton Avenue, Hilton, 3245
 Email: claire@colenbrander.co.za

Banking Details:

Thandanani Children's Foundation
 Standard Bank, 14 Chatterton Road
 Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, 3201
 Account Type: Current Account
 Account Number 052131327
 Branch Code 05-75-25
 Swift Code SBZAJJ
 Bank Phone Number: +27 860 101 341

Contact Person:

Duncan Andrew (Director)	Email: duncan@thandanani.org.za	Phone: +27 (0)33 3451857
Thandanani House	Office Suite 30	Fax: +27 (0)86 6143525
46 Langalibalele Street	Private Bag X9118	Web: www.thandanani.org.za
Pietermaritzburg	Pietermaritzburg	Email: reception@thandanani.org.za
3201	3200	

Registration Details:

Non-Profit Organisation:	006-136NPO	SARS P.A.Y.E:	7090709751
Section 21 Company:	2002/005186/08	SARS UIF:	U090709751
Section 18A PBO:	930003417	VAT Registration:	4360260691