

Transitioning from Residential Care to Family Care in South Africa

**FAITH
ACTION
INITIATIVE**



Beautiful Gate: CASE STUDY

Communicating Change with Donors

Engaging with key stakeholders is an essential part of any transition and must be handled with tact and wisdom. Located in South Africa, the organization Beautiful Gate began its ministry to protect street children and later grew to provide residential programs for children in need. Yet, as they began to learn more about the needs of children in families, they decided to shift away from residential care and expand their services to include the families of the children they served.

As Beautiful Gate broadened and prioritized the role of families, they communicated family strengthening as a key program to donors so they could see its value. Through sharing the successes of the program and their motivation for growing

it, a majority of their donors were able to make the journey toward reunification and family-based care alongside the organization.

As they shifted their communications, they also shifted their fundraising model - from sponsoring a child

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in the children's home to supporting family reunification. Initially, this was done by explaining to donors that they were no longer sponsoring a child, but rather given the opportunity to sponsor a bed. Beautiful Gate explained to donors that instead of sponsoring a child they



could instead sponsor the bed that was a safe place for a child while the organization worked to locate the family and safely reunite them.

The goal of gradually shifting communications was to help donors understand that their sponsorship was making a greater impact in the child's life through providing services to children and families. Donors went from being encouraged to sponsor a child, to sponsoring a bed, to then sponsoring a family receiving services. To help donors continue to feel connected to their work, Beautiful Gate shared stories of individual impact. For example, they shared the story of a grandmother struggling to care for her three grandchildren and the staff member who visited every day because of support for the program.

Eventually, Beautiful Gate called their sponsorship program the “Hope Club” – a community of development-minded supporters who donate monthly to see the community supported and transformed. Members of the Hope Club receive stories bi-monthly that give donors a picture of the positive changes happening because of their support. The story might be of a child who recently graduated from one of Beautiful Gate’s high school programs or a mother sharing how she overcame adversity with support from Beautiful Gate. Key to each newsletter is a tie-in to the bigger picture of what Beautiful Gate is trying to shift within the nation through help from the donor. For example, shifting education in the country to reduce student drop-outs and increase college acceptance, graduation, and employment.

Communications to donors were designed to encourage them to seek answers to key questions such as, What am I trying to shift in South Africa when I donate? Am I investing wisely? Dr. Stannard explained that he wanted to see donors’ concern shift toward saying, “I don’t want to just give a child money, I want to see something changing in their life and I want to see something changing in South Africa.” He continues, “Helping people see that big picture is important. [As a donor] it takes the focus away from myself and my own somewhat egotistical emotional need to be a savior in this situation and to actually invest in the improvement of a particular community, which is actually good for me, too.”

**“HELPING PEOPLE SEE THAT
BIG PICTURE IS IMPORTANT.”**

INTERNATIONAL DONOR STORY ►►

One of Beautiful Gate’s funders was an international church foundation formed to fund children’s homes. With Beautiful Gate’s transition, this funding was no longer likely. When a representative of the foundation came to visit, Dr. Stannard was frank. “I understand where you’re coming from, but there are ways of caring for children nowadays that are better than children’s homes. Improving the facilities within their communities where they can find safety and support, and recreation and services, et cetera, is of great worth in caring for children.”

Unexpectedly, the foundation decided to continue their partnership – funding projects to serve families and strengthen the community. Today Stannard can see they are reconsidering their approach to funding children’s homes. Yet he cautioned, “But you do run a risk, whether you face outright rejection or unhappiness from your donors or stakeholders, you have to be prepared to know what you’re trying to achieve and understand the basis for that. You have to believe it.”



Read the full story of Beautiful Gate’s transition to family-based care [HERE](#).