

## **2024 Combined Annual Reports of the Hillcrest Advice Bureau and Bursary Fund**

## Hillcrest Advice Bureau and Bursary Fund

*A Better South Africa, One Degree At A Time...*



*Figure 1 The CAO Project is reaching thousands of G9's and G12's, enabling personality and ability appropriate tertiary education applications with government student funding, reducing the demand within the Tertiary Fund and giving hope, purpose and inspiration*



# Hillcrest Advice Bureau and Bursary Fund

*A Better South Africa, One Degree At A Time...*



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# Hillcrest Advice Bureau and Bursary Fund

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Figure 2 Thanks To Schools Fund

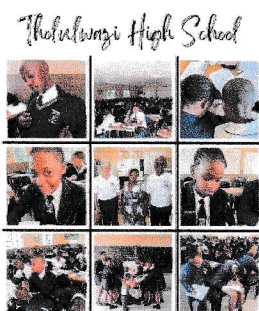


Figure 3 CAO Project Grade 12 Workshop



Figure 4 Advice Bureau Food Parcel Handover



Figure 5 Tertiary Fund Drop In

## Chairperson's Summary Report For 2024

Income from donations was **DOWN 8%**

Total Expenditure was **DOWN 8.5%**

Tertiary Fund Expenditure was **DOWN R259000**

**33 (down 25%) Academic & Vocational Tertiary Students** assisted, achieving a **97% pass rate**

**375 School Children** in 17 schools assisted with uniform

**40 Food Parcels** issued to 12 Advice Bureau Families

**283 (up 155%) Clients** helped by Advice Bureau

**84 (up 14%) 'High Flyer' Matriculants** helped by the **CAO Project** to access NSFAS funded tertiary education places

**820 (up 30%) Matriculants** benefitted from **CAO Personality Type & Course Choice workshops**

**1379 (up 25%) Grade 9's** from 9 schools benefitted from the **CAO Subject Choice workshop**

**Branding & Marketing** have increased community awareness

**Admin Costs** remain **4%** of expenditure

### WE NEED...

- 2<sup>nd</sup> hand laptops which we can have refurbished
- 2<sup>nd</sup> hand smartphones
- A post graduate level volunteer to run the Alumni programme
- A wider donor base – less reliance on a few key donors

Wonderful things have been happening with our work and it's all down to our fantastic team!

In the CAO Project Ann's focus and direction combined with her attention to detail and emphasis on training all volunteers working, even just for an hour, within CAO Project workshops is leading to purpose, hope and inspiration for thousands of G9's and G12's, enabling personality and ability appropriate tertiary education applications with government student funding, reducing the demand within the Tertiary Fund.

The Tertiary Fund graduates from 2024 are now all employed or doing further study – a credit to Nicky who advises, nurtures, grows, reprimands and soothes them dependent on their situation. Ann's detailed knowledge of the tertiary education system enables us to give concrete advice, challenge institutions and to advocate on student's behalf when necessary. Lwazi's workshops give lifeskill training leading to students improving how they come across within a business environment.



## Hillcrest Advice Bureau and Bursary Fund

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*Figure 6 HABandBF Team Christmas 2024:*

*L to R: Top Row: Siyabonga Sishi, Nokuthula Sokhela, Ann Braine, Winnie Mtakwende, Marijke Merson, Tanya Harvey, Rosemary Dickinson, Thabile Mbambo, Caitlyn DeBere*

*Bottom Row: Heather Maybery, Nicky Sibaya*

*Absent: Wiseman Mabaso, Zinhle Gasa*

The Schools' Fund is reaching more schools and more children with Caitlyn De Beer's network supporting Pass the Panties – Caitlyn speaks in privileged schools about the needs within quintile 1 to 3 schools. The school communities raise funds, donate underwear and join in with the deliveries, helping disadvantaged children put on their new uniforms and make sure the fit is good and generous for growth; often playing and making friends in the process! Rosemary, Caitlyn's grandmother, has been doing this work for 22 years now – if you look closely in the School Fund report you'll see a photo of Gogo Rose with Mrs Khumalo holding a picture of themselves taken 20 years ago! These are the sort of lasting partnerships the team at HABandBF makes.

Demand for help from the Advice Bureau is increasing exponentially – since Nokuthula started to accompany clients to SASSA, Home Affairs and other institutions the speed of completing cases has increased as has the success rate. Word has spread and there is huge demand from the elderly and disabled for help in obtaining their smart ID's. In 2024 58 children at Empilweni Primary did not have birth certificates. A huge problem for the school, the care giver and the child. These are complicated cases and can take many months to solve. As we all know, without an ID a person is not a recognised citizen – and to have an ID it is first necessary to have a birth certificate.

### **Finance**

Income and expenditure were both down around 8%. We have delivered more services to more beneficiaries for less money thanks to the CAO project leading to a reduced demand for Tertiary Fund support. We do need to build up our reserves to R300,000 which represents 4 months' expenditure. To do this we need increased income from donations, ideally through Lotto and Corporates (with BBBEE points and tax incentive benefits).

### **Team Members**

Our team expanded in 2024 with the addition of Laura Chesterton who does the book-keeping on Xero and Siyabonga Sishi who volunteers with the Tertiary Fund and the CAO Project. We held a successful recruitment drive, thanks to our increased reach and

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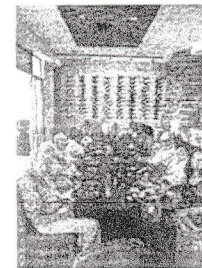
exposure through Facebook and Instagram, and appointed 3 stipended part time staff members to start in January 2025.

### Thanks

Thanks to our team of **volunteers** for donations of most importantly their time, Thank You gifts, their petrol, airtime, printer ink and paper, to **volunteers' families** for their support and patience when HABandBF work takes priority, to **Netelligent Consulting** email service providers for their discount, to **Holy Trinity Anglican Church** and the **African Gospel Church** for donating space and facilities.

Thanks especially to the Trusts, Charities, Corporates and individuals who donate the money, second hand laptops and smartphones that we use to do our work, helping to make 'A Better South Africa, One Degree At A Time...'

Thanks and Happy Retirement to Winnie Mtakwende who completed her 42 years with HABandBF in December! Winnie's Senior Paralegal role has been filled by her previous Paralegal Assistant, Nokuthula Sokhela. Nomalungela Ntobela will be joining the Advice Bureau team in January.



Tanya Harvey 12<sup>th</sup> May 2025

Figure 7 Winnie's retirement brunch with team members past and present - Peter Evennett (front left) was one of HABandBF original Trustees!

### Hillcrest Advice Bureau and Bursary Fund Donations Received During 2024

	Financial Donors	Non Financial Donors
January	Solon School Fund Anonymous Individual	Holy Trinity Anglican Church Space, storage, photocopying, use of telephones African Gospel Church Space
February	Comburs Three Anon Individuals Coker Family Trust Solon Tertiary & CAO Project	Kearney College Venue for meetings, Manzi Zungu's time Volunteers Time, petrol, airtime, printing, wisdom, advice Netelligence Consulting Email hosting discount Diapante Allowing use of their VirginGiving platform for UK based sponsorship funding and matched giving Cellphone Sue Keal 2 tablets Angela J Knock
March	Stanley Raiff Trust for School Fund Anon	
April	Anon Beane Foundation Greenacre Foundation SPAR	
May	Two Anon individuals	
June	Caitlyn De Beer Network for Nokuthula Comburs	
July	Rensden Trust Solon Schools Fund 2/2 Solon Tertiary & CAO 2/2	
August		
September	Kobus Hamilton Trust	
October	Key Portfolio	
November	Curro	
December	Giving Tuesday Zapper Fulton Trust Bordeaux Village R Paget Will Trust Molly Reynolds Trust Varsity College	



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<b>October</b>	Key Pinetown	
<b>November</b>	Curro	
<b>December</b>	Giving Tuesday Zapper Fulton Trust Bordeaux Village R Paget Will Trust Molly Reynolds Trust Varsity College	

## Report of the Tertiary Fund For 2024

### Highlights:

- **12 Students Graduated in 2024**, 9 of whom are employed, 2 doing further studies and 1 actively job seeking
- **Numbers Reducing** as CAO Project Beneficiaries receive full NSFAS
- Links made to **Alumni**
- Students Benefitted from lifeskill training workshops & created their 'HABandBF family' support network

### Alumni

We now have a spreadsheet of information about our alumni since 2010. Unfortunately earlier records were disposed of in error. Going forwards we hope that we will find a suitably qualified person to take on the role of Alumni liaison officer.

Here is a sample of the activities of some of the HABandBF Alumni:

- **Mandlakhe Hadebe** B. Pharm 2024 UKZN is working South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC) as a pharmacist in manufacturing
- **Awande Myeza** Project Management Mancosa 2024 is working as a Quantity Surveyor in Port Edward
- **Thulasizwe Tenza** B.Ed. Hons UKZN 2024 is teaching at Sinamanda Secondary School, Amanzimtoti
- **Nomfundo Mthembu** (Mbokasi) LLB UKZN 2020 now doing her PhD and employed as a lecturer in Law at UKZN. Also became one of our Governing Body Members in 2024!

### 2024 Students News



Figure 8 CV & Interview Skills Workshop Dec 2024

We supported 33 students in their studies, 12 of whom graduated with 7 of these employed, 2 in further education and 3 still job seeking. We also helped 18 graduates with transport, data, accommodation and relocation towards job seeking, 17 are employed and 1 is studying Masters.

Workshops held included a CV and Interview Training workshop for our unemployed graduates and final year students and a Budgeting and Communication Workshop for all students, particularly focussing on training new students in the correct way to communicate with the organisation and

both how to budget and how to live on a budget. These two workshops were facilitated by

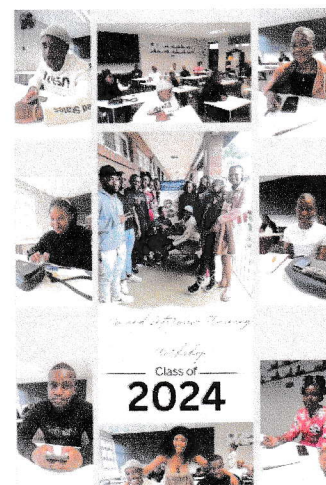


Figure 9 CV & Interview Workshop attendees



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Lwazi Kleinbooi assisted by Nicky Sibaya.

A selection of our students advocated on behalf of HABandBF at the Giving Tuesday event at Richdens Mall in Hillcrest. 25 students attended Key Truck and Car Hire for a tour of the facility and a questions and answers session with Matthew Holmes, Director, who then presented a cheque to the organisation.

Students really benefit from all of these events – learning key behaviours and skills which are difficult to teach but easily absorbed. They also give the students to network between themselves and creating personal links for support and advice, becoming an HAB family.



*Figure 10 Tertiary Fund Drop In: Team Members interviewing A New Applicant*

### **Volunteers**

We absolutely could not function without our team of volunteers. Sadly for us but happily for the bright, creative and inspirational Dudu Msimanga she joined the Hillcrest Aids Centre Trust in August. We see her there regularly through our collaboration with HACT. Siyabonga Sishi joined the team as a volunteer in September.

### **Thanks**

Thank you to all the team members for their steadfast support and dedication and to the donors who persist in providing funding during these challenging financial times

Nicky Sibaya 8<sup>th</sup> May 2025

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## Hillcrest Advice Bureau And Bursary Fund

### Thirty Three 2024 Students, Records of Studies

#### Qualifications Studied For:

#### SIX Postgraduate Degrees/Degree Equivalents In:

MSc Pharmacy	1	Masters in Medical Law	1
Post Grad Dip in Finance, Banking and Investment Management	1	BeD Honors	1
Masters of Commerce, Finance Banking & Investment Management 1/1 June	1	Project Management 2/1	1

#### SIXTEEN Degrees/Degree Equivalents In:

B.Ed.	2	BSc Pharmacy	1
LLB	3	MBCHB	2
B Com Accounting	2	B Soc. Sc Government, Business & Ethics	1
BSc Civil Engineering	1	B. Social Work	1
BA Development Studies	1	B.Sc Electrical Engineering	1
BSc. Mechanical Engineering	1		

#### TEN Diplomas and ONE Certificate In:

Dip Drama	1	Dip Buisness Admin	1
Dip Security Management	1	Dip Civil Engineering	1
Dip Office Administration	1	Dip Electrical Engineering	1
Dip Fashion	1	Dip Tourism	1
Dip Clothing Management	1	Dip Management Accounting	1
Fork Lift Certificate	1		

### EIGHTEEN 2023 Graduates Assisted in Job Seeking

(A further TWO went into further education, SEVENTEEN are in a Career)

B Com Financial Accounting	2	B PPL	1
Masters CHEMISTRY & CHEMICAL TECHNOLOGY	1	Project Management	2
Chartership in Accounting CTA Level 1/1	1	MASTERS MEDICAL MICROBIOLOGY Awaiting Result	1
Home Based Carer, Office Admin, Health Promotions Officer	2	B.Ed.	2
B.Ed. Honours	1	Dip Home Based Care	1
Agriculture	1	DIPLOMA ORP AGRiculture	1
Dip. GRAPHIC DESIGN	1	MSc Medical Pharmacology	1
Advanced DIPLOMA MECHANICAL ENGINEERING	1	HONS Psychology HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES	1

### TWELVE Students Graduated in 2024

(ONE with 3 different diplomas\*)

Chartership in Accounting CTA Level 1	1	Masters Medical Microbiology	1
Civil Engineering Project Management	2	Masters CHEMISTRY & CHEMICAL TECHNOLOGY	1
MSc Medical Pharmacology	1	HONS Psychology HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES	1
B.Ed.	3	BA LAW, PHILOSOPHY AND POLITICS	1
B. Com	2	Advanced DIPLOMA MECHANICAL ENGINEERING	1
Dip. GRAPHIC DESIGN	1	Dip Office Admin	1
Dip. Agriculture	1	Dip Health Promotion	2
		Dip Home Based Carer	1

#### Institutions:

#### THIRTY SIX At Universities

DUT	2	<u>TWO At FET</u>	
MUT	2	Elengeni	2
UNISA	8	<u>FIVE At Private Colleges</u>	
UNIZULU	1	Abafundi	1
UKZN	21	Mancosa	3
VUT	1	Creative Arts College	1

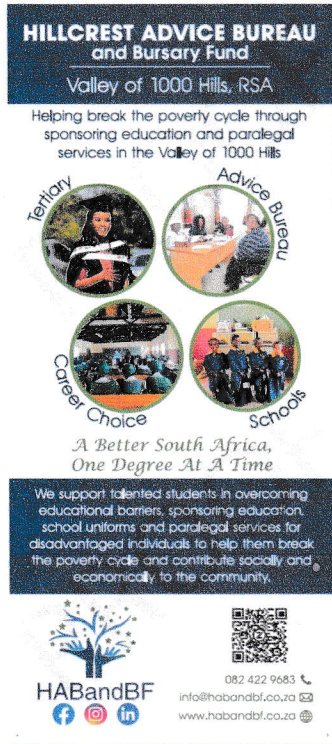


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## Marketing and Social Media Annual Report For 2024



2024 will be remembered as the year that HAB stepped out into the world of social media, albeit falteringly at times. Dudu's focus and content creation skill set within this sub-committee has been missed since she left HABandBF in August. We would welcome a new volunteer to take a lead within this portfolio.

The shirts and banners purchased with the LEH grant have proved an excellent investment – the team are now easily recognizable, and we have seen several people taking photos of the banner when it has been on display outside the Tertiary Fund Drop In. More banners and shirts are planned for 2025, so that no activity needs to be incognito.

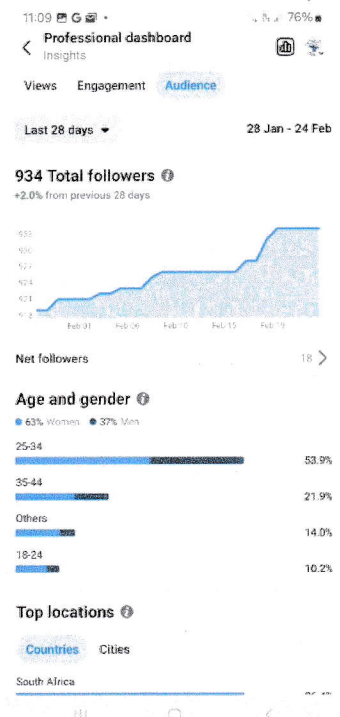
Facebook has been the real success story – there were 16 posts made between January and June, and 28 posts between July and December. We paid to boost three posts, and those three alone reached a total of 72 000 Facebook accounts. Follower numbers started at a bit over 700 and gained 139 during the year. Writing this report in May 2025 we now have 1021 followers, without paying for any additional boosting, and the

number is growing with every new post.

The majority of our new followers are local, many of them living in the Valley of 1000 Hills. One of our new volunteers approached us after finding us on Facebook, and social media advertising helped us to recruit a good pool of candidates for the three stipended posts advertised in November. We are still some way off being able to monetise our Facebook content, and have not had much success with a Back-a-Buddy campaign, but overall we are definitely making progress.

By contrast, our Instagram account has only 73 followers, and we have still not managed to synchronise it to our Facebook page which would enable a post on one to appear automatically on the other. This is a pity, because Instagram is preferred over Facebook by many of our younger beneficiaries.

Our Linked In page has only 39 followers although we do encourage our tertiary students and graduates to follow it. There was one post on Linked In last year, liked by one person, so we definitely need to focus more on that.

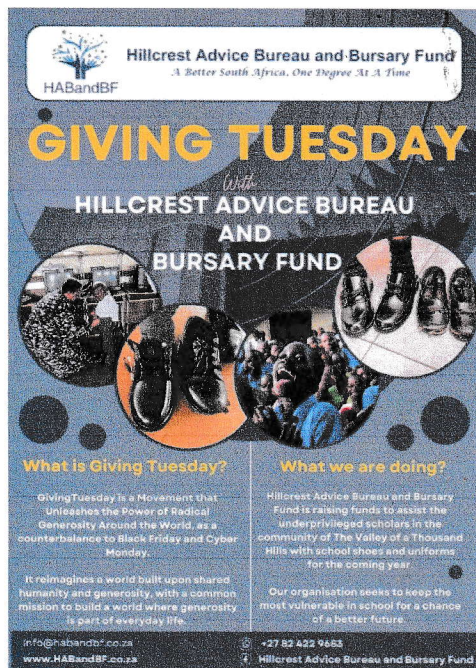


# Hillcrest Advice Bureau and Bursary Fund

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We produced Newsletters in June, September and November during 2024. These were emailed to those who have requested to be on the mailing list (including the new names collected on Giving Tuesday the previous November), and posted on the Facebook page. The November newsletter focused on ways in which people could help, and we printed hard copies for distribution on Giving Tuesday on 3 December.



As in 2023, our main outreach in Hillcrest was on Giving Tuesday. Once again Richdens generously allowed us to set up a table. We collected R3 192 towards school uniforms and signed up six people who were interested in further involvement. After taking expenses (printing, and travel and lunch for student volunteers etc.) into consideration, the profit was not great but the amount of exposure we received justified the effort.

Ann Braine May 2025

*Ann Braine*



## CAO Project Annual Report For 2024



*Figure 11 Montage of CAO Term 2 Workshop & Thabela High Fliers who have been supported with the R250 CAO Application Fee for the following year's NSFAS funded tertiary education*

As always, the cycle began with the collection of Matric results and registration data from the 74 Matrics who had been assisted in 2023. The 46% increase in numbers without a corresponding increase in volunteers available to work 'behind-the-scenes' made it impossible to follow up individually those who failed to respond to requests sent out on the various WhatsApp groups, as the new cycle of workshops began in early February, coinciding with the peak period of university registrations. Priority was given to responding to queries from those who were experiencing challenges, including some supported in earlier years. The most common challenge was with accommodation – aspirant students who were approved for NSFAS had no problem registering but several asked us to assist with rental deposits or money for food during the first few weeks while waiting for NSFAS funding to be released. One student approached HAB for payment of fees for a Bridging Course at Mangosuthu University of Technology which did not qualify for NSFAS funding. She was given a loan, passed the Bridging Course and was accepted for the Diploma programme. Two of our 2022 Matrics finally found study places for second semester 2024, and we were able to provide support to ensure they got off to a good start.

## Hillcrest Advice Bureau and Bursary Fund

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Hillcrest Advice Bureau and Bursary Fund invite you to a Workshop to help you plan your University and College applications and profitable use of a Gap Year

On Friday 8 March

In the Training Room and Computer Centre

At Hillcrest Aids Centre,

26 Old Main Road, Hillcrest

From 09:00 until 13:00

Places are limited – contact Ann now to book yours

We ran a Gap Year Workshop for those who found themselves uncertain what to do next. This was attended by 10 of our supported Matrics and 8 others who had approached us independently. We provided advice on making good use of the gap year, helped them identify and apply for appropriate programmes and signed them up with the Bridging Gaps programme for possible work opportunities.

From February onwards we were busy with Matric workshops. Our workshops are generally well received in schools. We entered into a partnership with the Hillcrest Aids Centre Trust (HACT) which added two schools to our list, Tholulwazi, in Lower Molweni, and Siphesihle in Fredville. HACT asked us to conduct additional workshops with their 35 Grade 9 Peer Educators, which allowed us to redesign our Grade 9 workshop to make it more relevant to the needs of that age group.

We held Grade 9 subject choice workshops in 8 schools in the third term. Parents are often present at these workshops, so we prepared a leaflet in English and isiZulu advising parents on how to assist their children in Grades 9 to 12. We also reworked the workshop to engage learners in more participation. The most rewarding of these workshops was held in the playground of Thabela on a bitterly cold day, where learners were able to work with their parents on their subject choices and many questions were asked.

The CAO Project reached a potential 820 Matrics and 1 379 Grade 9's, conducting three workshops in most of the 9 schools. We signed up 84 high fliers for application fee support. Outside the top 10 in each of eight schools there were very few with aggregates above 70%. (We did not include the ninth school because of lack of educator involvement.)

In response to a request from one school we put together a workshop to motivate Grade 11's, which we shall develop and may offer to other schools going forward. It included an experimental new module on identifying your preferred style of learning.

The team of facilitators grew in number during the year with the addition of an Intern and several new volunteers, not all of whom were consistently available. Dudu Msimanga produced some great material for social media, and the addition of younger volunteers encouraged greater interaction from the learners. Fresh faces are always appreciated, but fluctuations in the team of facilitators required some to present material they had not fully digested, and scheduling issues in some schools led to low turnout or repeated interruptions. We entered 2025 with a more stable team, including a part-time Assistant who is available to assist with the important work of preparation and monitoring.



## Hillcrest Advice Bureau and Bursary Fund

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The chart below gives the information we collect about our high fliers, but it is difficult to measure quantitatively the impact of the programme because some years have a greater number of highly talented learners than others and we do not get feedback from all Matrics.

For me, success is when one of our high fliers tells me they are now studying and would not have achieved it without our help. We cannot tell how many make better and more successful applications because of what they learnt in our workshops.

	2024	2023	2022	2021
Number signed up	84	73	50	40
Receiving SASSA Grants (needy and under 18)	65	56	48	Not asked
60% aggregate or more in school results (% of total)	56 66%	59 80%	43 86%	30 75%
Matric results received (% of total)	65 77%	33 43%	33 66%	34 85%
Bachelor passes (% of results received)	61 94%	33 100%	27 82%	30 88%
3 or more distinctions	25	10	9	3
Registration data provided	37	23	13	23
Number assisted during year from emergency fund (excluding transport to Drop-Ins and Gap Year Workshop)	9	10	6	
Accepted on to Tertiary Fund		1	4	4

Ann Braine 14<sup>th</sup> May 2025

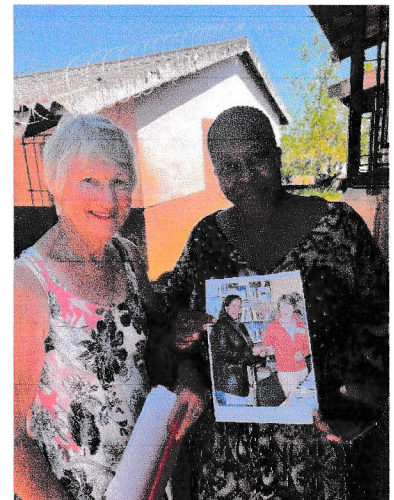
## Schools Fund Report on Activities During 2024



*Figure 12 The joy of giving & receiving a gift of dignity*

Our School project went really well in 2024. We found the year to go much smoother than 2023 had gone, with fewer disruptions experienced in schools. The greatest change that we had in 2024 was the addition of a School Fund assistant, Zinhle. Being a native language isiZulu speaker has made Zinhle's adjustment to our School Fund that much smoother as she has taken over the communication with the various schools that we work with as well as helping us with fittings during school visits. We are beyond grateful for Zinhle's help and are certain that it is the key factor in what made our year in the school fund run that much easier.

2024 was our year to broaden our project and we thus decided to do a few new schools that year in an attempt to spread the funds and potentially meet some new needy learners. We really enjoyed most of these new schools, as well as our faithful old ones, but in the same breath did have one unpleasant experience at a school that we will not be returning to. Based on our 2023 year, we chose not to do too many High Schools in 2024, as the Primary Schools in our valley tend to be better run schools, more controlled environments and overall simply more pleasant experiences for us as volunteers. We also decided to add underwear to each of our children's uniform packages, thanks to the Pass the Panties Initiative, and this proved such a blessing to the learners as many a child was without underwear on when we were trying to fit their uniforms.



2024 started off with us once again receiving a list from Hlengiwe Msome, in Ngcolosi. Her zeal for the children of her area is noteworthy and we delight in working with her each year. We then went on to visit 2 of our favourite schools, ones that we cannot help but reach out to year after year. The teams at Laboure Primary School (in Ngolosi) and Mnamatha Primary School (in KwaNyuswa) are organised, always ready for us and so very appreciative for our ongoing relationships with them respectively. After these 3 deliveries, we began our work with a few new schools. This meant that by the end of April 2024, we had already ordered and delivered/fitted 10 schools' uniforms. One of the new schools that we included in these 10 schools was Umzamo Primary School. We so enjoyed working with this school and more so seeing their greatest needs. This specific Primary school is a large school based in KwaNyuswa. The staff that we interacted with and students alike were very grateful for our uniform donations, interaction with the children as we fitted their new uniforms and overall



## **Hillcrest Advice Bureau and Bursary Fund**

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visit. This new connection, and our opportunity to have visited the school in 2024, opened up the opportunity this year (2025) to put forward their name when contacted by Highbury Primary school to donate to one of their old jungle gyms. This will be done next week and we have no doubt that the school will look after it.

As per last year, we opted to do our own fundraising and collections for school shoes and were thrilled to receive more than 40 pairs of shoes during the year. All of these were matched and fitted onto little feet that had no school shoes or very old ones on.

Between May and November, we visited and fitted uniforms at an additional 7 schools, and we included 1 High School in this mix. The High School that we worked with was Kwantebeni High School in KwaNyuswa and whilst relatively disorganised, we appreciated the vote of thanks from the head master himself as well as a few governing body members.

Lungi Khwela, the Development Services Worker gave us her uniform request list. As usual, Rosemary provided Lungi with these uniforms and Lungi supplied us with photographs of each of the 12 learners.

Nokuthula from the Advice Bureau in KwaNyuswa requested uniforms for a small number of needy learners too. She handled these fittings and too provided us with photographs.

### **NOTEWORTHY OBSERVATIONS**

Our best schools are always those that are prepared for our arrival and have provided us with accurate sizes of their needy children. One such school is Isihlangusabasha, which is a small Junior Primary school in Ncgolosi. The principal was waiting for us in their car park, which overlooks the Inanda Dam. He welcomed us into their lovely, neat little library to do our fittings, where the children were all waiting for us. The kids were cheerful, obviously very needy and so grateful, and the sizes were spot on which is such an enormous help. Another school which we always love visiting is Laboure Primary School. This year was especially special as the visit itself went well (as expected) but when we arrived to do the few exchanges, we were greeted by the learners who handed us thank-you notes and cards. This was enormously heartwarming and all thanks to their organized principal who we have come to love over the years of visiting their school, Mrs Mthethwa.

One lowlight for us, and a real challenge that we faced this year was the lack of buy-in from one particular principal. He was overtly rude to Rosemary and the HAB uniforms team and eager to get us off his school grounds in Molweni, even though we were there to bring uniforms for their poorest students. We are unlikely to return to this Senior Primary school next year due to this experience.

One further insight from this years' school visits has been that we have noticed an increase in children's understanding of the English language. We believe it's reasonable to assume now

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that most school-attending children in our Valley of 1000 Hills, from Grade 5 upwards can understand English without the need for a translator. This is really positive despite the generally low level of education that we see in our Valley. Another interesting recent insight is that many children, this year especially, are without decent school shoes and without jerseys – we assume this is due to the economic dip that South Africa was riding out last year, as well as the incredibly high levels of unemployment in our Valley.

### **SUMMARY OF CHILDREN/ FAMILIES REACHED**

Rosemary, Caitlyn and Zinhle visited **17** schools to deliver and fit uniforms on children, in total in 2024. In total we thus provided full school uniforms, clothing, to over **375** extremely impoverished learners in our Valley of 1000 Hills in 2024.

As usual, another part of our HAB division is food parcels which go to families in need that surface via our advice section of our organisation where Winnie sees enormous need. This year Winnie directed our food parcels to 4 families whose situations include the loss of a mother and now 2 very needy children living with a relative, a family whose child has diabetes and lives without a disability grant, a women with skin cancer but no disability grant (yet) and finally a lady who hasn't been receiving a grant, however soon will be due to the help of HAB.

Our sincere thanks to our donors, The Solon Foundation, Stanley Raaff Trust, to all those who donated money at our Giving Tuesday Initiative at Richdens Centre in Hillcrest and others who make this programme possible.

Caitlyn de Beer and Rosemary Dickinson

**Administrators – School Fund at Hillcrest Advice Bureau & Bursary Fund**



## **Annual Report Of The Advice Bureau For The Year 2024**

The numbers of cases being dealt with by the Advice Bureau grew by **155%** from 2023.

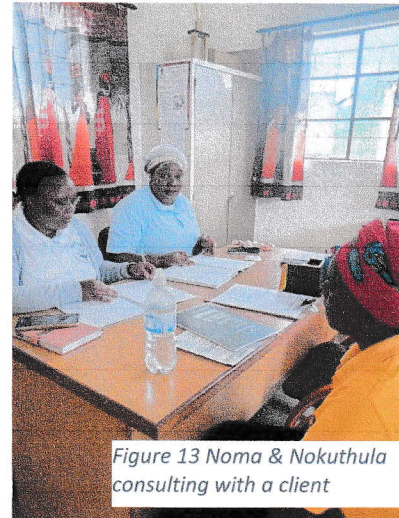
Clients are now aware that we do not charge for advice or for advocacy. An increased number of clients are reporting on the amounts of money received although clients are generally not wanting to take the risk that we might require them to pay us a commission. We have commissioned signage which will be installed in 2025 to reiterate to clients that we do not take payment, bribes or commissions.



*Figure 14 Waiting for SASSA - Nokuthula ready to advocate for clients*

The main areas of increased cases were ID's and Birth Certificates.

The government deadline requirement for smart ID's has led to an increase in demand from the elderly and disabled for assistance in applying for and obtaining their new smart ID. This is in addition to the normal caseload of lost, stolen, duplicate and first time ID's.



*Figure 13 Noma & Nokuthula consulting with a client*

Nokuthula's appointment on the Governing Body of Empilweni Primary School led to our awareness of the problem of children without birth certificates. Applying for birth certificates for these school-aged children is a long and complex process, especially if the mother has no birth certificate of her own, is deceased, is absent or from a different area and the child has been left with the paternal family. Without a birth certificate the caregiver cannot claim child support or foster care grants, the school does not receive their financial payment for the child and the child will not be able to apply for an ID. Without an ID or birth certificate they will not be able to register to write their Matric, enter into tertiary education or formal employment or open a bank account, among many other restrictions.

Advice Bureau staff attended the Legal Aid Stakeholders Forum in November where we made some good contacts. We also met with the UKZN law clinic with more difficult cases. Also the social worker at iKhethelo, Vukile Sentane, provided excellent advice and direction with regard to the more difficult birth certificate cases.



*Figure 15 Collaboration with UKZN Law Clinic*

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Winnie Mtakwende, Senior Paralegal and HABandBF employee for over 42 years retired at the end of December. Winnie leaves the Advice Bureau in the hands of Nokuthula Sokhela (now Senior Paralegal) and new recruit, Nomah Ntobela, Dip. Paralegal, appointed to Paralegal Assistant as of January 2025.

We extend our deep thanks to Winnie for all her years of dedication and passion in helping community members to access paralegal advice and assistance, often in her own time (sometimes in the middle of the night!), and also to the donors who continue to fund our work.

<u>Problems</u>	2024			2023	
	<u>Cases</u>	<u>Monies Reported as Received</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Cases</u>	<u>Monies Reported as Received</u>
Eviction			2 Pending	2	
Birth Certificates	58		58 Pending	6	
Child Support Grants	27	R2,540.00	3 Successful 24 Pending	11	
Foster Care Grant	4		4 Pending	2	
Death Benefits	17		16 Successful 1 Pending	11	
Disability Grants	37	R31,080.00	17 Successful 23 Pending	31	
Identity Books	69		59 Successful 10 Pending	20	
Care Dependent Grant			3 Successful 24 Pending	2	
Provident Fund			Pending	11	
Old Age Pension Grants	1	R8,560.00	1 Successful	7	
Miscellaneous	3		1 Successful 2 Pending	6	
UIF	1	R3,528.00	1 Successful 1 Pending	2	
Uniforms	20		All Distributed		
Food Parcels	40		Distributed to ? Families		
Abuse	2		2 Pending		
Land Claim	1		1 Pending		
Advice	3		3 Successful		
<b>Total</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>R45,708.00</b>		<b>111</b>	<b>R17,061.93</b>

### Thanks

We would like to thank all the Stakeholders and individuals who assist us with food parcels and uniforms, and everyone who's supporting us to make our office bring the services to the community, making it possible.

Nokuthula Sokhela, Senior Paralegal, May 2025



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## Advice Bureau Clients Who Received Food Parcels in 2024

1. Nguse Mavis Sbongile-. She is a care giver to 3 grandchildren who lost their mother and their child support grant lapsed, now she is trying to re-apply. One of the twins was diagnosed with diabetics, sometimes they sleep without food so the one on the medication sleep as well and no-one in the family is employed. Their biological father is unknown.
2. Mkhize Nokulunga- Her Mother died and left two children with her to take care of them. One needs birth certificate and she already applied for child support grant for one child that had a certificate.
3. Gumede Fisakuphi- She was diagnosed with skin cancer, she attends two hospitals Mariannhill and Albert Luthuli. She is trying to apply for disability grant.
4. Mzimela Hloniphile- She was receiving disability grant and it lapsed and we are helping her to re-apply again.
5. Hlambisa Lindeni Victoria- She is unemployed because she does not have identity document. She received a food parcel while waiting for the identity document
6. Ndlovu Nomusa Joyce- She is living with 3 grandchildren also taking care of her sick brother. She needs to be assisted with food parcel.
7. Nzama Thokozani- Given food parcel because he is trying to get R350 grant.
8. Ndwane Thulisile Bridget- She took disability grant application for reconsideration on September 2024. She was told to come back in January 2025
9. Phewa Johnson Ndumiso- He is suffering from HIV his disability grant lapsed and he is re-instating the disability grant. He mentions that they starve when the disability grant lapsed.
10. Dladla Ncamisile Primrose- She is suffering from epilepsy. She is on medication that she received at R.K. Khan Hospital she is also diagnosed with arthritis. She applied for disability grant and the outcome was unsuccessful. We help her to do reconsideration.
11. Mgenge Doris- She came for a food parcel, she wished to be assisted with application for disability grant and we advised her to visit Halley Stott and asked to have appointment with the doctor

*NEZOLU*