

smile
foundation

**IMPACT REPORT
MARCH 2025 - FEBRUARY 2026**

Every Child Deserves to Smile

2025 Smilestones:

25 Years of Smiles



2025 was a meaningful year for Smile Foundation as we celebrated 25 Years of Smiles, 25 years of showing up for children and families when they need us most. It was a year of growth, gratitude, and continued commitment to providing **life-changing care across South Africa.**

With the ongoing support of our donors, partners, and dedicated hospital teams, we were able to reach more children, strengthen key partnerships, and extend our impact even further.

A special thank you goes to the Smile Foundation head office team, whose passion, dedication and behind-the-scenes commitment make this work possible every day. Their unwavering support continues to drive our mission forward and ensure that **every smile truly counts.**



Surgical Impact & Hospital Partnership



In 2025, over **500 children** received life-saving reconstructive **surgery and psychosocial support** through Smile's various programs, offering a child not just medical care, but a second chance at inclusion, confidence and hope.

Some of the **key moments** from the year included:

- ❖ Hosting our first Smile Weekend at **Mankweng Hospital**, bringing specialised care to children in **Limpopo**.
- ❖ Launching our first Smile Week in partnership with **Inkosi Albert Luthuli Central Hospital**, expanding access to care in KwaZulu-Natal.
- ❖ Growing our national hospital network to **17 partner hospitals**, enabling more children to receive surgery through Smile Weeks and Smile Weekends.
- ❖ As part of *Good Morning Angels & Jacaranda FM's* radiothon, raising enough for a **world-class laser machine**, now in use at Nelson Mandela Children's Hospital. This treatment gives burn survivors in Gauteng access to laser treatment and improving their quality of life.
- ❖ Pioneering the **Socks for Smiles campaign**, which united schools, workplaces and individuals nationwide and raised vital funds to drive inclusion and support **almost 50 life-changing surgeries**.

None of this would have been possible without you. Your generosity and belief in our work make every surgery, every milestone, and every smile possible.

Thank you for playing your part in 25 Years of Smiles.

Tarri Parfitt
Chief Executive Officer



SmileWeeks

CHARLOTTE MAXEKE JOHANNESBURG
ACADEMIC HOSPITAL
GAUTENG
July & October 2025



CHILDREN RECEIVING SURGERY: 25

In 2025, Smile Foundation supported **Charlotte Maxeke Johannesburg Academic Hospital (CMJAH)** for a Smile Week of deep historical and emotional significance, co-ordinated by **Sylvia Mchunu**. As **the first hospital where Smile Foundation's work began**, CMJAH remains a cornerstone of specialised paediatric care in Gauteng and, for 25 years, has helped make life-changing reconstructive surgery possible for children from across the province and beyond.

This year marked an important milestone, with Smile Foundation proudly hosting **two Smile Weeks** at CMJAH, expanding access to much-needed care and support for more children and families. Led by **Prof Chrysis Sofianos** and **Dr Thendo Netshiongolwe**, 25 children received specialist surgical care, with families supported throughout with compassion and reassurance. The week also created space to connect, reflect, and reaffirm a shared commitment to accessible healthcare.

Feature Case: Lwandle



- When Lwandle was 3, he was struck and dragged by a car, leaving him with severe injuries and a deep scalp wound.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, his mother couldn't stay with him in hospital, adding to an already traumatic experience.
- Now eight, Lwandle is undergoing staged reconstructive surgeries to restore his scalp and hair.
- During this Smile Week, a tissue expander was inserted to prepare new skin for the next phase of treatment, supporting his return to school with confidence and without fear of teasing or standing out.

Smile Week

TYGERBERG HOSPITAL

WESTERN CAPE

May 2025



CHILDREN RECEIVING SURGERY: 8

At **Tygerberg Hospital**, many children received the gift of a smile during a dedicated Smile Week, led by **Prof. Nick Kairinos** and **Dr. Mosadi Mahoko**, with the involvement of guest surgeon **Dr. Frank Graewe**, co-ordinated by **Wendy Canterbury**. Procedures ranged from cranial vault remodelling to cleft and ear reconstruction, addressing both medical and psychosocial needs.

For many families, this week marked the end of long waiting periods and the start of a new chapter, one where children can embrace school, friendships, and everyday life with greater ease and confidence. The work at Tygerberg Hospital shows how specialised surgery, delivered with care, can truly change the course of a child's life.

Feature Case: Malachi



- 5-year-old Malachi was born with scaphocephaly - a condition where the skull fuses too early and can place pressure on the brain.
- He has shown remarkable determination and continues to thrive at school.
- During Smile Week, Malachi underwent cranial vault remodelling to reshape his skull and relieve that pressure.
- The surgery protects his health and supports his confidence, helping to ease the stares and unkind comments he has faced.

Smile Week

NELSON MANDELA CHILDREN'S
HOSPITAL
GAUTENG
June 2025



CHILDREN RECEIVING SURGERY: 28

Smile Week at **Nelson Mandela Children's Hospital** brought together some of the country's most dedicated specialists from Gauteng, the Western Cape and the Eastern Cape to treat children with complex craniofacial conditions, cleft lip and palate, and other reconstructive needs. Led by **Prof Chrysis Sofianos**, the multidisciplinary team - **Dr Chris van der Walt**, **Prof Saleigh Adams**, **Prof Tim Christofides**, **Dr Stefan Rawlins** and **Dr Jason Labuschagne** - delivered skilled, compassionate care throughout the week, co-ordinated by **Sylvia Mchunu**.

Alongside surgery, **essential orthodontic support** helped guide facial growth, improve function and strengthen long-term outcomes. For many children, the week ended a long wait for specialised care, and families left with renewed hope that their children can grow, learn and participate fully in school and society.

Feature Case: Caroline



- Caroline was born with Moebius Syndrome, a rare condition that left her unable to move her face or show emotion.
- During Smile Week, she underwent a long, delicate facial reanimation surgery, giving her the chance to express herself for the first time.
- Performed by Dr Dimitri Liakos, the operation also gave young doctors valuable exposure to a highly specialised procedure.
- Her story reflects the courage children carry into theatre, and the new beginnings made possible through the right care.

Smile Week & Mini Smile Week

FRERE HOSPITAL

EASTERN CAPE

July & November 2025



CHILDREN RECEIVING SURGERY: 21

In 2025, Smile Foundation returned to **Frere Hospital**, with the Smile Week and Mini Smile Week co-ordinated by **Tanya Jackson**, creating rare opportunities for children in the Eastern Cape to access specialised surgical care closer to home - care that would otherwise not have been available in these areas.

The Smile Week was led by **Dr Chris van der Walt** and his team, whose dedication helped set the tone for a powerful year of impact. The Mini Smile Week was made possible through the generosity of private plastic surgeons **Dr Tim Perks** and **Dr Andre Keppler**, who gave their personal time to operate on children, stepping away from their own practices so families who had been waiting could finally move forward.

By bringing specialist treatment into the province, Smile Foundation helped lift the burden on families, offering not only surgery, but reassurance, dignity and renewed hope for the future.

Feature Case: Joshua



- Joshua, 11, has already faced more than most children his age; after two major cardiac surgeries earlier in life, he is now free of his heart condition.
- Following these surgeries, Joshua developed painful keloid scarring on his chest and back, causing ongoing discomfort and emotional distress.
- During the Mini Smile Week, surgeons began a staged treatment process to remove the scars and support healthier healing.

Smile Weekends

P.E. PROVINCIAL HOSPITAL

EASTERN CAPE

March & September 2025



CHILDREN RECEIVING SURGERY: 31

In 2025, Smile Foundation hosted **two Smile Weekends at PE Provincial Hospital, co-ordinated by Tanya Jackson**, where 31 children received surgery to support their comfort, function and everyday lives.

These weekends were made possible through the extraordinary commitment of **Dr Chris van der Walt**, his surgical team and the hospital staff, who gave up their personal time and weekends to care for children in need. Their compassion, generosity and quiet dedication reflect the humanity at the heart of this work - showing up not because they have to, but because they care deeply about the children they serve. Together, they helped families move from long periods of waiting to moments of relief, restoring not only health, but hope.

Feature Case: Hesham



- Hesham, 18 months old, was born with syndactyly, a condition where fingers are fused together.
- During the Smile Weekend, he underwent a delicate finger separation procedure to restore hand function and support healthy development.
- The surgery gives him the freedom to play, explore and grow with confidence.

Smile Week

INKOSI ALBERT LUTHULI
CENTRAL HOSPITAL

KWAZULU - NATAL

October 2025



CHILDREN RECEIVING SURGERY: 16

Inkosi Albert Luthuli Central Hospital hosted its **first** Smile Week in partnership with Smile Foundation, co-ordinated by **Shawaal Van Rooyen**, where 16 children received essential cleft lip and cleft palate surgeries, along with other complex reconstructive procedures.

This Smile Week placed a strong emphasis on both service and skills transfer. Under the leadership of **Prof Mahendra Daya** and **Dr Zama Khumalo**, registrars and anaesthetists took part in hands-on training and internal presentations, gaining exposure to a high volume of specialised cases in a short period. The result was immediate impact for children and long-term benefits for the healthcare system in KwaZulu-Natal.

Feature Case: Nonkanyezi



- 4-month-old Nonkanyezi stole every heart she met and went into theatre for repair of a severe unilateral cleft lip.
- The surgery was completed successfully in just 45 minutes.
- When Nonkanyezi came out of theatre, her mother was moved to tears, overwhelmed to see her baby's cleft fully closed for the very first time.
- A small girl, a big smile, and a moment her family will never forget.

Smile Weekend & Smile Slate Day

MANKWENG HOSPITAL
LIMPOPO
October & November 2025



CHILDREN RECEIVING SURGERY: 26

The **first-ever Smile initiative at Mankweng Hospital** in Limpopo, co-ordinated by **Yanga Mbondwana**, marked a significant moment for public healthcare in the province, and the first of what we hope will be many to come. During these initiatives, 26 children received surgery by **Dr Christian Vyamungu and Dr Thendo Netshiongolwe** who travelled from WITS to assist. 19 children received their surgeries during the three days, primarily for cleft lip and cleft palate, with a dedicated Smile theatre slate enabling a further 7 children to receive much-needed surgical treatment.

In a province with limited specialist capacity, **families often face long waiting periods** and difficult choices. This focused weekend brought life-changing care closer to home. By strengthening local surgical skills and improving access to specialised treatment, the Smile Weekend supported individual children and helped build a stronger, **more resilient healthcare system for Limpopo**.

Feature Case: Kearabilwe



- Kearabilwe, 3 months old, from Polokwane, was born with a bilateral cleft lip and his mother, Lebogang, also grew up with a cleft condition.
- During the Smile Weekend, Kearabilwe received a complex reconstructive procedure.
- The surgery will allow him to feed more easily and smile more confidently as he grows.
- Lebogang described it as a new beginning for both - breaking a generational cycle of stigma and uncertainty.

Smile Week

UNIVERSITAS ACADEMIC HOSPITAL

FREE STATE

29 September - 3 October 2025



CHILDREN RECEIVING SURGERY: 14

At **Universitas Academic Hospital**, co-ordinated by **Letitia Jordaan** and led by **Dr Nikita Blake**, 14 children received surgery, giving paediatric patients the chance to begin a new chapter. **The focus was on cleft lip and palate, burns, and other facial differences** - challenges that can affect how children eat, breathe, speak and are seen by the world around them.

Through the dedication of the surgical team and the support of donors, these children now have a stronger chance to grow up with improved health, confidence and opportunity.

Feature Case: Vusumzi



- Vusumzi, 1 year old, from Welkom, was born with a cleft lip and palate and a hole in his heart, so his cleft repair had to wait until after his cardiac surgery.
- During this Smile Week, Vusumzi finally received the cleft surgery they had hoped and prayed for.
- Nomvula imagined this moment for months - a chance for her son to smile confidently and grow up with the same opportunities as other children.
- For this family, the week marked the end of a long road and the start of a hopeful new chapter.

Slate Day & Mini Smile Weeks

ROBERT MANGALISO
ACADEMIC HOSPITAL

NORTHERN CAPE

April, November & December 2025



CHILDREN RECEIVING SURGERY: 19

The Slate Day and Mini Smile Weeks at **Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe Hospital** (RMSH), co-ordinated by **Linda Katz-Hulana**, brought long-awaited relief to families who had been waiting months - and in some cases years - for specialised reconstructive care. During the year, 19 children from Kimberley, Pampierstad, Upington, Douglas and Steinkopf received surgery to support improved feeding, speech and overall development, and for many parents travelling from rural areas, it marked the moment their children finally received the help they had been hoping for.

As the Northern Cape's only tertiary centre for plastic and reconstructive surgery, **RMSH has treated more than 200 children through Smile Foundation since 2017**, and this Smile Week also forms part of the ongoing **upgrade of the hospital's Burns Unit**. Led by **Dr Maria Giaquinto Cilliers** and **Dr Gert Steyn**, the surgical team continues to work through a long waiting list, offering reassurance to families across the province and supporting a more confident future for children in need.

Feature Case: Timotheus



- Timotheus, 6 months old, from Kimberley, received the first of several life-changing surgeries.
- His mother was deeply emotional at his birth, having been unaware of his facial difference and carried both worry and hope as she prayed for the care he needed.
- Timotheus underwent a cleft lip repair, marking the beginning of his reconstructive journey.
- His mother was filled with gratitude as she watched him take this first step toward a brighter, healthier future.

Mini Smile Week

GEORGE HOSPITAL
WESTERN CAPE
November 2025



CHILDREN RECEIVING SURGERY: 12

Smile Foundation returned to **George Hospital** for a Mini Smile Week, co-ordinated by **Wendy Canterbury**, where 12 children received essential surgery after months of waiting, many taking their first steps toward a healthier, more confident future.

As George Hospital does not have the facilities required for these complex procedures, **the entire medical team was brought in from Cape Town**. Under the guidance of **Dr Gertruida van Niekerk**, surgeons and specialised nursing staff travelled to ensure children from rural communities were not left behind. The week was further supported by **Dr Paul Skoll**, who continues to dedicate his private practice to assisting with surgeries and helping reduce long waiting times for families in need.

Together, the team helped children move closer to eating, speaking and smiling with confidence - a reminder that distance should not stand in the way of hope.

Feature Case: Labib



- Labib, 20 months old, was born with a cleft lip and palate and struggled to feed, initially too underweight for surgery.
- During this Smile Week, Labib was finally strong enough to receive the surgery he had waited so long for.
- Now an active and affectionate toddler, he continues to gain strength with support from his dietician.
- His mother, Melly, expressed deep gratitude for this long-awaited moment as for Labib and his family, the week marked a turning point - a chance to move forward with confidence and possibility.

Smile Slates

TYGERBERG HOSPITAL
WESTERN CAPE
Throughout 2025



15

CHILDREN RECEIVING SURGERY: 91

A dedicated theatre slate takes place at **Tygerberg Hospital every Thursday**, co-ordinated by **Wendy Canterbury** and led by **Dr Mosadi Mahoko**, where close to 100 children received surgery and psychosocial support. These reconstructive procedures address cleft conditions and other facial differences, supporting both physical function and emotional wellbeing.

This ongoing slate shows how **targeted support** can unlock critical theatre time, ensuring children who have waited patiently for care can finally receive the treatment they need.

Feature Case: Luan



- Luan, 9 months old, from Barrydale, was born with an incomplete cleft lip.
- His surgery during the Tygerberg theatre slate gives him the chance to grow up smiling with confidence.
- With a family history of cleft conditions, his mother expressed deep gratitude that he could receive surgery so early in life.



CHILDREN RECEIVING SURGERY: 40

A dedicated theatre slate, co-ordinated by **Yanga Mbondwana**, takes place at **Steve Biko Academic Hospital in Pretoria**, led by **Prof Solly Selahle** and **Prof Mzubanzi Mabongo**, providing children with access to reconstructive surgeries and emotional support. These procedures address cleft conditions, supporting both essential physical function and long-term emotional wellbeing, giving **40 more children the chance to smile with confidence**.

This ongoing theatre slate highlights how targeted support can unlock critical operating time, enabling children who have waited patiently for care to finally receive the treatment they need and deserve.

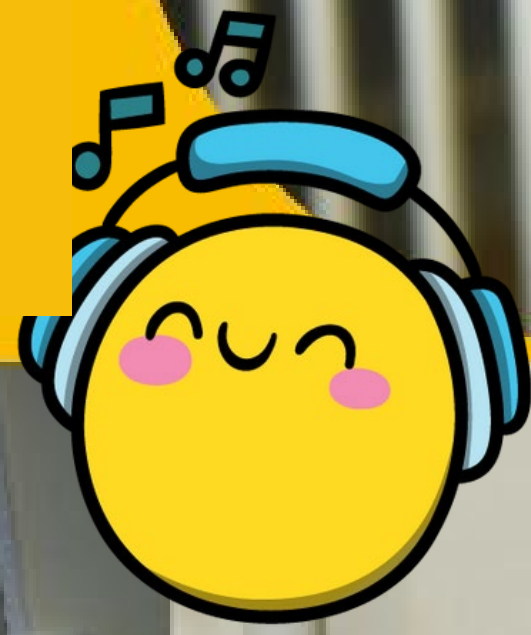
Feature Story



In February, **Kyle, Luke and John** took on the iconic aQuellé Midmar Mile for the very first time, choosing to swim with purpose in support of **Smile Foundation**. Funds raised through their Midmar Mile challenge directly contributed to supporting **Smile Theatre Slates at Steve Biko Academic Hospital**, helping more children access critical surgical care. Their commitment is a powerful reminder that when individuals step up for a cause, real change follows.

Smile Slates

GREYS HOSPITAL
KWAZULU - NATAL
2025



CHILDREN RECEIVING SURGERY: 44

At Greys Hospital, a dedicated theatre slate was made possible for children on the waiting list for reconstructive surgery to receive the care they needed, co-ordinated by **Simphiwe Radebe** and **Shawaal van Rooyen**.

Through this initiative, 44 children received surgery, with procedures led by **Dr Manti Makakole** addressing facial differences and **Dr Nikki Allorto** addressing burn-related injuries, affecting children's physical function and emotional well-being.

This slate forms part of an ongoing effort to **reduce surgical backlogs** and **ensure children do not wait years for procedures** that can dramatically improve their quality of life.

Feature Case: Anothando



- Anothando sustained burn injuries to her face, neck and arms after accidentally pulling a kettle cord while her mother was washing dishes.
- The kettle had just boiled, causing serious injuries that required urgent surgical care.
- Her procedure was more complex than most, with multiple areas needing cleaning and grafting.
- Outside the theatre, her mother waited in tears - a quiet reflection of the fear and heartbreak families endure when a child is hurt.

Craniofacial Surgery Slates

TYGERBERG HOSPITAL

WESTERN CAPE

June - December 2025



CHILDREN RECEIVING SURGERY: 3

Smile Foundation supports the **Tygerberg Theatre Slate** dedicated to craniofacial surgeries, co-ordinated by **Wendy Canterbury**, where four children were scheduled for surgery. These highly specialised procedures address **complex and often rare conditions**, requiring advanced surgical expertise, with a single operation often taking up to **eight hours**.

The cases are performed by **Dr Arnold Douglas**, whose skill and commitment help ensure children can access essential, life-changing reconstructive care.

This Smile initiative also provides hands-on surgical training under the guidance of Dr Douglas, equipping future surgeons with **critical craniofacial skills** and **strengthening long-term capacity within the medical workforce**.

Feature Case: Careson



- Careson, 14, from Worcester, has faced significant challenges from a young age; after losing her mother at 1 year old, she has been raised by her father, Christie, who noticed early concerns as her vision worsened.
- Careson was diagnosed with craniosynostosis (Crouzon Syndrome), affecting the growth of the skull and face.
- Bullying at her previous school deeply affected her confidence, but today she is thriving at the Pioneer School for the Visually Impaired.
- She approached surgery with courage and quiet strength.
- Her operation was successful. Careson remained hopeful and positive throughout - a reminder of resilience, bravery and the strength of a young girl who continues to move forward with grace.

RED CROSS WAR MEMORIAL CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL SLATES 2025



CHILDREN RECEIVING SURGERY: 63

In 2025, **Smile Foundation** proudly supported a dedicated theatre slate at **Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital**, co-ordinated by **Wendy Canterbury**, giving **63 children** access to **transformative surgery**.

Led by **Prof Saleigh Adams**, alongside **Dr Gertruida van Niekerk** and **Dr Destiny Links**, these surgeries addressed **complex cleft and reconstructive needs**, restoring **essential physical function** and helping children reclaim their **confidence, dignity, and long-term wellbeing**.

This theatre slate is a powerful reminder of what targeted support can achieve by **unlocking critical operating time** in one of South Africa's busiest paediatric hospitals and ensuring that children who had waited far too long, were finally able to receive the care they needed. Through this intervention, **Smile Foundation continues to turn compassion into action, changing not just faces, but futures**.

Feature Case



From pain to hope, Given's story reminds us why access to care matters.

When Given was just over one year old, a tragic household accident left her with severe burns. Through intensive laser treatment and corrective surgery at Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital, including the release of burn contractures, her movement was restored and her healing began.

After her surgery, **Given ran towards us with her arms wide open** - a moment that captured everything this care makes possible. Today, her family is deeply grateful, comforted by the knowledge that their child is healing and receiving the best possible care.

Smile Slate

LIFE ROSE PARK HOSPITAL

FREE STATE

27 September 2025



CHILDREN RECEIVING SURGERY: 5

Smile Foundation's Smile Slate Day at **Life Rosepark Hospital**, co-ordinated by **Letitia Jordaan**, continued our **private-public partnership** with the hospital group, and saw five children receive surgery after the private hospital opened its doors to Smile patients. Most procedures focused on **otoplasty**, supporting children with ear differences and helping them feel more comfortable as they grow.

The surgeries were made possible through **Dr Efraim van der Walt** and **Dr Shashi Agarwal**, plastic surgeons in private practice who worked pro bono and partnered with Smile Foundation. Their generosity, skill and time played a vital role in changing young lives.

Feature Case: Leseli



- Leseli, 12, lost part of his ear in a dog bite in 2019.
- His reconstructive journey has begun with the placement of a tissue expander, a specialised procedure that gradually stretches the skin in preparation for further reconstruction.
- Once sufficient skin has been created, a reduction procedure will be performed in the coming months.
- While his reconstruction will continue over time, this initial surgery marked an important step toward healing and restoring what was lost.

Burns Treatment Programme

NELSON MANDELA CHILDREN'S
HOSPITAL
GAUTENG
4th Quarter 2025



CHILDREN RECEIVING SURGERY: 15

At **Nelson Mandela Children's Hospital**, the burns treatment programme, co-ordinated by **Anthea Fernandes** and led by **Dr Ronell Parkhurst**, supported 15 children with ongoing care after painful injuries, multiple procedures and long recoveries.

Through the generosity of corporate and individual donors via the **Jacaranda FM Good Morning Angels initiative**, **state-of-the-art laser equipment** was made possible to support children on their healing journey. This specialised treatment helps soften scars, ease pain and itching, and improve mobility - helping children move with greater comfort, return to school with confidence, and begin reclaiming parts of childhood so often taken by burns.

The programme also supports families with **transport assistance, psychological care and holistic support**, easing the emotional and financial strain for caregivers who often travel long distances to access treatment.

Feature Case: Lesedi



- Lesedi is a gentle little girl who loves hugs and carries a soft sweetness wherever she goes.
- At 1 year old, she suffered severe burns to her face, back, legs and arm when hot water spilled from a pot on the stove.
- She spent a month in hospital over Christmas and New Year, undergoing skin grafts and a long recovery.
- Her facial scars have healed beautifully, but she still needs laser treatment to soften scars on her body, improve movement and ease discomfort.
- Her mom is deeply grateful for this opportunity and hopeful for the difference these treatments will make in Lesedi's life.

'SOCKS FOR SMILES'

19 September 2025



Socks for Smiles was created to raise funds for children waiting for life-changing reconstructive surgery, and to shift how we see and treat one another. The campaign encourages children to **notice differences without fear, choose kindness early**, and understand that looking different should never mean being treated differently.

By wearing their socks proudly, schools, corporates and communities make a simple, visible statement: **inclusion is learned, and compassion is practised**. Together, we are shaping a generation that stands up for children awaiting reconstructive surgery - not out of pity, but out of respect. The campaign raised over

R1 MILLION

which helped fund almost **50 reconstructive surgeries** for children whose lives have been shaped by facial differences, trauma or burns. Through the involvement of schools, workplaces and individuals nationwide, Socks for Smiles showed how **collective kindness** can turn small actions into **life-changing outcomes**.



A heartfelt **thank you** goes to every school, workplace and individual who took part.





Umatter

TOGETHER TO HEAL



A COMMUNITY FOR BURN SURVIVORS

Umatter, sponsored by **Avela Foundation** and co-ordinated by **Tebogo Tsotetsi**, was created for families whose lives have been changed by burn injuries - a safe space where healing is not faced alone.

It supports families through the emotional journey after trauma, offering understanding, connection and hope when the road ahead feels overwhelming.

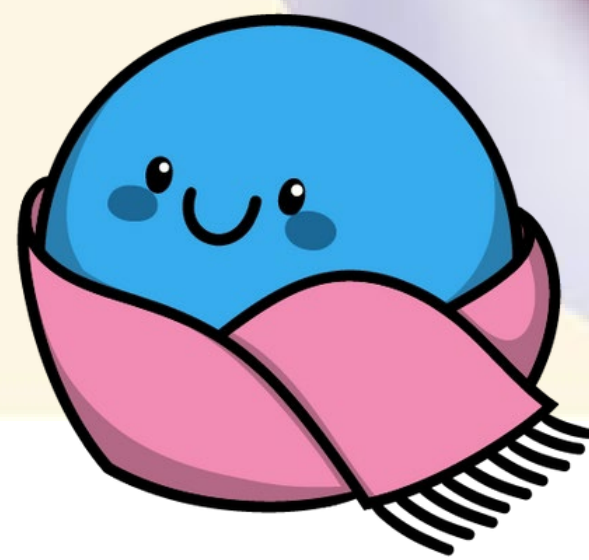
A burn injury affects far more than the body. Children and parents can carry fear, grief and uncertainty long after physical wounds begin to heal. Umatter steps in during these moments, reminding families that what they are feeling is valid, and that support is within reach. Through counselling, shared stories and gentle guidance, **Umatter helps survivors and caregivers begin to process trauma and rebuild confidence.**

Storytelling is central to this work, creating space for families to voice their experiences, find strength in one another, and know they are not alone. The programme also walks closely alongside families during laser treatment recovery, offering emotional support when exhaustion and anxiety often run high. Parents, siblings, caregivers, friends and communities all form part of a survivor's journey - because recovery is never just physical, and no one should have to carry it alone.

Umatter exists to remind every burn survivor and every family: you matter, your story matters, and your healing matters.



CLOSING THE GAP



24

PARENT-TO-PARENT SUPPORT AFTER DIAGNOSIS

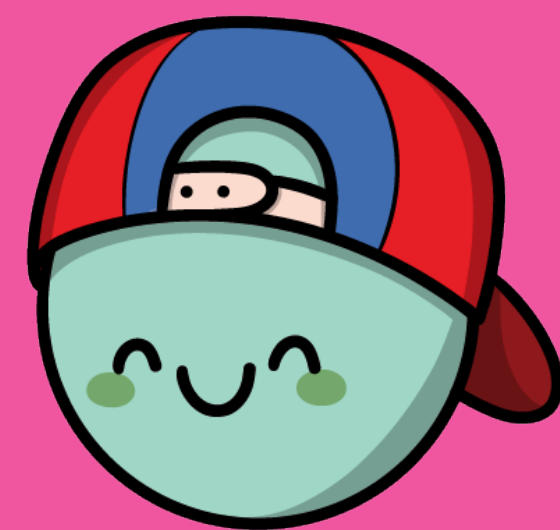
Cleft Friends is a parent-led support initiative within Smile Foundation, created by families who understand what it feels like to hear the words, “*your baby has a cleft.*” It offers empathy, reassurance and lived experience - a space where **parents are supported by people who have walked the same road.**

When a child is born with a cleft lip or palate, families can feel overwhelmed by fear, uncertainty and unanswered questions. Cleft Friends meets parents in that moment with comfort, understanding and the reminder that their child is beautiful, deeply loved and full of possibility.

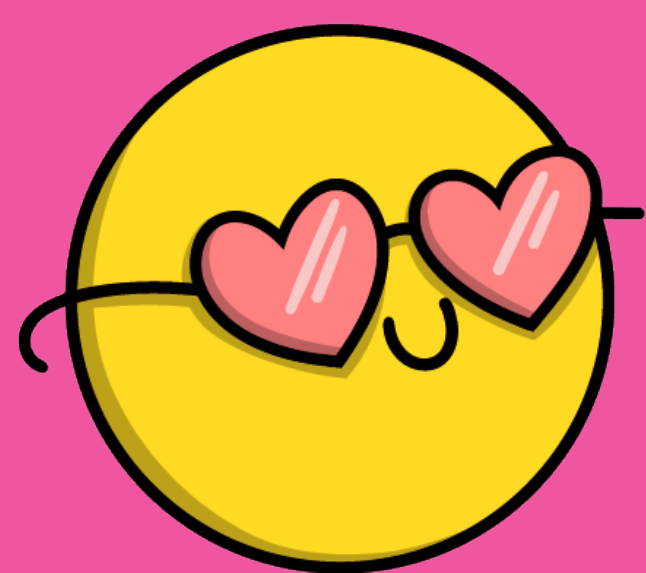
Through **parent-to-parent connection**, families are supported to process the emotional weight of a diagnosis and move forward with hope. Parents are encouraged to celebrate their babies at every stage, recognising that confidence and acceptance begin at home.

Cleft Friends also helps parents feel more **prepared** when engaging with medical teams, offering practical guidance on what questions to ask and what to expect throughout treatment. This clarity can ease anxiety and help families feel supported rather than afraid.

At its core, Cleft Friends is about **belonging** - ensuring no parent feels isolated, no family feels forgotten, and every child grows up surrounded by love, confidence and belief in their future.



Thank You to Our Volunteers



At Smile Foundation, our volunteers play a **vital role behind the scenes**, helping ensure our work runs smoothly, efficiently, and with care.

From supporting events and activations to assisting in our storeroom and logistics, your time and willingness to step in wherever needed allows our team to focus on delivering life-changing surgeries and support to children and families across the country.

Your contribution may not always be visible, but its **impact is felt every day**. Because of you, campaigns are better organised, events are possible, and our operations continue to move forward with purpose.

We are truly **grateful for your commitment, generosity, and belief in our mission**. Thank you for being an essential part of the Smile Foundation family and for helping us create lasting impact, one smile at a time.

Thank You to Our Board Members



At Smile Foundation, our Board Members play a critical role in guiding the organisation with integrity, foresight, and commitment to our mission. Led by our Chairman and co-founder, **Mr. Marc Lubner** - truly the man behind the smiles - the Board provides the leadership, governance, and strategic direction that enables our work to thrive.

From stewardship and oversight to thoughtful challenge and support, your guidance ensures that Smile Foundation remains resilient, accountable, and **focused on delivering the greatest possible impact** for children and families across South Africa.

Your contribution often takes place quietly, behind the scenes, but its influence is **profound**. Because of your leadership, partnerships are strengthened, resources are safeguarded, and our long-term vision continues to be realised.

We are deeply grateful for your time, wisdom, and belief in Smile Foundation. Thank you for standing with us, **leading with purpose**, and helping us create sustainable impact - one smile at a time.

Because of you,
Smiles Happen.
Thank You



Dis-Chem+
Better health starts here



Connecting for Good
Vodacom
Foundation



good morning
angels
jacarandam

avela
together to give

adcock ingram



Discovery
Vitality



BLUE LABEL
TELECOMS

Dis-Chem
Foundation
Caring for the Community

Life **Rosepark**
HEALTH CARE Hospital

SABC

DRYLAND
EVENT MANAGEMENT

Lubner Family Foundation
TO GIVE. TO LOVE. TO LIVE

famous brands
you're in good company

WORLD
SPORTS BETTING

SPAR

goldrush

yoooh



WERKSMAN
ATTORNEYS

SUZUKI

EASIGAS
LIFE MADE EASI

RG
REATILE GROUP
WE ARE GROWING

ANGLO GOLDASHANTI

sasfin **Wealth**

SAFELINE
PHARMACEUTICALS
Quality. Trust. Confidence.

baroque medical
PARTNER OF CHOICE

E.P.X.
COURIER SERVICES

AIRLINK
Freedom of the African Sky

THE LINDEN
MARKET

THE CAPITAL
Hotels | Apartments

Dashpay

AIR
PRODUCTS

Because of you,
Smiles Happen.
Thank You

