



Scalabrini
Centre of Cape Town

LAWRENCE HOUSE

IMPACT REPORT 2022

by Jade Henderson, Lawrence House Manager

OVERVIEW

After the past couple of pandemic stricken years, a time where days, months, and years blurred, we were excited to step out of the haze into a new year. If 2021 was the dress rehearsal in navigating our post pandemic world then 2022 would be the show.

We were ready.

We welcomed many familiar faces back to Lawrence House. Our pre-pandemic hustle and bustle of cooks, tutors, and interns was alive and well within the house, and being able to see everyone's smiling faces as we welcomed them back was something we didn't fully realise was so important and so greatly missed. As one of the Lawrence House Child and Youth Care Workers said, "it's amazing what a simple smile can do." Cooks were back preparing delicious meals and working wonders in our kitchen. Welcoming tutors back to help with homework was such a relief! We remain hopeful that the massive effect of two years of irregular schooling has had on our young residents will slowly but surely improve. Having both local and international interns back, coming in as a support to Lawrence House staff and young people has been such a powerful re-addition in both the capacity and positive energy that they add to the space.

There was a sense of busyness that had been missing and we are grateful for its return.

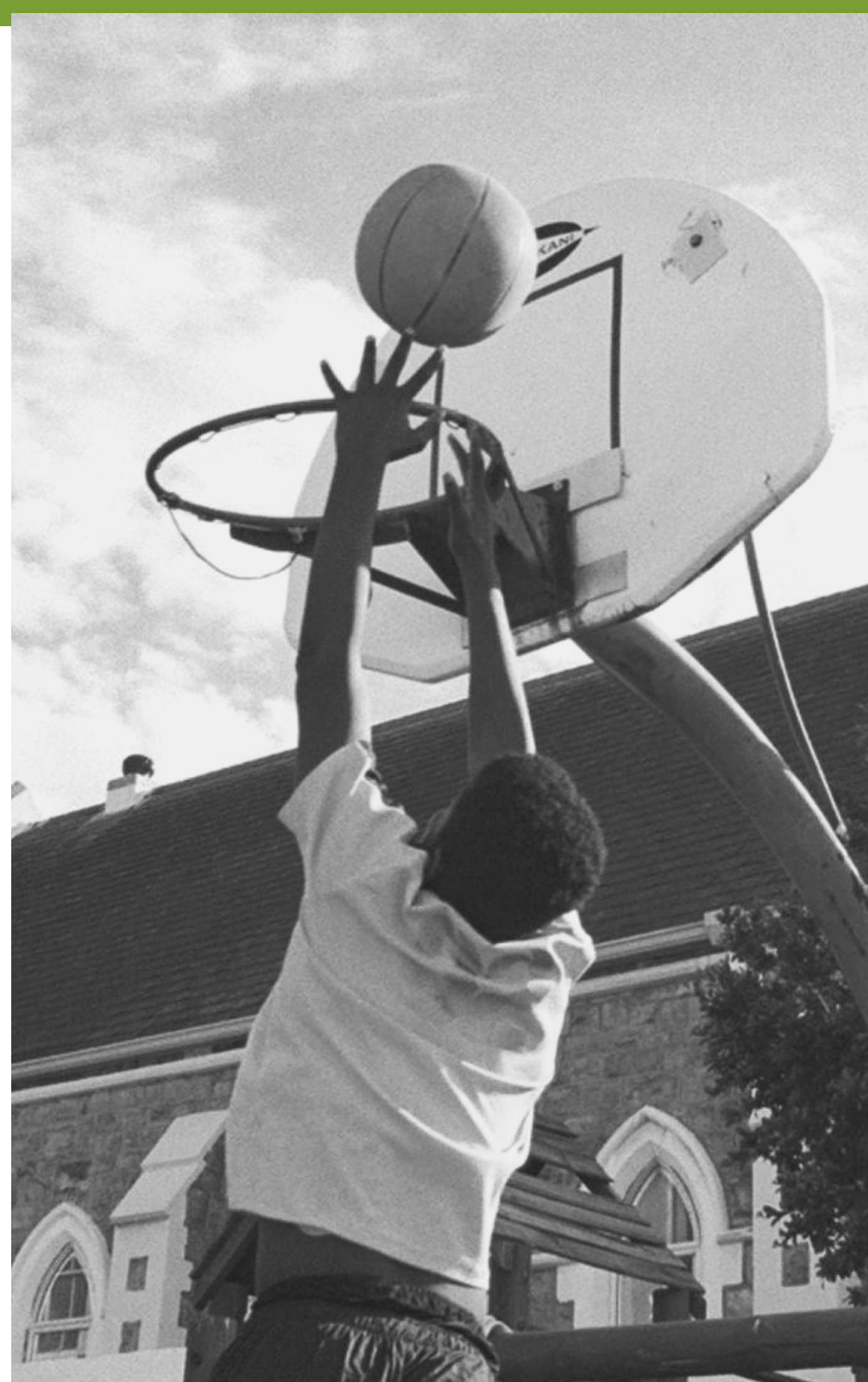


ACHIEVEMENTS

As we welcomed routine back into Lawrence House, the young people went back to school every day, and activities and sports resumed. Afternoons were once again filled with soccer or netball practice, rock climbing, dance, and art. Some things were similar, others were different, both valued by the staff and young people as we operated with a deeper sense of appreciation and gratitude for every person who contributes to making Lawrence House the special place it is. One of the Lawrence House staff members said, “the way you feel warm and welcomed at Lawrence House because of who you are and not in spite of who you are makes you feel better seen as a human being.” Unfortunately, not all people are made to feel this way within the environments they navigate on a daily basis and as the pandemic perpetuated many of these injustices, we remain focused and vigilant to continue fighting to be a force for justice so that Lawrence House is not an exception to the norm, but our way of welcoming, of doing, of being, of action, becomes the norm itself.

Fighting to be seen, for greater understanding, acceptance, and inclusion is nothing new for Lawrence House. When the world began to open up and pre-pandemic processes took the foreground, our familiar realities remained unchanged. There is no getting away from the fact that while living in care, whether it be with us here at Lawrence House or another Child and Youth Care Centre or care system, unaccompanied migrant minors and separated refugee children face the challenge of documentation. Living in this country undocumented is an added vulnerability these young people on the move face, one they shouldn't have to add to their intersectionality. There is a false sense of positivity in believing that because progress in the fight for these young people's rights wasn't lost - it just took a back seat for a while - that this is in fact a win. What about the young person who turned 17 and then 18 years old during the pandemic while it all stood still? What happens now that they are no longer protected under the conditions of the Children's Act? What about that young person and their right to Nationality? The reality is that there are countless young people in need of care and protection.

Many of those are young people on the move and as Lawrence House is dedicated to the plight of these young people, it is our mission to make sure they are welcomed, their basic needs are met, and their development is safeguarded. At Lawrence House, this looks like being welcomed with a smile, greeted with compassion, listened to with understanding, and shown care, respect, and dignity. We understand that each young person welcomed to Lawrence House is on a journey, a journey that a safe, accepting, and trauma-informed environment supports as the young person walks alongside us safely and holistically tackling their challenges. Is it futile to strive for this high standard of care, greater understanding, and a way of working and being, of conscious action, for it not to be reciprocated in other environments or continued outside the walls of Lawrence House? Some may say yes, but we believe that by not doing it we are not showing what is possible. So as our work continues, as it even amplifies, we work to reframe what care looks like and shift the narrative of young people who are not originally from South Africa, through education and action, to create continuous positive lasting change.



LOOKING FORWARD

Through the lessons of the pandemic, the period of new normals, and the time we subsequently find ourselves in; for us, there is a strong thread that runs through them all. There is no best time, right time, or opportune moment for anything. The only guaranteed time and moment is now, and it is all we really need. Thank you to each and every Lawrence House team member for embracing the now and helping move the needle forward, you are the heart of this very special place and your dedication to the cause is what keeps us moving forward.

A WORD OF THANKS

A special word of thanks must go out to all the sponsors and friends of Lawrence House who have continued supporting us through very challenging times. To the interns and volunteers who give of their time to cook, tutor, and support us, a big thank you. A very special thank you to our board members; Fr Filippo, Fr Gerardo, Jamala, Safari, Daksha Hargovan, and Fred Nshumbusho for their support, guidance, and ongoing care for Lawrence House.

We would like to acknowledge and thank the Department of Social Development, the Holy Childhood Commission, the HCI Foundation, and all international Scalabrini networks, as well as both local and international supporters for their financial support.



The centre is registered with the South African Department of Social Development as a non-profit organisation (021-079 NPO), as a youth and child care centre (C7569) and as a Public Benefit Organisation with the South African Revenue Services (930075335) and governed by a Trust (IT2746/2006).
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