



thrive

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SPECIAL NEEDS PROGRAM



What counts in life is not the mere fact that we have lived. It is what difference we have made to the lives of others that will determine the significance of the life we lead.

Nelson Mandela





Unique. Complex. Valuable. Worth Fighting For.

These words describe each child we serve, and it is our honor to care for each of their unique and complex needs with love. When a child arrives at Acres of Love our experienced team of house parents, social workers, and medical partners work together to assess how we can support healing from past trauma and provide the highest quality of life. There is no “cookie-cutter” or institutional protocol if we are to truly mirror their worth and value, so we work to become students of our children. As we slowly uncover and address their individual wounds, needs, and strengths, we are able to encourage them to truly thrive. For some of our children, this process must be expedited due to immediate, existing medical needs or intense levels of special needs. Our core expertise and commitment to the highest quality of care has placed us in a unique position to receive long-term placements of children, with intense medical and special needs, who are unable to be placed elsewhere.



Our General Mission: To Offer the Highest Quality Care and Love to Abandoned and Orphaned Children in South Africa

Acres of Love exists to provide the most vulnerable affected and infected infants and children of South Africa with the highest possible quality of care and love, a strong early childhood development foundation, a local and global community-based safety net, and hope. In simple terms, we exist to bring children, who were once orphaned and abandoned, into families. Institutional care offers survival for many, but our goal is to offer each child in our care the chance to truly thrive in a small, family environment, with every chance and opportunity to succeed. Comprehensive care, a solid education, and high-quality medical and emergency medical care is absolutely foundational to the impact our children can make as adults in South Africa. Acres of Love currently owns and operates 27 Forever Family Homes, licensed through the RSA Department of Social Services and Population Development, as Children and Youth Care Centres for orphans and abandoned infants and children living with and/or affected by HIV/AIDS in South Africa.

Acres of Love strives to ensure that each child:

- Receives the specialized care, education, and assistance they need to develop soundly.
- Has a team of specialists to ensure that short and long term needs will be met with the highest possible quality of health and residential family care available.
- Lives in a safe, nurturing, and happy environment, with the support and security needed to develop to reach his or her fullest potential.
- Feels welcomed into a permanent family, with a sense of stability and future free of abuse and neglect.
- Receives a sound and individually tailored education plan, leading to a fulfilling life.



Our Model Program: Forever Family Home

Acres of Love has an established holistic model program that is widely considered to be the bench-mark for orphan care in South Africa. Our Forever Family Home (FFH) model of care has vastly improved the quality of life for each of our children. Acres of Love provides a non-institutional setting and pristine environment for the infants and children rescued and entrusted into our care. Our infants and children live and thrive in small, de facto families. Each Forever Family Home provides loving parents who care for and create a long-term family for eight to ten children. Regional managers, social workers, therapists, pediatric HIV specialists, and in-home assistants support our committed house parents. Our current capacity is 200 children, however, that number is growing each day with our continued acquisition of Forever Homes in the Johannesburg and Cape Town Regions of South Africa.

The concept of “belonging” and having a home in which to be nurtured, educated and dream is foundational in our work as we strive to establish routine and consistency for our children. We focus on the following broad range goals:

1. Residential care in a Forever Family Home with parents, supported by specialists, and volunteers including love, nurturing, support, spiritual guidance, culturally appropriate activities, mentoring, recreational activities, nutritional meals and clothing.
2. Comprehensive and ongoing medical and dental care; including HIV/AIDS testing, antiretroviral treatment and ongoing treatment for HIV/AIDS-positive infants and children.
3. Emergency medical intervention and equipment, including wheelchairs, walking and hearing aids, orthopedic shoes, extra support, and occupational therapy.
4. Education, including uniforms, private school tuition when needed, school supplies, educational games, mentoring and tutoring, participation in extra-curricular and other educational activities.
5. Recreation including culturally appropriate activities, sports, and community activities.
6. Case planning, including coordination and transition to foster, adoption, and other permanency planning, in partnership with the Department of Social Services and approved agencies.
7. Age-appropriate early childhood development activities including preschool, games, and hygiene.
8. All other activities necessary to provide a stable, nurturing, structured and normalized home environment that provides guidance, support, love, exceptional care and hope.
9. Education and training to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS in the community at large and among families of children in our care.
10. Maintenance and security of property, upgrading Forever Family Homes and investing in beautiful gardens to maintain healthy relationships with our community neighbors.
11. Utilities, transportation and related expenses.
12. Full Legal Compliance with the new Child Care Act of South Africa; regular court proceedings and case reports.

“I have come to realize more and more that the greatest disease and the greatest suffering is to be unwanted, unloved, uncared for, to be shunned by everybody.”

Mother Teresa

Emergency Medical & Special Needs (EMSN) Program

The primary goal of our EMSN Program is to equip and empower our Acres of Love team (social workers and regional managers) to accept children with progressively more medically complex needs into our Forever Family Homes. We want to continue to meet the expected and unexpected needs of our infants and children with emergency and special needs such as, but not limited to: HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, cerebral palsy, cancer, down syndrome, paralysis, autism, hearing impairment, and severe malnutrition.

The EMSN Program is crucial to our future success in caring for children with more complex medical needs. Our EMSN budgetary framework

is vertically integrated and designed to fund specific line items, in order to supplement the Forever Family Home continuum-of-care model program (which is horizontal in structure); allowing us to provide long-term, holistic care. We believe that each life has value, not determined or affected by medical or special needs. Our commitment to serving the most vulnerable population of children in South Africa is lived out on a daily basis as we continue to welcome children into our Forever Family Homes who are literally struggling to survive. However, Acres of Love is committed to helping the children do more than survive; we help them thrive.



Children with HIV/AIDS

On the frontlines of caring for children living with AIDS/HIV since 1998, we understand the complexities and hope that surround the AIDS pandemic. We have watched our children thrive on the right anti-retroviral medications. We have seen children, who arrive with AIDS ravaging their bodies, become healthy, happy, and virally suppressed. Many children enter our care as a direct or indirect result of the HIV/AIDS pandemic devastating South Africa. Statistics show that while new cases of HIV and AIDS related deaths are in decline in Sub-Saharan Africa, the region remains the most heavily affected region in the global HIV pandemic with 5.7 million people currently infected in South Africa. According to the 2012 UN Report on AIDS, more than 90% of the children who acquired HIV in 2011 live in Sub-Saharan Africa, and there are approximately 2.5 million children living in South Africa who have been orphaned due to AIDS.

Entire communities have lost a generation of mothers, fathers, aunts, uncles, teachers, social workers, and other valuable members of community support. Many children orphaned by AIDS are also infected, and stigmatized, by society and extended family members. This is the story of many of our children, who found themselves abused or severely neglected, abandoned a second time, and left to fend for themselves without any support. The result is a tremendous population of parentless children and child-headed households, who then also develop desperate medical deficiencies, infections, and diseases. It is at this critical and hopeless point of despair that many of our children arrive. We immediately welcome them into a Forever Family Home, begin to meet their daily needs with love and consistency, and thoroughly assess their medical, emotional, developmental, and educational conditions. We then aggressively begin to provide the highest-quality medical care, emergency surgeries, medical equipment, and ongoing treatment for life-threatening medical conditions. Our desire is to remove, through education and unconditional love, the stigmas and rejection that often result from illness and long-term special needs. While many people consider this population of children worthless and expendable, it is our belief that each child in our care is worth fighting for. We value each life, and know that every child has potential to impact their world. We constantly advocate for our children and combat the quiet but steady stream of low expectations placed on their lives and future potential due to their health and orphan status.

Strategic Medical Partnerships

As a result of our partnerships with exceptional hospitals and world-class doctors, our capability to cater to complex medical conditions has increased. We partner with the best local hospitals, which have been rated as some of the most specialized in HIV/AIDS treatment in the world. We partner with top medical professionals, including Dr. Leon Levin, who are known and respected for their knowledge of dealing with pediatric HIV. A growing number of children are designated to us due to our ability to receive children with complex special needs and provide them with the highest possible care. As our EMSN program grows, we will be able to care for a greater number of children with intense needs, while maintaining our incredibly high standard of family-centered care.

Children with Intense Special Needs

Roughly 38% of the children who come into our care are living with moderate to severe special needs including down syndrome, hearing impairment, cerebral palsy, AIDS/HIV, severe malnutrition, paraplegic limitations, and autism. These children are often shunned by society, stigmatized as cursed, hidden by their families, and abandoned to die in deplorable conditions. Acres of Love Forever Family Homes provide long-term support and love that give children with disabilities a high quality of life and self-dignity. Often, these children cannot attend normal schools and usually require multi-pronged services. We passionately advocate on their behalf and pursue every avenue necessary to give them everything needed to thrive. Our mission is to make sure that we are able to give them everything we would give our own children, as they deserve nothing less.







Uniquely Equipped to Provide the Highest-Quality Care

As we serve South Africa's most vulnerable and forgotten children, living with disabilities in disadvantaged societies, we find ourselves with a unique admission policy. We are the only registered Child and Youth Care Centre in South Africa that welcomes abandoned orphan children with extraordinary special needs and medical emergencies. The unique and excellent care provided by Acres of Love has allowed the Children's Court in the province of Gauteng, South Africa to designate all children with remedial or special education needs to reside in the Acres of Love Forever Family Homes. Acres of Love is in full legal compliance with the Child Care Act of South Africa.

Complex Needs Require Individualized Care

Through our unique and holistic team approach, we appoint each child a special team of physical therapists, specialized doctors, psychologists, social workers, teachers, house-parents, and volunteers to collaborate and design an Individual Development Plan. We know that each child is unique, and their needs are complex. Our customized plans allow our children to have an active and fulfilling life, addressing their physical, emotional, educational, developmental, and spiritual needs. Each child is given an accessible living space, transportation, home support, high-quality medical equipment (such as wheelchairs, walking aids, orthopedic shoes, hearing aids, etc.), regular physical therapies and treatments, specially trained doctors and care-givers, and special education to suit their individual needs.



A Family for Each Child

Each Acres of Love Forever Family Home serves as a safe haven for our children, located in safe neighborhoods, with immediate access to good schools and well-equipped hospitals. The homes are furnished with care by volunteer interior designers, providing a warm and welcoming living space. Pristine gardens surround each home, offering the children a peaceful home environment and space for play-sets, vegetable plots, and trees. The children are well-fed with nutritious home-cooked meals and are provided with new school and play clothes. During the week, our older children attend school and participate in enrichment activities such as reading, extra-curricular sports, singing, dancing, or playing games. Our younger children attend our Acres of Love crèche to prepare them for formalized education, and our infants receive constant love and touch from our house parents.



Education Tailored to Each Child

Due to malnutrition, neglect, and previously unaddressed medical concerns, many of our children cannot be placed in mainstream schools. Some require special medical equipment or time spent in a bridging school with smaller sized classrooms and dedicated teachers to learn a new language, heal emotionally, and build confidence. We know that the key to helping a child thrive is to see them as unique and complex individuals. Our team is empowered to provide individualized care that is tailored to each child. As our children receive particularized care, we watch them heal from past trauma and begin to thrive academically. Our children attend exceptional schools in our community that focus on the individual needs of students. Acres of Love also provides crèche, or pre-school, education to children in our care who are denied access to local crèches because of their HIV status. Acres is also working on developing creative online education solutions for children who, based on their lack of continual education prior to placement at Acres of Love, cannot be 'mainstreamed.'

Dental Care

Acres of Love is committed to providing the highest-quality dental care to the children in our care. Many have rotten teeth and cavities due to a lack of care prior to coming to Acres of Love. Each child receives proper dental hygienic instruction as well as regular visits to a local dentist. Many of our teens wish for and receive braces, due to the generosity of the South African Society of Orthodontists, a group of local orthodontists who partner with us to meet our children's orthodontic needs, pro bono. Our teens are thrilled to have this blessing, and we are overjoyed to be able to watch their smiles become more confident.

Regional Development

As we seek to grow strategically and care for more children, we ensure that each home has the suitable amount of support staff and infrastructure to safeguard long-term support, relationships, and access to proper medical and educational institutions. We carefully plan each new home as part of a larger, long-term region. Our Regional Development Initiative (RDI), defines a "region" as a cluster of five or more Forever Homes in close proximity, generally in the same neighborhood, with access to good schools and the best hospitals. Each region is supported by a social worker and manager, with parents residing in each home with a full-time assistant. Currently, we operate in four regions; three in Johannesburg and one in Cape Town, allowing better and more focused care by our support teams.

As we seek to strategically rescue more children, future house parents and their assistants are currently being recruited and trained to meet the upcoming identified needs based on current and past growth. Regional managers will be appointed once a new region is launched and will focus on establishing the homes and selecting the parents. Once the homes are ready to be occupied, our social workers begin to process the children designated to our care.



How Will Your Funding Impact Our Children?

- Educational programs including customized curricula via IDP's (Individual Development Plans), school fees, school uniforms, school supplies, educational games, and tutoring for the children in our care who require special instruction to maximize their potential for learning.
- Speech therapy, occupational and physical therapy services.
- Emergency medical funds to provide surgeries and special care for children with complex and life-threatening medical conditions.
- Alterations and maintenance of special housing and transportation accommodations.
- Regional manager development and education.
- Social worker development and education.
- Tertiary education needs (universities and specialized training institutes).

Project Time Frame

All EMSN activities are on going. As Acres of Love continues to open new Forever Family Homes, our admission policy is to continue accepting the most vulnerable orphans and abandoned children in South Africa. We remain committed to giving the children the very best comprehensive care: medical and emergency medical care as well as the best possible education, just as we would for our own children. The EMSN program is discretionary, as the budget is estimated and will supplement the general operating account. The EMSN program will fund all the actual expenses related to the EMSN line items, and retroactively allocate the expenses to the EMSN program budget accordingly, at fiscal year-end. A progress report will be provided to our investor partners on an annual basis.

Performance Indicators & Evidence of Achievement

Acres of Love strives to ensure that each child receives the care, education, and assistance needed to develop soundly and ensure that short-term and long-term needs are met with the highest possible health and residential care available. Our success is evident in the lives and progress of children who are thriving physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually in our Forever Family Homes. Acres of Love's successes are ultimately determined by our caregiving and operational team's ability to execute at the grass roots level. There are three objectives the management and team focus on:

URGENCY: We are committed to responding with urgency to the rescue of infants and children that desperately need to be brought into our Forever Homes.

ACTION: We are committed to ensuring a safe and nurturing rescue process, prayerful and proper home placement, and long-term quality care.

EXECUTION: We are committed to ensuring that the quality of care provided to our children is commensurate with the financial capability provided by our partners.

Measurement of Outcomes, Benefits to our Children & Sources of Verification

- Medical and social worker reports
- Occupational therapist reports
- Speech therapist reports
- School teacher reports

Our success is evident in the lives and progress of the children. Our IDPs (Individualized Development Plans) enable our caregivers to measure the progress and impact of our strategic intervention in each child's life.





Project Assessment, Reporting & Evaluation

The Acres of Love CEO receives comprehensive and detailed weekly reports from the following caregivers:

1. Regional managers
2. Social workers
3. School teachers
4. Therapists
5. Physicians

As a collaborative team, our staff then evaluates and continues or adjusts the care of each child to ensure maximum physical and emotional health.

Funding Sources

Strategic alliances and successful partnerships empower Acres of Love to sustain the core services provided.

PRIVATE INDIVIDUAL DONORS AND FOUNDATIONS: Each Forever Family Home is connected to, and funded by, either a private foundation or individual families in conjunction with other non-profit entities, such as community foundations and donor advised funds. We focus on facilitating long-term relationships between the donor/s and the children by establishing a de facto family concept. A number of our donors have invested financially and relationally, and are extended family to our children.

FUNDRAISERS AND CORPORATE DONATIONS: We also raise discretionary funds through annual fund raisers and corporate donations. A leading financial group in South Africa supplies us with our vehicle fleet needs, including a new multi-passenger vehicle for each home we commission. In addition, many of our appliance needs have been provided by an international appliance corporation in South Africa.

Success is defined and measured by observing and recording the miraculous progress of the infants and children in our care. Two of our boys, attending the Vuleka Bridging School, were recently awarded the Oppenheimer Scholarship to attend a top Preparatory school, St Peters College. The award was granted due to their leadership qualities and excellent academic progress.

What does love look like? It has the hands to help others... feet to hasten to the poor and needy... eyes to see misery and want... and ears to hear the sighs and sorrows of men.
Saint Augustine

The Growing Demand for Our Services

With the demand for the services of Acres of Love far outpacing our ability to satisfy it, we need to greatly expand our placement capacity and enhance our programs to accommodate difficult and complex cases. Many of the abandoned infants and children designated to Acres of Love arrive on the brink of death, with substantial emergency medical needs that require immediate proactive intervention. However, since all our Forever Homes are full, new homes must be quickly established to meet this growing demand.

Raising Quality of Life for Children Living with HIV

As we push past the low expectations in place for orphan care, we advocate for children's rights by offering unparalleled care. Our children who are HIV-positive are constantly monitored to determine their CD4 count. Their pathology reports, taken at regular intervals, provide us with an incredible amount of data about their general health and well-being. We ensure that each Forever Family Home offers a healthy, fresh diet, filled with fruits and vegetables. If our HIV positive children were not on a holistic nutritional program, we would immediately pick up the negative results in the blood tests. One of our pediatric HIV specialists, Dr. Levin, stated that the results he sees in the anti-retroviral care provided to our HIV positive children is far superior to those from children in disadvantaged areas with no proper nutritional program in place.

Offering an Unmatched Level of Care

The sound and established organizational status of Acres of Love, along with its record of excellence in providing care for orphans, ensures that additional funding will be spent wisely and promptly. In addition, the organization's strategic plan has been prepared for the purpose of guiding our board, executives, managers, staff, volunteers and donors in the effort to achieve our vision, goals and objectives. Our experience, careful planning and advance preparation has enabled Acres of Love to successfully replicate its Forever Homes model 26 times over the past 15 years, allowing the management of Acres of Love to remain focused while simplifying procedures.

Our high-quality, comprehensive care and scale of work is unmatched in South Africa and our reputation results in an increased number of vulnerable children brought to our attention. The growing demand compels Acres of Love to consistently engage in sound strategic business planning to sustain its current operations. We are continually exploring all possible funding opportunities to meet the needs of the most vulnerable victims of the socio-economic and HIV/AIDS pandemic in South Africa. It is not enough to offer survival. We passionately work to ensure each child in our care can truly thrive.







HELLO KITTY

SPIDER-MAN
SPIDER-MAN

