

Food for the Children of Eldorado Park Funding Proposal

During these challenging times posed by the COVID-19 global pandemic, providing assistance to those in need is critical. The measures that are being taken all over the world to combat the infection and spread of this deadly illness can have dire consequences for many families. Families that were already experiencing financial hardship, without stable housing, struggling to feed their children, or suffering from health issues, are particularly vulnerable. For the more than 65,000 people living in Eldorado Park in Johannesburg, South Africa, these hardships form their daily life¹. In this small region of barely four square miles, families struggle to keep their children fed and out of the clutches of drug lords². It is not uncommon for a dozen people to live in one house, and for children to roam the streets day and night, unsupervised³. Now that businesses have been ordered to shutter and schools have been closed as the entire country shelters in place, even some of the few recourses residents had for receiving aid have been extinguished.

One such recourse was the Elton John Masibambisane Centre for Orphaned and Vulnerable Children run by Jo'burg Child Welfare (JCW), a hundred-year-old nonprofit organization that helps orphans throughout Johannesburg. Masibambisane means "let's pull together," and was officially opened in 2005 by Sir Elton John. Ordinarily, the center offers free early child development education to prepare children for schooling and provides them with meals during the day. Children in the 0-4 age group have the highest mortality rates in South Africa and high levels of exposure to violence and neglect. South Africa is also listed in the top twenty of countries with the highest burden of undernutrition—one in every four children suffers from nutritional stunting. Having a safe place for these children to spend part of their day and receive proper nutrition lifted a massive burden for their families, and in many cases opened the space for both parents to be able to seek employment and increase their household income. JCW had even partnered with other nonprofits to procure additional resources to the center, including specialists in innovative pediatric therapeutic interventions that would visit at regular intervals.

Due to limited resources as a result of the crisis, JCW has been unable to continue to provide meals to the children that normally attend its programs—something that JCW would desperately like to see continue. With the majority of families in Eldorado Park no longer receiving their incomes, food insecurity is a daily reality.

Spence-Chapin Services to Families and Children is a long-time partner of JCW, supporting the children they serve through our Granny Program and International Adoption Program. As part of our commitment to children in need, Spence-Chapin is soliciting support on behalf of JCW to continue to provide meals to the children of Eldorado Park through Masibambisane. **Our initial goal is to raise \$10,000 to provide food for 259 children over the next three months. Your support will help ensure that through this COVID-19 global pandemic, these children can count on a healthy meal from a trusted institution.**

¹ Eldorado Park. Sub Place 798015211 from Census 2011. 18 May 2020. Available at: <https://census2011.adrianfrith.com/place/798015211>

² Dipa, Karishma. "Eldorado Park identified as a hotspot for drugs and substance abuse." IOL. 29 June 2019. Available at: <https://www.iol.co.za/saturday-star/news/eldorado-park-identified-as-hotspot-for-drugs-and-substance-abuse-28064812>

³ Nkosi, Oupa. "Eldorado Park was built on dreams, many of them shattered by government ineptitude." Mail & Guardian. 25 July 2016. Available at: <https://mg.co.za/article/2016-07-25-eldorado-park-was-built-on-dreams-many-of-them-shattered-by-government-ineptitude/>