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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SPENCE-CHAPIN SERVICES TO FAMILIES AND CHILDREN COMPLETES FIRST OF FOUR PLAYGROUNDS FOR ORPHANAGES IN JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA AS PART OF PROJECT PLAY INITIATIVE

(New York, NY, 2020): In 2019, Spence-Chapin Services to Families and Children (Spence-Chapin) launched *Project Play* in conjunction with Jo’burg Child Welfare (JCW) as part of its Granny Program expansion project to benefit more than 200 children residing in four orphanages throughout Johannesburg, South Africa. *Project Play* benefits four orphanages in Johannesburg, South Africa by providing outdoor playgrounds with state-of-the-art equipment and stations. The first of the four playgrounds planned for *Project Play* was completed in August of 2020 at Othandweni Family Care Centre in Soweto, Johannesburg, home to 90 children, the majority under the age of 12.

While the COVID-19 pandemic has had an incredible global impact and is particularly hard-felt by already vulnerable populations, Spence-Chapin made it a priority to continue to serve the children, women, and families who rely on its services and programs. This commitment to the children residing in orphanages in South Africa is no exception. By working closely with local partners, Spence-Chapin was able to continue *the Project Play* initiative as part of its Granny Program expansion despite the pandemic, while still ensuring the health and safety of all involved.

“Spence-Chapin is dedicated to the well-being of every child and is committed to our partnership with JCW, our Granny Program, and *Project Play*. We want every child residing in a JCW children’s home to thrive. *Project Play* provides the opportunity for children to play, which is such an important part of their physical and mental development. We deeply appreciate the work that Walt Landscape Architects has done to bring this vision to life. It is truly a momentous occasion, and we can’t wait for the completion of the next playground,” said Kate Trambitskaya, Spence-Chapin Chief Executive Officer.

Project Play was launched in conjunction with the expansion of Spence-Chapin’s South Africa Granny Program, which pairs local volunteer caregivers from the community with children in orphanages, providing them with consistent, one-on-one attention and care to help them grow and form healthy attachments. Since the expansion commenced in the summer of 2019, the number of children served has grown from 30 to 108, with 40 new Grannies.

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Recreation and play contribute greatly to a child's brain development, physical growth, social skills, and emotional well-being. Walt Landscape Architects is a firm that designs and builds playgrounds to encourage child development, to improve motor and social skills, and to accommodate the needs of children of all ages.

Although play is a central part of the childcare philosophy among the four children's homes participating in the project, a lack of vital resources had made it impossible for the staff at these facilities to provide the materials and space required for child recreation. The design for the second playground, which will benefit the Princess Alice Children's Home, has been completed, and construction is set to begin soon.

To learn more about *Project Play* and the Granny Program, as well as how to support these initiatives, please visit www.spence-chapin.org/Granny-Program

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About Spence-Chapin

Spence-Chapin has been offering exceptional adoption and family services for more than 100 years. The organization helps find loving families for children whatever their needs or circumstances and provides counseling and support for all children and the families to whom they have been born or entrusted. Spence-Chapin's roots were established in the early 1900s with the pioneering work of Ms. Clara Spence and Dr. and Mrs. Henry Chapin, who created nurseries for infants abandoned on the streets of New York City, led humanitarian efforts, and created families for children of all abilities through adoption. Spence-Chapin has since expanded to include other comprehensive, award-winning support programs and has served more than 25,000 children, women, and families through domestic, international and special needs adoption, post-adoption support, and humanitarian aid programs such as the International Granny Program. Find out more at spence-chapin.org.

About Jo'Burg Child Welfare

Jo'burg Child Welfare (JCW) is one of South Africa's oldest non-profit organizations, founded in 1909. JCW provides a range of direct services to abused, abandoned, neglected, orphaned and vulnerable children (including those who are infected or have been affected by HIV and AIDS in the greater Johannesburg area).

Tags: Adoption, Humanitarian Aid, South Africa, Orphanage, Playground