



# YEAR *in* REVIEW

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THE ———  ———  
**CHARACTER  
COMPANY**  
RAISING BOYS TO BE GOOD MEN



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THE  CHARACTER  
COMPANY  

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RAISING BOYS TO BE GOOD MEN

The Character Company's 2016 Activity Report serves to highlight the programme objectives, including activities and achievements for 2016. We celebrate our achievements and thank our donors, supporters and participants for making 2016 a year of growth and great success.

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[www.thecharactercompany.co.za](http://www.thecharactercompany.co.za)



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Making children happy is one of the most rewarding things a person can do, and being able to make a difference in a child's life is a gift and a privilege. **I have no doubt we are making a difference in the lives of the boys we work with.**

*Michael Moore - TCC MENTor*

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# A company with Character



## OUR VALUES

The Character Company operates from a basis of integrity and the following **5 Core Values** are integral to our philosophy:

Honesty

Courage

Kindness

Respect

Self-discipline

These 5 Core Values form the basis of our interactions with each boy in the programme and behaviour that reflects these values is modelled and encouraged at all times.

## OUR MISSION

The Character Company is committed to raising boys to be good men. To achieve this we focus on a long-term mentorship and relationship building programme during which we work at instilling 5 Core Values - honesty, courage, kindness, respect and self-discipline - into each boy. We work with young boys between the ages of 5 and 10 as an intake age, but our long-term mentorship approach means that we will continue to be part of their lives throughout their school career and beyond

## OUR VISION

The Character Company makes a positive impact on society by assisting every boy in the programme to gain insight into himself, to make wise choices that will help him realise his full potential and to one day become a respectable man who, in turn, will inspire many others to do the same.

**Our dream is to have branches across the country, in both urban and rural areas, where many thousands of boys, currently growing up without the help and guidance of a caring father, can benefit from this programme.**





“

Young boys need a father figure. Someone who can show up, be present, lead by example, build lasting relationships, show support even when it is inconvenient or uncomfortable to do so. **I mentor because I believe that to whom much is given, much will be required.**

*Mitchell Gow - TCC MENTor*

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# Why MENtorships work



## OUR RATIONALE

There are many socio-economic factors that have influenced the breakdown we see in marriage, relationships and family life in South Africa; poverty, unemployment, the rising cost of basic commodities, the increase in crime, violence and abuse, a growing trend toward materialistic, status-driven lifestyles along with a general decline in old-fashioned family values, are just some of the issues that confront us today. HIV-Aids too, has decimated the population and the rise of child-headed households is a cause for grave concern. Single parent families have become the new norm. In most cases, it is the mother who is left alone to support her family and raise her children as best she can, working long hours away from the home and obliged to leave her children in the care of others. For many moms, this is stressful and exhausting. For children, it can be devastating and particularly so for boys.

We should never underestimate the powerful influence of the same-sex parent. The void left in a boy's life by an absent father is all too often filled with anger, bitterness, guilt and a host of insecurities that can result from the lack of a positive role model.

**I believe that we, as men, need to step up and help fill this aching gap in the lives of boys without dads. Indeed, I believe that it is our responsibility to do so, not only for the benefit of the boys but also for the good of our society as a whole.**

The Character Company represents the values with which I was raised. I strongly believe that the Core Values, as promoted by the Character Company, will result in the positive moulding of a boy's character, assisting him to become the man of integrity that he is destined to be. I feel honoured to be part of this work.

**Jaco van Schalkwyk.**

## Why 'long-term' MENtorships

As any parent knows, the job of parenting is not a short-term project. From the start we understood that we could not simply run a 6-month course on "how to deal with your absent father". There are so many milestones in a boy's life where he needs to talk/share with "dad". The Character Company believes in a long-term intervention, especially for problems that have grown and developed over a number of years - in many cases, for generations.

Our MENtors are invested in helping our Acorns through those transitional events and are committed to the long-term MENtorship programme. What that means is that we are offering to be part of the boy's (and his family's) life for as long as he needs us. As boys grow older their needs will change and we want the programme to grow with them so that the MENtor is always there to guide and support. A boy entering the programme is encouraged to build a relationship with his MENtor based on the 5 Core Values on page 1.

“

Our activities are about presenting opportunities to face your fears and conquer them, find obstacles and overcome them. Rock climbing and mountain biking are great ways to learn these life lessons. **I love sharing what I'm passionate about with the boys and seeing the difference it makes in their lives.**

*Willie Sapsford - TCC MENTor*

”



# Our Board



## Jaco van Schalkwyk - Dad, Founder and Director

After starting his career in the financial and corporate fields, Jaco moved into the NGO sector in 2001. He spent the majority of that time managing a non-profit organisation in Lanseria where he observed the impact of absent fathers on a daily basis. Along with the invaluable experience he gained in working with communities, as well as the NGO sector in general, his passion for the fatherless just grew

stronger and stronger. His “first-given” son, Michael, shaped his future and furthered his thinking around this devastating challenge.

*“In 2012 I lost the plot a little and the inevitable burn-out left me with sufficient hurt to turn my back on my calling, but (as always) God’s grace sufficed and out of the ashes He brought restoration and second chances and The Character Company was born as a result of that.”*



## Penny Marsh - Founder and Director

Penny was born and raised in Johannesburg. She has a B.A. in Sociology from the University of Cape Town but returned to Jo’burg, where she has lived ever since. Penny is married with two sons and two grandsons.

The importance of bringing up children to be happy, caring members of society has been something that has motivated Penny throughout her adult life. She volunteered in several

organisations, including *Guild Cottage, Child Welfare and Refilwe Community Project*. She also spent 3 years managing a volunteer referral service, *Volunteer Link*.

As a committed South African, Penny is immensely enthusiastic about the positive contribution she feels The Character Company can make to growing a happier, healthier nation.



## Johann Combrink - Director

Johann is a family man with two boys. William (8) and Jason (6) are his pride and joy and he is committed to raising them with good values. He is passionate about assisting men to be better men and also enjoys outdoor life. As part of this passion he has now joined Character Company as director to assist in this great organisation.

Johann is a qualified Chartered Accountant and has spent more than 10 years in multinational companies in various roles. He assists in some of the organisations processes, financial

management and strategic decisions.

God is a central part of his life and greatly influences his priorities and identity. He believes strongly that if we know who we are in Him we will be able to make wiser choices that will positively impact our society. Most of the social issues we face in South Africa have a root cause in fatherless homes and men who are not taking responsibility. Johann believes that we need to change this and that working with the young men at The Character Co is a great place to start.



## Thandeka Ngoma - Director

Thandeka is a marketing professional with over 10 years’ experience in managing products, strategy and communications for some of the biggest brands in the country. She has worked across several African markets and is passionate about capturing the hearts and minds of consumers in this diverse continent of ours.

Thandeka is a wife and mother to 2 princesses. Her number one priority is supporting her husband and giving a good foundation to her kids, enabling them to become independent, strong, God fearing women. She believes that

God is foundational and that everything she does should be to bring others closer to Christ. She also believes in South Africa and being the change we want to see in this country. She believes that men should be leaders in our homes, but recognises that the reality of our society does not reflect this picture, with a majority of homes headed by women.

*“Women are strong fighters who can do anything, but they can never fill the role of a man in a family or child’s life. This is why I am passionate about the work we are doing at The Character Company.”*



“

My son has changed from a shy introverted boy into confident person who speaks up and has found his voice. At school, he is one of the strongest achievers in his grade and strives to do his best. **I am so grateful to the MENTors for inspiring my son. Thank you for the impact you make in my son's life.**

*Onika's Mom - TCC Mom*

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## Our Staff



### Loraine van Schalkwyk - Social Worker

Loraine van Schalkwyk grew up in Klerksdorp and studied at the University of Potchefstroom to become a Social Worker. She has been practising as Social worker/Treatment professional since 1995.

She specialises in the field of addictions but is also involved in family and marital counselling as well as life-skills training for children and teenagers.

She is currently employed as a Chief Social worker and her main responsibility is the supervision of social workers in the field. She is a registered member of the South African Council for Social Service Professions.

## Our MENTors

### Willie Sapsford - MENTor

Willie Sapsford was born and grew up in Bloemfontein in the Free State. He matriculated in 2007 and completed his B.Sc. Quantity Surveying degree and honours in 2011 at the University of the Free State. He is currently involved in running The Character Company's afternoon programme. With his love for sport and the outdoors, Willie really wants to see how this can be utilised to make a difference and to teach specific life skills and values to the boys we work with.

### Francois Joubert - MENTor

Francois Joubert is a serial entrepreneur, speaker, business strategist, husband, and father. He is married to Yvette and they have two beautiful girls. Through speaking and coaching, Francois uses his life and business experience to help his clients achieve exceptional business results. His personal vision is to make a meaningful difference in people's lives and leave a legacy of significance.

### Michael Moore - MENTor

"Uncle Michael" is one of our trusted MENTors with a heart of gold. He is an industrial designer by trade, a caring animal lover and advocate for The Character Company by heart. Michael is our "arts & crafts" go-to guy amongst his many other amazing qualities.

### Shaun Barnes - MENTor

Shaun Barnes was born and raised on a family-owned Vine Nursery and Wine Estate and grew up to value family and the impact of that support structure in his life. Shaun is the MENTor for The Character Company's very energetic Newlands group and enjoys adding value into their lives and providing them with a positive male role model they can look up to and "enjoys inspiring youngsters to become good men."

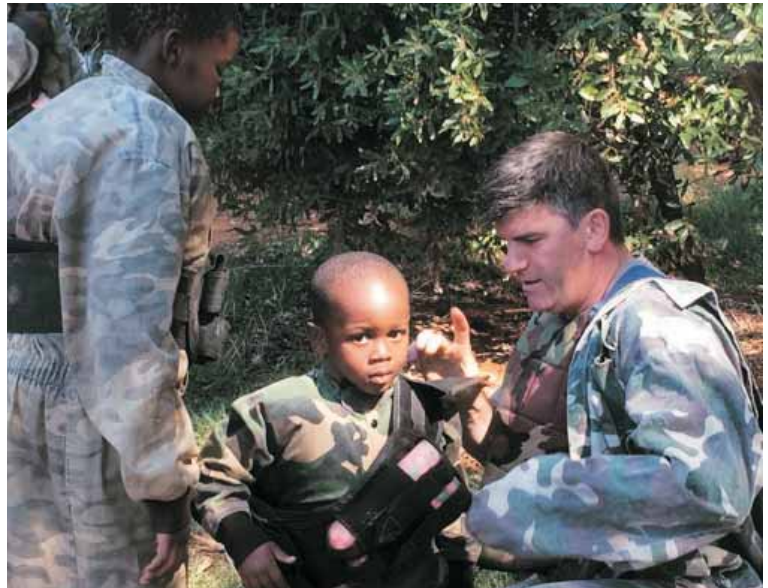
“ Brighton was petrified of the dark, he refused to enter any room without someone with him. Now he sleeps alone with the lights off. **He is now more structured and his daily routine is organised. He does his chores without any fuss or getting into any arguments. I am so proud and so thankful for the TCC mentors.** ”

*Brighton's Mom - TCC Mom*





# Our Programme



## WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

Each week, meetings are held for age-similar groups of boys. The groups are kept small (no more than 5 boys at a time) to ensure that every boy can participate fully in the activities and be given individual attention. During these meetings we discuss our 5 Core Values and what behaviours will accurately reflect those values.

## WEEKEND ACTIVITIES

We organise regular weekend activities during which the various groups can come together. This gives boys from different groups the opportunity to meet each other and make new friends. Families are also invited to special weekend meetings.


Our weekend activities are typically a hike, a picnic in the park or an outing to an event or venue.

## MOM'S SUPPORT GROUP

We run an extensive support programme for all the moms whose sons are participating in our MENTorship programme. We have seen several moms who are vulnerable and have very little or no support structures in place. While they are being the best dad's they can be, many moms usually have to fulfil a number of roles, leaving little time or energy to take care of themselves and their own needs.

Our Mom Support includes support group meetings, access to training, special events (including parenting workshops), access to professional services like counselling and financial training and in some extreme cases, we offer practical support such as food parcels and temporary school fee support.

We specifically separate the MENTorship of the boys from the support and assistance we offer the moms - our MENTors work with the young boys whilst our social worker engages with the moms. A number of discussions are held with the moms in order to get a detailed background of the family and insights into what the current behavioural issues are. Based on this information, the MENTors are then coached so that the correct interventions can be applied. We focus on protecting the various role players (MENTors and moms) and beneficiaries (boys on our programme) and continually monitor and evaluate those participating in our programmes.

A photograph of a river scene. In the foreground, two children are wading in the water. In the background, several people are standing on the muddy bank. The scene is surrounded by trees and vegetation.

Stander was never a confident child, he would not even attempt to do anything that challenged him. **Since joining TCC his confidence has grown leaps and bounds, he has learnt to ride a bike and will try anything new! The influence the MENTors have is also evident at school and his reports show consistent improvements.**

*Stander's Mom - TCC Mom*

# Our Character Camps



## EVENTS

We use various events to get the different groups to interact and meet - this allows for new friendships to be formed and often for moms and siblings to take part together and meet other families.

These events provide us with opportunities to enjoy different interactions with the boys, away from our regular weekly activities and provide an opportunity for those boys who are still on a waiting list to get introduced to the programme and see how it works. These are also usually longer activities as we host them on a Saturday and they are "different" and designed to enhance and enrich the programme experience. Special events include hiking trips, visits to places such as Gold Reef City, Bounce, Paintball, Outside Rock Climbing and the like.

## CAMPS

TCC camps are an extremely effective way to build strong relationships and get boys exposed to all kinds of activities and experiences. Camps are generally run with great precision and include a detailed programme that still allows for "off time" and opportunities to spend one on one time with the boys.

Camps generally include at least one night walk to see the stars and one sunrise, along with hiking and exercise every morning. At the start of camp the boys make up the camp rules - "Daar gaan jy" is used as a discipline tool that allows MENTors to send boys running for a pre-determined distance in instances when the camp rules have been broken.

Meal times are also very structured and boys line up for each meal. The rule is that you eat everything on your plate and that you must sit down and eat. Each boy is responsible for washing his own dishes and maintaining a tidy sleeping area. Camps are opportunities to interact socially, learn about boundaries, build relationships and learn more about one's self while having an awesome amount of fun. Our first camp in 2014 hosted a total of 7 boys. In the 2016 July school holidays, more than 50 boys attended the camps, which were held over the course of two weeks - clearly evidence of how popular our camps are and how our numbers are growing!



Our **2016 Activities Calendar** included the following:

JANUARY

01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
														MOM'S MEETING	
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	

FEBRUARY

01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29			

MARCH

01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
				FAMILY PICNIC				KRAV MAGA EXPERIENCE							
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	

APRIL

01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
											JUNIORS WEEKEND CAMP		ZOMBIE PAINTBALL		
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30		

MAY

01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
SUPER MOM'S DAY CELEBRATIONS															
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	

JUNE

01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
'THE WORLD NEEDS A FATHER' TRAINING WORKSHOP															
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30		

HOW RAD IS YOUR DAD  
FACEBOOK AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

JOHANNESBURG  
JURA RACE

JOHANNESBURG  
JUMA RACE

01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
WEEKEND CAMP INTRODUCTIONS					MINI ACORNS CAMPS				ACORNS TO OAKS JNR CAMPS				ACORNS TO OAKS SNR CAMPS		
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	

JULY

01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
FIGHT CLUB FOR BOYS						FIGHT CLUB FOR MOMS & BOUNCE FOR BOYS									
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	

AUGUST

01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
AFRICAN LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE CONFERENCE						GOLD REEF CITY THEME PARK VISIT									
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30		

SEPTEMBER

01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
HIKING TRIP		ORANGE RIVER RAFTING TRIP						PWC BIKE PARK FOR BOYS & CABANGA FUNDRAISER							
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	

OCTOBER


01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
SETSHABA SAFARIS WEEKEND CAMP						SELF ESTEEM MOMS WORKSHOP									
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30		

NOVEMBER

01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
YEAR END JNR CAMPS				YEAR END SNR CAMPS				TCC ACTIVITIES CLOSE							
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	

DECEMBER





“ Since starting school I have received weekly letters from teachers stating that Troy lacked concentration and would become disruptive in class. **Since joining the TCC programme, that has changed. Troy has applied himself and was awarded ‘Star Student’ this last year, with special mention of his polished manners.**”

*Troy's - TCC Mom*



# Curriculum Themes for the year



## THEMES

Along with the **5 values** we discuss with each boy every week, we have also chosen **10 themes** to work through during the year. These 10 themes form the foundation for our curriculum. The choice of these themes was based on the results of our 'What Is A Good Man' survey, our experience over the past few years and our vision of the kind of men we would like our boys to grow up to be. These themes are:

### FEBRUARY - Who am I

- I am a beloved son of God.
- I am a boy.
- My strengths and weaknesses.
- My likes and dislikes.

### MARCH - Communication

- What is communication?
- Forms of communication.
- Body language.
- How do I express myself?

### APRIL - Conflict management

- Why do you get angry? (*anger is an emotion*)
- Emotion vs. Action (*It is ok to get angry but not ok to lose control*)
- How to fight fair.
- How to express your opinion in a positive way.

### MAY - Relationships

- My relationship with God.
- My relationship with Self.
- My relationship with Others.
- My relationship with Girls.

### JUNE - Courage

- What is courage?
- Why do we need courage?
- How to challenge yourself.
- Saying no.

### JULY - Kindness

- Kindness to myself.
- Kindness to Mom.
- Kindness to others.
- Kindness to nature.

### AUGUST - Integrity

- What does integrity mean?
- Why is integrity important?
- Be a man of your word.
- Respecting others' beliefs.

### SEPTEMBER - Protector

- What is a MENTor?
- Protection vs. Abuse.
- Bullying.
- Asking for help.

### OCTOBER - Self Discipline

- Why is self-discipline important?
- Watch what you watch.
- Decision making skills.
- Anger management.

### NOVEMBER - Respect

- Respect yourself.
- Respect for others.
- Respect for authority.
- Respect for the environment.







## Our Journey



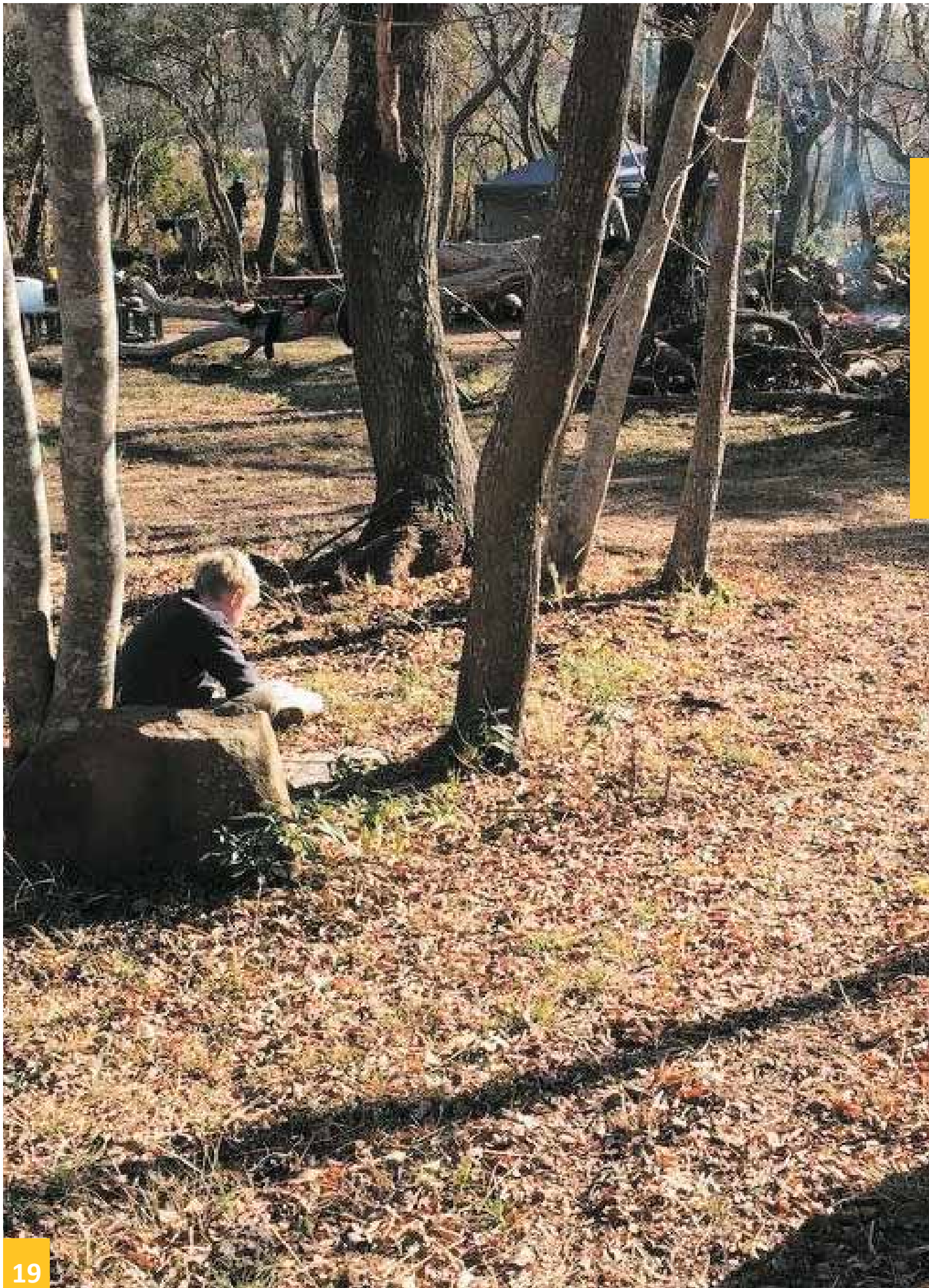
### LOOKING BACK

As I look back over the last 4 years since we planted that very first acorn I am amazed at the journey we have been privileged to be a part of. By the grace of God we have found a solution to one of the biggest challenges with which our society is faced - fatherlessness. I remember those early days, trying to gather the stats to motivate the reason behind “The Character Company” and feeling so overwhelmed by the lack of information about the impact of absent fathers on our families and society and at the same time, being shocked to my core by those that were available.

***Did you know that a girl growing up in a township has a greater chance of being raped than of learning how to read and write?*** That stopped me cold. What are we, as men, doing to woman and children, to society, to our beautiful country ... and to ourselves? Over the past couple of years I have tested some of the statistics

available and what I found is that, if anything, they underestimate the problem. I think this is what created the driving force behind *The Character Company* - raising boys to be good men - because we desperately need them.

So, *The Character Company* was born and I would have loved to say that we had it all figured out ... sorry, we still don't have - we are a massive work in progress but I am encouraged by that progress. As small as the numbers are, (just over 50 boys), we are removing that number from the current rape and crime statistics by providing positive male role models to MENTor them - on a long term basis and from a young age. We realised early on that we could not simply run a 6 month course on 'How to deal with your absent father'. Long-term intervention, from an early age, is the best solution to this massive problem. One-on-one time would be ideal but we simply do not have sufficient MANpower for that. Therefore, small groups of 5 boys per MENTor is our best-practice model for the time being. Fortunately, we have been blessed with a growing number of amazing MENTors who are committed and dedicated to changing the lives of young boys growing up without dads. We need many more. I suspect that this will remain one of those problems where the demand is far greater than the supply.







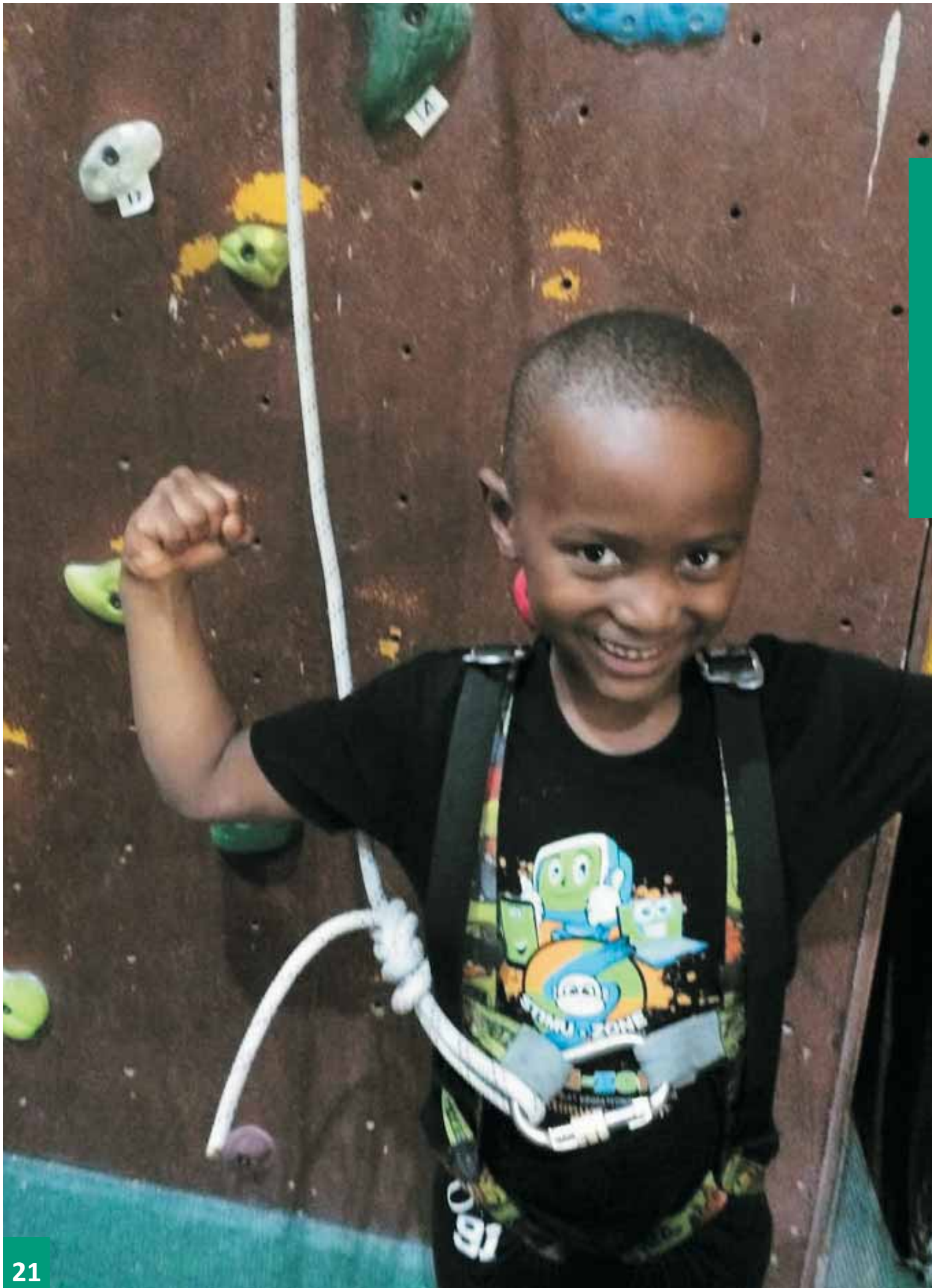
As I write this, I am more privileged than I was yesterday because I got to spend time with a group of amazing young boys who are growing up to be remarkable young men. But I am also more burdened today because I have seen and experienced more of the negative impact of absent fathers on their lives. Seeing them once a week and being able to play a part in shaping their lives is so much more than they have at the moment, but so much less than they deserve. From our 4 year olds to our 14 year olds, we are learning valuable lessons and making lasting impacts - slowly but surely.

**Our greatest challenges remain the human and financial resources to make sure that the Acorn that was planted can grow into a strong Oak Tree - sustainability!**

The responsibility is massive, as every decision and action impacts the lives of these young men we are shaping. We are experiencing growing pains like any other “start up” out there but we are blessed to see it grow, day by day. With every new MENTor or Fatherhood Ambassador joining the team we are building organisational capacity, networks, curriculum, monitoring and evaluation structures, new ideas and

new opportunities. And with all of that we are grappling with the concept of “Social Franchising” - how do we get men from all over the country and from different walks of life, different cultures and beliefs to come together with one single purpose - raising boys to be good men. With every opportunity we shine a brighter light on the impact of absent fathers, get more conversations going and challenge society’s “status quo” on this issue.

May you find our very first “activity report” informative and positive, but most of all may it challenge you to take a moment and consider that we can either stand on the sidelines and criticise or we can get into the game and make it change. I look forward to seeing you on the field.





# Social Worker's Report



## ACTIVITY REVIEW

Since the rationale for the need of a social worker's assistance with this programme has already been stated previously, I shall keep this report brief and simply give you the facts about what we've done so far this year.

**We have 37 boys who are seen by their MENTors for one afternoon each week and a further 15 boys who join us for the weekend activities. This brings the total number of boys in the programme to 52.**

There are 48 moms in our support group - some moms have two boys in the programme - and, since February, we have hosted 37 meetings. During these meetings we have addressed a number of important issues ranging from depression, grief and loss, behavioural and learning problems, to good parenting practices and techniques for coping as a single mom. These support group meetings not only provide moms with the opportunity to socialise, share their experiences and vent some of their frustrations in a safe and supportive environment but also provide the opportunity for the learning of practical and applicable life skills.

During this year we have also made 8 visits to schools after receiving requests for assistance from moms.

The areas we cover are: Northriding, Rivonia, Cresta, Fairland, Northcliff, Newlands, Boskruin, Sharonlea, Weltevreden Park and Krugersdorp.

We are very grateful for the support we've received from the media. To date, we've enjoyed exposure on:

### RADIO

Classic FM, RSG, 94.7FM, 702Talk, SAFM and Cliff Central.

### TELEVISION

CCTV, DagbreekTV, eNCA and E News.

### PRINT

Metro Beeld, Rapport and Family Matters.





## Our Donors



### PRICE WATERHOUSE COOPER

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At PwC we are actively incorporating consideration of corporate responsibility and sustainability into our core business strategy and operations. We do this because our purpose - to build trust in society and solve important problems, drives our desire to be a part of the global conversation and movement towards responsible business practices that create positive change in the world.

Our local approach to Corporate Responsibility is centered on leveraging our specific strengths, opportunities and core skills as a professional services firms, to create measurable business and social value-enhancing outcomes.

Providing our services on a pro bono and discounted fee basis is an important part of how we help our communities thrive. We provide audit and advisory services to a diverse range of non-profit organisations annually. We also lend our support to these organisations through the time that our Partners and people commit to board positions at non-profit organisations.

By lending our time, skills and expertise to assist non-profit organisations such as the Character Company, we enable non-profits to achieve their missions and better serve our communities.



### TIDY FILES

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Tidy Files is a proud supporter of The Character Company. We have always respected traditional family values, and as such the core function of the organisation resonates with our own company values. We applaud the values The Character Company instills in the boys it supports, and are happy to align ourselves with such a worthy initiative.



### NOW MEDIA

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We have seen first hand how quickly the children, given time with a father figure, are able to adopt decent values that immediately impact on their lives now and hopefully the community in the future. It is not often one finds such a worthwhile cause where every Rand donated works so hard. That is why Now Media continues to support the activities of The Character Company.

### HENK

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As a father I come to understand, in a new way just how vulnerable children with absent fathers are. Unthinkable what harm would come to my children if I was not there. I was inspired by the dedication, love and passion that Michael Moore (Character Company Mentor) has displayed towards these boys. He speaks almost of nothing else! My support is in some small way an attempt to be part of - and to encourage that excellent work.





# Our Partners



## FORGOOD

When The Character Company registered on forgood, it was very clear from the start that the organisation was a perfect fit for forgood.

The Cause (what we call NPOs on the platform) is run by such an engaged and proactive person. Jaco made sure that he understood how the platform works and the best ways to make sure that The Character Company gets the most out of forgood.

He has one of the most active profiles on forgood, the needs that the organisation has uploaded are some of the most creative and popular on the site.

Working with such a great initiative has been an absolute pleasure and we hope to be able to have a long relationship with The Character Company going forward as forgood.



## IMPERO CONSULTING

“I met Jaco at a gathering in Northriding, and heard about The Character Company there. His story simply amazed me, and I knew I had to become involved with such a worthy charitable organisation. So many people (albeit great, don’t get me wrong...) do the “simple” things: providing food, or clothes, or giving money. The Character Company does SO MUCH MORE!

Taking on a long term commitment to a single household, standing in as absentee fathers to boys who often have adjustment issues, trying to see them through from the time their paths cross until the troubled young boy leaves matric as a confident young man with great values is nothing but EXTRAORDINARY.

Of course, financial support is very important, but a charity such as this deserves more than just my money. They deserve my time, too. That is why I have built their website.”





# Our vision moving forward



## DEVELOPMENT AND EXPANSION PLANS

As one of the founding directors of The Character Company (TCC) I've been privileged to watch its growing success and to get involved in the development of its operational model. As one who is passionate about raising kids to feel that they're important role players in their families and society as a whole, I've found it thrilling to see how TCC's model resonates with a wide range of people who are aware that single moms need support and their sons need special guidance to become good men.

As the North Riding operation has grown, lessons have been learnt that have helped us design a formal curriculum that will enable us to expand TCC's programme into other parts of Gauteng and the rest of South Africa. During the last year Lorraine and I have worked to get this curriculum formulated with input from a curriculum expert and from Jaco with his experience of what works.

In the process of developing our programme we had to recognise a number of factors that impact its effectiveness, such as shortage of time and the short attention span of boys after a morning in school! Other factors included facilitation of record keeping so that progress could be monitored and each boy's particular challenges noted for follow up. Also we have to be flexible enough so that different groups in different areas can make best use of the resources available to them.

Monthly themes provide the framework for the curriculum. At every group session TCC's 5 core values are tied in with the themes, AS OUTLINE ON PAGE 16. Bible stories and characters are often used to illustrate topics. Moms are kept informed of each month's focus so that they can reinforce TCC's messages at home.

Our aim is to roll out the TCC model in 3 new areas in 2017. The key challenges as we work towards that goal are fundraising and engaging the right mentors. The length of our waiting list has shown us that we'll have no difficulty finding single moms needing support as they try to raise their boys to be good men.

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