

TIAS ARMS 2025



HEARTBEAT
NEWSLETTER
MARCH 2026

TIAS  ARMS

WWW. TIAS ARMS.ORG

A Word from our President

Dear Tias Arms Family

Twenty-five years ago, Joanne Baker, our founder, an operating room nurse from Newport Beach, took a trip home to her beloved South Africa. Joanne was born and schooled in South Africa and what she witnessed on that trip in 2001 would be indelibly stamped forever in her heart and mind. The HIV and AIDS pandemic had decimated a generation of adults, leaving, in a wake of utter despair, an enormous number of orphaned children. The HIV pandemic took hold in the 1980's and South Africa very quickly became ground zero for the highest infection rates worldwide. Fast forward 25 years and South Africa and Eswatini still have the world's highest infection rates. The downstream effects of geopolitical and socio-economic impact have remained as an ongoing, ubiquitous challenge.

Our north star are the children of South Africa. Not only do they represent the innocent victims, but they are the future of the country. They are where we witness, first-hand, the massive impact of our collective kindness and compassion. The children are where we place the smallest investments, knowing that we will receive the greatest yield.

Over the years, TIAS ARMS has found deeply inspiring organizations in need of funding. Four of these sites are in the state, or province of Kwazulu-Natal, and three are in in Cape Town. Seven sites. Hundreds of children. However, it is not just the facts and statistics that motivate us, a board of volunteers, to continue our hard work; it is the personal stories of triumph over hardship and hope over adversity that spurs us on. It is our partnership with the caretakers, staff and heroic people in South Africa that in turn move us to do good in perpetuity.

We relied on you to complete this cycle of hope, success, compassion and change, and as donors, you delivered!

2025 was our most successful year of fundraising ever! Our year end board meeting culminated with huge success as we were able to deliver around \$170 000 in grants to all those we support. In addition, in 2025 the board visited South Africa to maintain our deep connection.

Words are inadequate in expressing our gratitude.

On behalf of the children of South Africa, who know you, who feel and acknowledge your generosity, THANK YOU!

With heartfelt gratitude,

Belinda Stewart-Burger
President of the Board
TIAS ARMS



OUR MISSION STATEMENT

TIAS ARMS IS A NON-PROFIT, NON-DENOMINATIONAL ORGANIZATION THAT BELIEVES IN PROVIDING A DIGNIFIED, NURTURING, AND COMPASSIONATE ENVIRONMENT FOR ORPHANED AND ABANDONED CHILDREN AFFECTED BY HIV AND AIDS IN SOUTH AFRICA



Pictured above: Never Never Land student in his heritage costume. Right: Principal Zandile Mdladla and TIAS ARMS founder, Joanne Baker,



TIAS ARMS is a non-profit organization, tax exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, and contributions are tax deductible to the fullest extent permitted by law. Our tax identification number is 87-0692743

TIAS ARMS has been awarded PLATINUM GOLD STAR RATING

WAVES FOR CHANGE

IMPACT REPORT

HOT MEALS

SUFT THERAPY

TRANSPORT

WAVES FOR CHANGE surf therapy is a non-profit organization that provides mental wellness support to adolescents growing up in high stress environments. These adolescents are disproportionately affected by HIV and AIDS. The coaches are program alumni who provide mentorship, friendship and the tools to develop social and emotional wellbeing. TIAS ARMS proudly supported transportaion and the daily hot meal after their surfing session. Thank you donors for making this happen!



Pictured above right: Board members Joy Freeman and Vice President Doris Gordon.
Below: Board members and volunteers join coaches in a surfing and team building coaching session.

HOKISA

HOMES FOR KIDS IN SOUTH AFRICA

IMPACT REPORT
HOUSING THERAPY EDUCATION



Opened by the Archbishop Desmond Tutu in 2005, HOKISA is a childrens home based in the township of Masiphumelele. HOKISA cares for children in a safe nurturing home offering them rescue from unsafe environments and abandonment related to HIV and AIDS. Your role in supporting TIAS ARMS has ensured that the vital work of provding food, shelter, education and social support has continued.



Pictured above right: Board member Denise Fernandez enjoying a hug.
Above and below: The board with Hokisa staff and Manager, Mr. Phillip Rihlampfu.



OUR KWAZULU NATAL SITES

NEVER NEVER LAND FULL SERVICE SCHOOL

IMPACT REPORT

EDUCATION MEALS TRANSPORTATION TEACHERS SALARIES
VEGETABLE GARDENS LIBRARY SHELTER

LETTER OF THANKS FROM PRINCIPAL MS. ZANDILE MDLADLA

Dear Friends at Tias Arms,

I write today with a heart overflowing with gratitude. Your generosity has stretched far beyond the school gates, touching lives in ways that words can scarcely capture.

Because of your funding, young people who once faced hunger, cold nights, and uncertainty found shelter, warmth, and nourishment. Blankets were bought to shield them from the winter chill, a gas heater warmed the container classrooms where they studied late into the night, and meals—breakfast, lunch, and dinner—gave them strength to face each day. These acts of care began when they were just 14 or 15 years old, and today we celebrate the remarkable journeys they have taken because of you.

Lusanda pursued a career in the medical sector. His results, which I have shared, are a testament to his determination and the foundation you helped provide.

Lindelani was able to attend Love Howick courses through your support. He now works at Coffeeberry in Hilton and has already started his own small business selling milkshakes—a young entrepreneur with hope in his eyes.

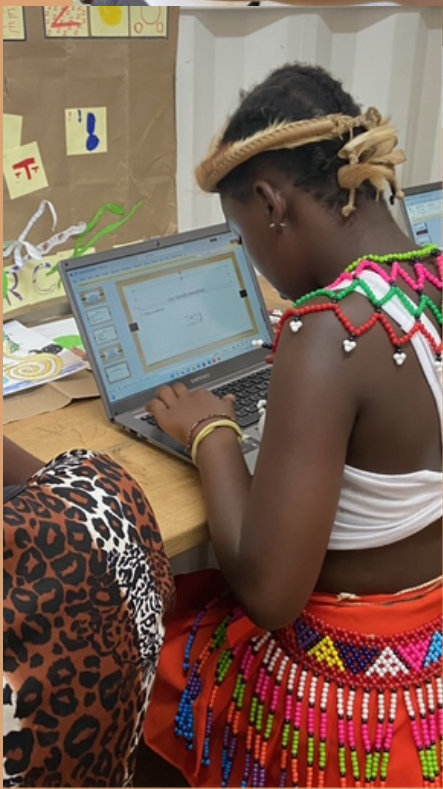
Awande, who endured unthinkable neglect and trauma, finished school and is now in her second year at university, studying towards a Human Resources Diploma. Her resilience is extraordinary, and your kindness gave her the chance to rise above her circumstances.

Without Tias Arms, these stories would not have been written. These young people would not have finished high school, nor stepped into the futures they now embrace. You may be miles away from us, but your impact is felt deeply here—in every classroom warmed, every meal shared, and every success celebrated.

On behalf of the young lives you have helped transform, thank you. Your partnership is not only financial—it is a lifeline, a beacon of hope, and a testimony of love in action.

Pictured: Mrs Zandile Olga Mdladla,
Founder and Principal of Never Never Land
Full Service School





Pictured above left:
Board member Donna Worsham
with children at Never Never Land.
Above: School Librarian Nosipho
Ndlovu
Center:
President Belinda Stewart-Burger,
Ms. Zandile Mdladla and visting past
pupils.

NEVER NEVER LAND SCHOOL GETS A NEW CAR!!!

Thanks to YOU, our generous donors, TIAS ARMS was able, in 2025, to purchase a car to be used for transporting the children.

The thrill of making this dream a reality was indescribable for both the board members and the recipients alike!

Transportation costs have been an enormous burden for the school with children and staff having use taxis for essential trips and emergencies. Operations moving forward, can take place with improved efficiency thanks to the gift of readily available transportation!

Thank you for making this happen!



Pictured above: The new car arriving at the school escorted by cheering, singing dancing and ulatating students!

KHAZIMULU CHILDRENS HOME

IMPACT REPORT

**FOOD SCHOOL UNIFORMS SHOES SANDPLAY THERAPY MARIMBA
SPECIAL PROJECTS EXTRA TUITION TRANSPORT SALARIES**

Your donations have ensured our continued support of this children home nestled in the green hills of Lidgetton.

From humble beginnings, Khazimulu has grown to provide safe housing, around-the-clock caregivers, social workers, psychology services, marimba lessons, and nutritious meals. Children affected by HIV and AIDS are placed at Khazimula to ensure psychosocial and emotional support as well as growth and learning.

THANK YOU!

TIAS ARMS is excited to announce Khazimula's latest project! An Education Container sponsored by Mr. Dwight Decker has been installed. This room will be a safe place for the children to do their homework, work on computers and engage in learning and research.



Board member Hayley Price-Sanchez hamming it up with the Khazimula girls.

Below left: Charles Gordon, husband of VP Doris Gordon seen here with the Khazimula boys.



ST. JOSEPHS PRE-SCHOOL

IMPACT REPORT EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION TEACHERS SALARIES HIV OUTREACH TRANSPORTATION MEALS



Thank you for continuing to support early childhood education! At St. Joseph's Pre school children get to have a great start in their schooling. Your generosity gives them teachers, a hot meal and transportation to and from school every day.

MIDLANDS HOSPICE

IMPACT REPORT HIGH CALORIC FOOD PROGRAM

THANK YOU LETTER FROM MIDLANDS HOSPICE

Dear Belinda and all Board Members of Tias Arms
As we come to the end of another year, I would like to take a moment to personally thank our Tias Arms family for your loyal support of Midlands Hospice.
Regular giving is the quiet strength behind our work - it gives us stability, allows us to plan ahead, and ensures that we can respond when someone needs us most. Please know that your many years of support have made a real and lasting impact on thousands of lives!

It was wonderful for us to meet so many of you this year and to have the opportunity to share more deeply the impact of your funding. I hope that our monthly reports don't simply bring you numbers and assurance that the funds are being properly spent, but also help you, over time, to 'get to know' the children you are supporting and to feel part of their journey into adulthood.
There are indeed sad and disappointing stories - ones we must eventually accept, not for lack of trying - but we are grateful that these are not the norm. More often, we are privileged to witness progress, resilience, and success. Your support makes this possible.



Pictured: Midlands Hospice Social Care Worker Ntombisi Thabetne and board members Joanne Baker, Hayley Price-Sanchez and Donna Worsham

TIAS ARMS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

In 2024, the children graduating 7th grade at Never Never Land school deserved to attend a good high school.

Schooling is not free in South Africa and unaffordable to so many students. TIAS ARMS embarked on an ambitious scholarship program which would partner each student with a sponsor. 2025 was the students first year and they excelled beyond imagination, earning the highest academic scores for their grade.

The students are attending three high schools: Heritage Academy, Etham College and Marion High.

To our sponsors, THANK YOU!

You have changed their lives forever!



**If you are interested in sponsoring
a high school student
please contact
Joanne Baker: 949-375-0616
or Belinda Stewart-Burger: 562-841-5537**



SOUTH AFRICA 2025 :Memories from our VICE PRESIDENT

By

Doris E. Gordon

TIAS ARMS Board members and friends traveled to Cape Town, Durban, and Howick South Africa. Our founder Joanne Baker and our president Belinda Stewart Burger are native South Africans. They return to South Africa annually to visit family and friends and our TIAS ARMS grantees. For many in the group, this was the first visit to South Africa. The country is very beautiful. The panoramic view from the top of Table Mountain was breath taking. Cape Point, where the Atlantic Ocean and the Indian Ocean intersect, was majestic. Several members of the group visited the beautiful Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens. The Mandela Capture Site and museum and Robben Island were all so moving. The more adventurous group members opted for a little ziplining and mountain climbing! A major and memorable portion of the trip was visits to the organizations that TIAS ARMS has supported throughout the years.

1. Grandmothers Against Poverty and AIDS - greeted us with a traditional African dance. Over the years, GAPA has evolved from a group of community grannies feeding orphaned children affected by HIV AIDS into a senior center and quality after school program. They were so proud of the new cooking stove that TIAS ARMS provided a few months earlier. They shared aspects of the grandmother's health and fitness program as well as the after-school program that TIAS ARMS supports.
2. Home for Kids in South Africa (HOKISA) - we met the staff, children, and toured the facility. We left with a better understanding of how this orphanage creates a nurturing family environment. Many of the children come to HOKISA very young and remain there until they reach the age of 18. At HOKISA, the older children live together with an emphasis on learning life skills and self-sufficiency. They have the option to transition to a home not far from HOKISA until they reach the age of 21. They must work or attend school, and they must pay for their keep. I met one of its earliest residents, Sive. Sive came to HOKISA when he was only 3 months old. Joanne Baker bought his first crib. Sive is now 23 years old and working with marine biologist taking groups out on the ocean and to study and examine marine life.
3. Khazimula - we saw the new van that TIAS ARMS raised funds through a special appeal in 2024. It is so important to have reliable transportation to get the children to the various schools, sporting events, medical appointments, and shopping. The children gave a wonderful marimba concert and their budding violinist performed for us. It was amazing to see how much the programs for the children have developed since my 2019 visit. In 2019, the average stay was two years. I was told that the children now stay on average 5+ years. This stability has allowed the creation of a home-like atmosphere. The children are engaged in therapy, sports such soccer, and the marimba group perform at community events. The young violinist was selected for a group to perform in Cape Town.
4. Midlands Hospice - visit with the staff. They provided an update on the status of HIV AIDS in South Africa. Statistics have been difficult to obtain since COVID. However, South Africa remains one of the leading countries affected by HIV AIDS.
5. Never Never Land School - greeted us with the red-carpet treatment. The children from all seven grades and preK danced and performed. Seeing the NNL Library that TIAS Arms funded and opened in 2023 was so rewarding. We met Carol Brebner, a retired librarian and longtime volunteer at NNL School. Carol was our boots on the ground overseeing every aspect of the library. She did a wonderful job! Carol also has been instrumental in training the current librarian Nosipho. Carol and Nosipho are quite a team. The resources are very well managed, and they have developed a reading program and books for all grades. They are also teaching the children how to use the library computers for research.
6. St. Joseph Preschool – beautiful three- and four-year-old preschoolers thriving and learning English.
7. Waves4Change - on the beach in Muizenberg one Saturday morning and participated in the activities with the coaches and surfers. Surf therapy provides mental wellness support to adolescents. Two of the coaches were former HOKISA residents. It was wonderful seeing them all grown up and thriving.

In addition to visiting the grantees, we also had an opportunity to go on Safari for three days. It was truly a wonderful experience. We stayed in elevated tents. There were morning and evening drives to see the animals start and end their day. We saw the big 5 (minus the leopard) and many other animals. The animals can get very close to the jeep. Great photos. The sunsets were breath taking.

As our adventure came to an end, some headed to other African countries while others headed home with wonderful memories and hearts full of inspiration.

SAVE THE DATE!

For our annual Jazz event!

August 23, 2026

at Campus Jax



**TO MAKE A DONATION TO TIAS ARMS
SCAN THE QR CODE BELOW**



GET INVOLVED!!!

TIAS ARMS NEEDS VOLUNTEERS!

If you are interested in volunteering
or becoming a board member,
please contact

Joanne Baker
at 949-375-0616

TIAS ARMS FACTS TO KNOW!

- 13% of the population in South Africa is HIV positive.
- 0.4% of the population of the US is HIV positive
- 17% of 15-47 year olds in South Africa are HIV positive
- 33% of pregnant women in South Africa are HIV positive
- 1-3% of children are estimated to be HIV positive
- South Africa is the country with the greatest disparity in income and wealth
- TIAS ARMS gives 97c per dollar to our grantees!
- All board members are unpaid volunteers
- YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE !
- YOU ARE APPRECIATED!

