

KERATOCONUS

FOUNDATION SOUTH AFRICA

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Trust no. IT000597/2017 (D)
SARS PBO ref no. **930062214**

Dear Partners and Friends

The **Keratoconus Foundation of South Africa (KFSA)**, a non-profit organisation, engages in various partnerships in the quest to change the lives of children living with Keratoconus. Our clinical partnerships have successfully grown and strengthened, enabling us for over a year now, to treat indigent children with corneal transplants, INTACS, CXL and contact lenses as needed.

Since inception, we have been overwhelmed by the need for treatment. The **KFSA Team**, and partner **Dr Lourens Coetzee of Envision for Sight** decided to undertake a Corneal Transplant Marathon for 10 children with severe visual impairment caused by advanced keratoconus. The 10 children were from Limpopo (1), Kwa Zulu Natal (1), Mpumalanga (2), Eastern Cape (3), Gauteng (3). The majority of the children were referred through a partnership with the National Department of Health whilst 4 were referred through our private practitioner partners.

Realizing that undertaking transplant surgery for 10 children on 1 day was going to be a huge task, we decided to call on various other partners to join us in the endeavour. We are most grateful to all the partners and friends who came together to ensure that this initiative was conducted in accordance with our mission.

1. The specialist team (*ophthalmologists*: Dr Lourens Coetzee & Dr Precious Phatudi; *anaesthetist*: Dr Pieter Lategan) and the entire clinical, administrative, legal, cleaning and security staff at the Envision for Sight ophthalmology practice for the support provided to the Foundation. Of special note is the high level of professionalism, the genuine compassion and utmost respect shown to both the patients and care-givers. The service standards as detailed in *Batho Pele Principles* were clearly applied by all concerned.
2. The Board members, theatre and ward nurses and the administrative personnel at CORMED Private Hospital in Vanderbijlpark, Gauteng for the generous offer to utilize the facility and the excellent level of care afforded to each child. The nurses in theatre and wards showed each child kindness, care and warm encouragement right until the last child came out of theatre just before midnight. This was most comforting to the children, KFSA team and anxious parents/guardians.
3. The National Eye Care Co-ordinator at the NDOH, Mr France Nxumalo, who initiated their partnership and facilitated the provincial co-ordination. Mr

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Nxumalo shared our burden for the children that were on the transplant lists from the different provinces.

4. The DOH and private optometrists, ophthalmologists and medical officers who diagnosed the children, assisted with their applications to the KFSA and attended the clinical training and patient profiling workshop. Ongoing practitioner education is promoted to ensure quality co-management care is administered to the graft recipients pre and post surgery.
5. The optometrists who generously donated some of the eye medication that were supplied to the children.
6. The restaurants and other private individuals in Vanderbijlpark for assisting with some of the meals for children and care givers.
7. The owner of the Shakespeare Inn in Vanderbijlpark for offering a subsidized rate for the patient & caregiver accommodation.
8. The Red Cross Air Mercy Service, KZN DOH and Gauteng Emergency Medical Services for helping to transport our child from northern KZN with her mother.
9. The practitioners, friends and family who graciously donate to the Keratoconus Foundation of SA to help us undertake the various treatment protocols for keratoconic patients.
10. Allergan and Baush & Lomb for supporting the practitioner training sessions.
11. Volunteers who gave up the weekend to assist the KFSA team.
12. The friends, colleagues and family from around the world whose ongoing prayers, encouragement and support gave the KFSA and Envision Surgical Team the courage and strength to plan and execute this mammoth initiative.

The coming together of this diverse group of partners highlights the strength of partnerships. The initiative, valued at over 1 million rands, was only achievable by the goodwill, kind generosity and commitment to improving the lives of others by all the mentioned partners. Some of the children who received donor corneas had already dropped out of school and by your kind support, you not only enabled the medical care but you also helped redefine the child's future.

The KFSA TEAM acknowledges and appreciates each partner without whom this corneal transplant marathon will not have materialized.

Kind Regards

Vanessa, Tate & Laurent



MEMORIES OF THE 2019 CORNEAL TRANSPLANT MARATHON



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