

The
LifeMatters
Foundation

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

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PURPOSE

The LifeMatters Foundation believes that every life matters and deserves our help to build strong foundations to discover their worth and to reach their full potential.

MISSION

Our mission is to provide holistic support in the form of academic and life skills intervention, so that children are equipped to reach their full potential and become active citizens.

VALUES

We believe:

- That God has a plan and a purpose for each person's life
- That hope drives purpose
- That it is our responsibility to advocate for children's rights
- That active citizenship transforms communities
- That all people deserve respect
- That diversity should be celebrated
- That equity is the first step towards restoration
- That integrity and honesty are the foundation of all relationships



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As I reflect on the year 2024, I am filled with immense pride in the achievements of the entire LifeMatters team.

Thanks to the dedication and hard work of everyone involved, we reached a monumental milestone—providing over 4,000 children with essential support in literacy, numeracy, counselling, and life skills. These are 4,000 children who would otherwise have faced significant challenges in reaching their academic potential or addressing emotional and mental health concerns.

I am particularly grateful to our 177 volunteers, whose selflessness and generosity made this possible. These remarkable individuals commit their time each week to guide and support learners in our numeracy and literacy centres, offering the personal attention necessary to help children become confident readers or catch up with the maths curriculum. Their contributions are truly invaluable.

In addition, we had the privilege of working with eight outstanding youth in our *iMatter* Internship Programme. These young individuals were exceptional in their daily support of our centre managers and learners. Their enthusiasm, work ethic, and dedication to both their own growth and the development of the children in our programmes left a lasting impact, and I am incredibly proud of their commitment.

Our *Teenage Awareness Programme* (TAP) team delivered a record number of programmes to both for-profit and beneficiary schools this year. The feedback we received from participants, teachers, principals, and parents was overwhelmingly positive, highlighting the significant benefits

of the programme. I am deeply proud of our TAP team for their willingness to tackle difficult topics and for creating a safe, non-judgmental space where young people could openly discuss issues that matter to them.

In September, we hosted our 14th Annual Auction Dinner Dance, raising an astounding R510,000! I am so proud of the team for organizing such a memorable and successful event. The generosity of our prize sponsors, event sponsors, and guests played a crucial role in the event's success, and I am truly grateful for their support.

Finally, I must express my heartfelt gratitude to our incredible donors. Your unwavering support ensures that our programs continue to thrive, directly impacting the lives of over 4,000 children. The partnerships we've built over the years are invaluable, and we are fortunate to have donors who genuinely feel a part of the difference we're making.

As I reflect on all we've accomplished, one word sums up my feelings for 2024: **Proud**. What an incredible year it has been! I'm confident that, together, we will continue to build on this success and impact the lives of even more deserving children in the year to come.

Thank you for your unwavering support.

With thanks,
Alnerié Turck

2024 CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

2024 has seen LMF move our 'Head Office' from operating out of a cabin at Connect Church to more modern office space at CHS Life Centre in Kirstenhof. It has invigorated the staff and given us a more professional look and feel.

We have remained committed to delivering our services to under-resourced schools, with ongoing programmes in Counselling, Teenage Awareness, Literacy and Numeracy. These initiatives continue to thrive, showcasing the tangible impact we have on individual success stories and contributing to the overall improved performance of the children we've supported. Our efforts have consistently helped these students outperform their peers, who, unfortunately, are not part of our programmes.

In September 2024, we made the difficult decision to end our 10-year partnership with Steenberg Primary due to management challenges that made our continued involvement unsustainable. While this decision was both heartbreaking and unavoidable, it paved the way for us to begin providing literacy and numeracy support at iThemba

Primary School, where we already had a dedicated counsellor in place. We also agreed to take over the running of the Rosmead Primary Literacy Centre after Shine Literacy closed their doors in March of 2024.

Once again, it is my privilege to acknowledge and thank the parties that make it possible for us to do what we do; our volunteers, our staff and our donors. Without any one of these amazing groups we would not be able to operate and make a difference in the lives of disadvantaged children in our area. We look back on 2024 with thanks to the God we serve as we seek to serve others.

With thanks,
Peter Withey





LIFESKILLS PORTFOLIO

COUNSELLING

Report by: Siphesande Mfaku

Our Counsellors had a busy start to 2024 as we focused on laying a strong foundation for the year ahead.

Building this firm foundation has been critical in providing the essential psychosocial support that the children at our beneficiary schools need. A major part of our team's work this year was engaging with parents and caregivers. We connected with 294 parents and teachers across our centers to discuss the children's progress and explore how they could contribute to the overall well-being of the children. It's been inspiring to witness the growing number of parents and teachers actively involved in the psychosocial development of the children.

We have provided individual counselling to 531 children across our centres. Individual counselling is a critical aspect of our work as it offers personalized support tailored to each child's unique needs. It provides a safe space for children to address personal challenges, express their emotions, and work through complex issues that may not be easily communicated in group settings. This one-on-one support is vital in fostering emotional resilience and improving overall well-being.

Additionally, 533 individuals (parents, teachers, and children) benefited from our groups and workshops. These group sessions serve as a valuable opportunity to engage with larger communities, where shared learning, mutual support, and collaborative discussions can create a collective impact. Whether it's raising awareness, building skills, or providing resources, these workshops help to extend our support to the wider community, ensuring that both children and adults

have the tools they need to navigate challenges and promote mental health.

Throughout the year, we also had the opportunity to run several classroom and school-wide engagements. At Steenberg Primary, we facilitated a bullying workshop with Grade 7 learners, in collaboration with the Life Orientation teacher. This workshop was a response to several bullying referrals from teachers and aimed to equip students with skills to effectively handle bullying situations. It was heartening to see the teacher and counsellor work together to create a safe, supportive space for the students to learn.

In April, Steenberg and surrounding areas were impacted by gang violence, and our counsellor, Natalie, discovered that some students had family members involved in gangs, with a few even being recruited. To address this, Natalie invited Jonathan Jansen from Love Out Loud to conduct a workshop for the Grade 6 and 7 learners about the dangers and deceptions of gang involvement and the importance of making healthy connections.

Another highlight of the year was when our counsellor at Sullivan Primary School organised a Children's Rights activity. The learners created a vibrant poster that is displayed at the school, serving as a reminder of their rights. Additionally, we organized a special day for teachers and Life Matters staff to commemorate the 16 Days of Activism.



531 LEARNERS RECEIVED COUNSELLING INTERVENTION IN 2024!



Workshops

During Child Protection Week, we had the opportunity to run vital Child Protection workshops with Grade 6 learners at Sullivan Primary School where a key part of the session was helping students develop their safety networks.

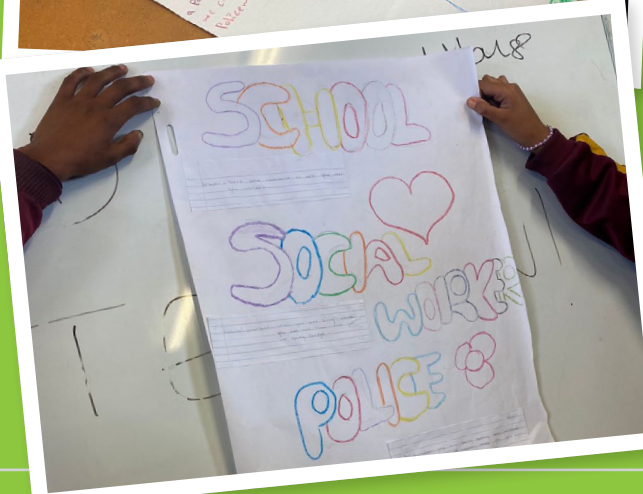
At Steenberg Primary, we distributed child-friendly posters to the teachers, highlighting key information about child abuse which were displayed in classrooms, allowing students to identify the signs of abuse and learn where to report any incidents.

At Lourier Primary School, our counsellor Rose conducted an informative workshop on ADHD, focusing on how the ADHD brain functions and providing teachers with strategies to support learners affected by ADHD.

At Westlake Primary, our counsellor received several referrals from Grade 1 teachers who expressed concern about inappropriate exposure among students. In response, Tsidi conducted a Body Awareness Talk for the Grade 1 learners. During the session, Tsidi introduced the PANTS rule—a simple guideline designed to help children understand personal boundaries and the importance of safety.



**533 INDIVIDUALS
BENEFITED FROM OUR
GROUPS & WORKSHOPS!**



Staff Development

Our counselling team had the opportunity to attend a workshop and networking session at Wynberg High School, which proved to be a productive and enriching experience. This event allowed us to build meaningful professional relationships, engage in thought-provoking group discussions, and exchange best practices with fellow counsellors. Our team also had the opportunity to attend a workshop by Lauren Snailham on Understanding Children's Drawings. This workshop was a valuable experience that deepened our understanding of how children use art as a form of self-expression.

In our ongoing commitment to supporting each other, we hold monthly supervision meetings. During these sessions, many counselors shared feelings of being “tired” and “overwhelmed” by the demands of the job. In response, we organized a team brunch designed to refresh and rejuvenate spirits while fostering a supportive atmosphere.

Reflecting on the year so far, the success stories underscore the importance of early intervention. The positive changes we've seen in the children's lives highlight how counselling can significantly enhance both emotional well-being and academic success. Our team's ongoing engagement in continuous training ensures that each child we serve feels heard and seen. While the statistics are important, the true impact of our work is reflected in the meaningful connections and encounters that happen during our sessions. These moments represent our ongoing commitment to building a community where mental well-being is not only prioritized but actively supported.

TEENAGE AWARENESS PROGRAMMES

Report by: Kayla-Tess Pattenden

2024 was a year of looking at expanding our core facilitation team enabling us to say 'yes' to more bookings confidently!

We are excited to have provided Kylie-Rae, Lerato and Arlene with additional training, enabling them to administer and lead programmes on their own. Going into 2025 we look forward to them hosting programmes. The growth in the facilitation team also allows for us to be more context sensitive matching the lead facilitator to the subjective contexts and needs of the school. This is an intentional move towards diversifying our programme delivery to truly resonate and connect with different teen populations across South Africa.

Our facilitator pool has grown a lot in 2024 due to regular training opportunities integrating quality, screened facilitators into our team. These trainings have also meant that Lead Facilitators are continuously mentoring our existing facilitators and troubleshooting issues that have come up in programmes past. Our team is so much stronger and secure in its mandate now! Ongoing training for our facilitators remains a priority in 2025 and beyond.



We spent some time at the start of the year with key stakeholders to work on content development, breathing new life into our workshop selection for the year. We aim to ensure that our programmes are always relevant and up to date with the needs of teenagers and pride ourselves in ensuring that every programme is tailored to the specific needs of the learners at the schools we go to. Our programmes cover a wide range of topics including self-esteem, sex, drug abuse, puberty, and bullying, to name a few.

2024 saw us maintaining relationships with our existing core clients, Cape Kids, Sweet Valley, Westcott, St Cyprians, WPPS and Oakley House. These for-profit programmes enabled us to provide free programmes to our beneficiary schools, Steenberg, Westlake, Sullivan, Lourier and iThemba Primary Schools. Moving into 2025, we want to expand our for-profit clients to ensure that we are able to provide programmes at more beneficiary schools. Our focus will therefore be on promoting and marketing the programmes to more schools.

In 2025 we are planning to do some LifeSkills workshops open to parents, educators, youth leaders and other child and youth care workers to expand our impact beyond the learners and into their homes and other spheres of their lives. These workshops will be charged for, enabling us to raise funds to further contribute to additional not-for-profit programmes.



A photograph of two young girls in a classroom setting, smiling at the camera. They are sitting at a wooden table, working with colorful sticks (likely popsicle sticks) and green clay. The girl on the left is wearing a white shirt and has her hair in a short cut. The girl on the right is also wearing a white shirt and has her hair in two braids. They are surrounded by various materials including a blue bowl of sticks, a container of toothpicks, and scattered sticks on the table. In the background, other students and a teacher are visible, along with blue storage bins.

ACADEMIC PORTFOLIO

LITERACY REPORT

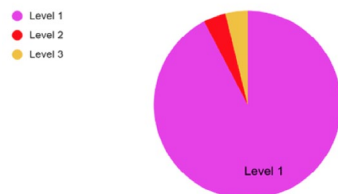
Report by: Kirsty Nortje

When looking back at 2024 I feel immensely proud of all we have achieved in the literacy portfolio.

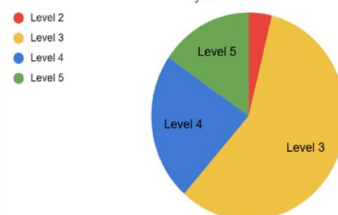
The scale of the problem can feel overwhelming at times, with the 2024 Western Cape Education Department systemics showing that only 45,5% of Gr 3 learners scored over 50% on the language part of the test (WCED Systemic Results). Whilst the need is so huge, the teams in our schools continue to make a difference for each child who enters our literacy centre's, encouraging and supporting them in their reading journey. This year we opened the year with 7 centres operational, but sadly at the end of Term 3 made the difficult decision to close our centre at Steenberg Primary due to significant, ongoing management challenges at the school. As saddened as we were by the loss of Steenberg, we are looking forward to opening a new centre at iThemba Primary in Vrygrond in 2025.

Our centre managers have worked hard this year, managing teams of volunteers and interns, and together we have made a huge impact. We have managed to do over 16 000 literacy sessions, which is over 10 000 hours of intervention this year. We have had 590 Grade 2 and 3 learners come to our centres and enjoy time reading, learning and broadening their imaginations. We have seen such pleasing results for the learners on our programmes – this year we monitored how learners progressed through the reading levels for levelled readers and we were so encouraged by these results (note: difficulty level increases from Level 1 up to Level 5) .

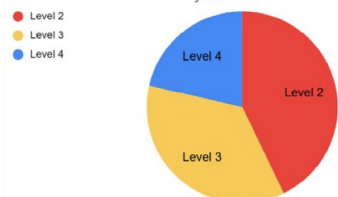
Participating G2 Reading levels at the start of the year



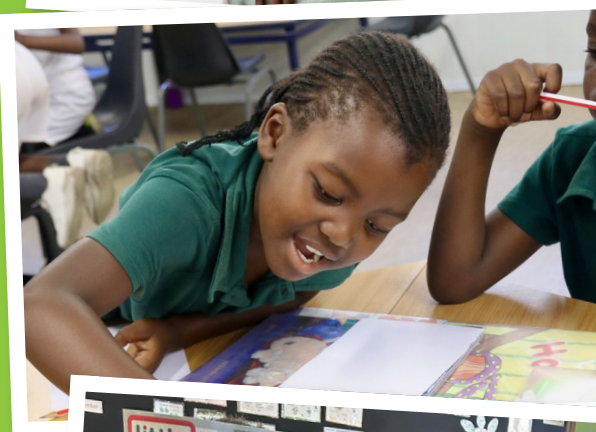
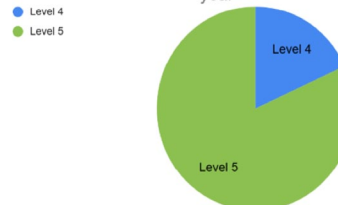
Participating G2 reading levels at the end of the year



Participating G3 Reading levels at the start of the year



Participating G3 Reading levels at the end of the year



With only 30% of South African households found to have 1 or more children's books in them (National Reading Barometer) the need to get books into the hands of our learners is greater than ever. Our lending libraries have gone from strength to strength and in 2024 we had 721 learners come through our lending libraries, and we recorded over 19 000 visits to our libraries this year. The ages range from Grade 1 to Grade 7 depending on the school, but the delight of choosing a book to take home is the same at every age.

We began 2024 with some refresher training for our volunteers which was incredibly beneficial. During the course of the year we went on to train 66 new volunteers, and had a total of 119 active volunteers in the literacy portfolio at the close of 2024. We cannot give enough thanks to each and every volunteer who is so generous with their time and in their efforts to encourage, listen to and build into the lives of the learners they work with—we couldn't have the same impact without them.



721 LEARNERS CAME THROUGH OUR LENDING LIBRARIES!



During the course of the year we were able to deliver Little Issues to every Grade 2 and 3 learner in all of our beneficiary schools. Thank you Little Issue for your generosity – the learners loved receiving these colourful, interactive and well-designed magazines.



Although the academic programming continues throughout the year, we make sure to pepper the year with fun events that bring books to life. This year we enjoyed reading with visitors – Sweet Valley Grade 7s and North Star for Mandela Day. We celebrated fun international literacy related days like World Read Aloud Day, and International Literacy Day with a visit from Natalie Osborne, the Author of Cole the Mole. At Capricorn Primary we hosted a Foundation Phase Readathon and accumulated over 190 reading hours with over 286 foundation phase learners in only two days!

Term 4 is always very busy and a bit disruptive with assessments of all Grade 1s for the following year, as well as school assessments, but we still managed to finish the year strong, and a highlight is always our class parties. A wonderful celebration for all the hard work the learners, volunteers, interns and our centre managers have put in over the year. Reflecting on 2024 we feel proud of all that we have achieved, and can't wait to see what 2025 has in store.

NUMERACY REPORT

Report by: Nix Bowley

In 2024, we continued to make positive strides in our numeracy intervention programme, fostering significant growth in the skills of the learners who attended our centres.

We began the year with a surge in demand for numeracy intervention, driven by an increasing waiting list of learners needing support. To accommodate more learners, we added extra tutoring days at Capricorn and Steenberg Primary, while also launching a new numeracy centre at Kleinberg Primary School in Oceanview! The set-up and success of this new centre, which very quickly became as efficient as our established ones, was made possible by our Kleinberg centre manager and the generous support from the MacFarlane Foundation.

Over the course of the year, we trained 41 new volunteers who were deployed across six beneficiary schools. Their dedication, together with our solid and established volunteers, helped us to provide 4372 one-on-one tutoring sessions, almost 1000 sessions more than the previous year! By year's end, we had supported 89 learners, many of whom

are now on track to confidently continue their Maths journey in Grade 3.

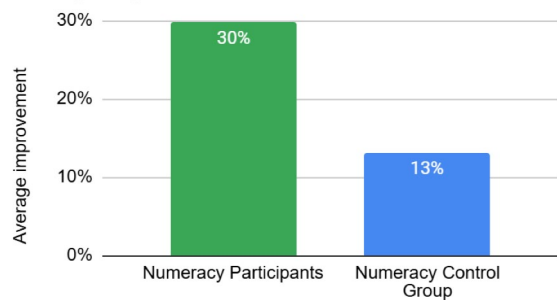
A significant milestone this year was the improvement of our learners' performance between November 2023 to June 2024. Comparing their assessments with a control group, we saw a remarkable 30% increase in the LifeMatters learners' average, a stark contrast to the 13% improvement of the control group. This demonstrated the true effectiveness of our programme.

We are also thrilled by the success of our Grade-wide Maths Fun Days. We have three per year at the end of each of the first three terms and we invite all the Grade 2's to play fun Maths games in groups of four. These days bring many smiles and laughs from the adults and impart much joy and enthusiasm to our learners, reinforcing that maths can be fun and engaging.

	NUMBER OF LEARNERS	MAX INDIVIDUAL SCORE	TOTAL SCORE IMPROVEMENT	AVERAGE IMPROVEMENT (%)	IMPROVEMENT DIFFERENCE
NUMERACY PARTICIPANTS	75	40	893	30%	17%
NUMERACY CONTROL GROUP	67	40	353	13%	



Average improvement across all LMF schools



In the third term we sadly had to close our doors at Steenberg Primary, but were excited to embark upon the adventure of a start-up at iThemba Primary School where there is a great need for intervention. We realized after doing assessments with the Grade 1 learners, that we needed to offer four days of weekly support in 2025.

In the final term of 2024, we assessed 604 Grade 1's at all of our beneficiary schools. These assessments provide valuable insight into which learners will benefit most from our numeracy intervention. Those learners who score between 30% and 55% are identified as potential candidates for our programme. Based on the November 2024 results, we identified 142 potential learners for 2025's Numeracy intervention.

As we reflect on the year, we are deeply grateful to our dedicated volunteers, interns, and centre managers, whose hard work made our connections and achievements possible. They bring warmth and hope to the learners they work with and many children who would normally get "lost" in a whole class setting, get the individual attention that many of them crave. We are equally thankful for the ongoing support of our donors and the positive feedback from the Grade 2 teachers. Together, we've made a significant difference in the lives of many young learners, and we are excited about the future as we strive to reach even more children in need of numeracy support in the coming year



4372
ONE-ON-ONE TUTORING
SESSIONS PROVIDED!



iMATTER INTERNSHIP REPORT

It's been an incredible year with the 2024 cohort of interns. We started with a full group of 17 interns and ended with 8.

Throughout the year, some interns moved on to full-time employment or studies, while others transitioned as the funding cycle from the Department of Trade and Industry concluded. While our cohort was smaller than usual, the youth who remained in our centres were nothing short of passionate, kind, considerate, and eager to learn.

The programme format remained consistent with the previous year. Interns were placed at one of our beneficiary schools, where they worked Monday through Thursday mornings. This hands-on placement offered them valuable work experience in education, while also helping them develop key skills in administration, organisation, communication, and professionalism.

Our partners, Action Volunteers Africa (AVA), played an instrumental role in the programme's success. They supported us with recruitment and ongoing HR assistance throughout the year. AVA also provided monthly training sessions on a variety of topics, including career development, financial planning, customer service, CV writing, interview preparation, and communication skills. Additionally, AVA offered access to a Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) course for all our interns.



The year ended on a high note with a heartfelt graduation ceremony during our volunteer thank-you breakfast. It was a perfect opportunity for the volunteers at each centre to celebrate and acknowledge the work of the interns they'd collaborated with throughout the year.

We wish all our interns the best in their future endeavours and look forward to welcoming a new group of fresh, inspired, and positive young people in 2025.



FINANCE REPORT

Report by: Bretta Russell-Espin

WHERE THE MONEY CAME FROM:

We are extremely grateful to our donors, which has resulted in the income of R4 369 633 for the year. This included fundraising income which increased by 5%. Donations from individuals, companies and foundations passionate about the work of LMF remain the foundation of the organisation's income, making up 86% of the total income. In addition, LMF graciously received R1 685 000 in advance at the end of 2024, which is reflected on the balance sheet as Deferred Grants, as the funds relate to activities planned for 2025.



WHERE THE MONEY WENT:

Organisational spending for the year increased by 4% to R4 030 514. Marketing costs remained similar to 2023. Management decreased by 13% and Operational costs increased 13%. The Internship programme decreased by 15% and Project costs increased by 7%. LMF shouldered the burden of the interns' stipends in 2024 due to the Western Cape Education Department cancelling the Teacher Assistant Programme. We felt, however, that this programme provided additional support and stability to our centres as well as invaluable skills to our interns and therefore took on the responsibility of fundraising for and paying the youth stipends.

FUTURE

The budget expenditure of R4 257 518 for 2025, represents a 5.6% increase on the 2024 expenditure. Personnel costs will only increase by an inflationary amount. The Teenage Awareness programme will increase by 24% and will continue to be offered free of charge to beneficiary schools and will largely be funded by schools who are able to contribute to the Teenage Awareness Programme. The budget is cautiously optimistic about the activities that will be possible in the 2025 year. It is expected that spending will be tightly controlled during the year. Broadening the fundraising efforts continues to be an area of focus.



REVENUE: R4 369 633

Grants	0%	
Donations - Corporates/Others	73%	R3 188 628
Donations in kind	1%	R51 032
Fundraising events	14%	R598 800
Fees	4%	R188 374
Interest received	8%	R342 799



EXPENDITURE: R4 030 514

Marketing, PR & Fundraising	5%	R185 740
Management & Admin	4%	R182 484
Capital & Operation costs	16%	R639 195
Internship Programme	7%	R296 578
Project Costs	68%	R2 726 517



SURPLUS: R339 119

OUR DONORS

Thank you to all our faithful individual donors who give so generously to our work.



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