

## HOPE HEARING & LANGUAGE OPPORTUNITIES FOR EDUCATION

### ESTABLISHING A FOOTHOLD



#### Remembering why...

It is easy to lose sight of our purpose amongst the hardship. A very big thank you to Shameema Daniels for reminding us why the struggle is worth it. *“As a first time mother I didn't know what to do, I felt completely helpless when I was told my baby had failed his newborn hearing screen. The Amazing woman from hope hearing organization that had helped me, reassured me that everything was going to be okay, it's not the end of the world and that there are steps we can take. It didnt just end there in hospital that day, the organization kept in contact and went out of their way to call every week checking on my baby and making sure he gets the necessary help he needs. When we informed them that we've been waiting for almost a month for our local hospital to get back to us with an appointment they immediately helped and got us into Red Cross where our boy is now currently under audiology. Thanks to Hope hearing organization and their early intervention our baby was diagnosed with Microtia. He is now 7 months old, and we still get calls checking on him, We will forever be grateful for hope hearing organizations for their care, love and compassion towards us.”*

#### UBUNTU - “I am because we are”

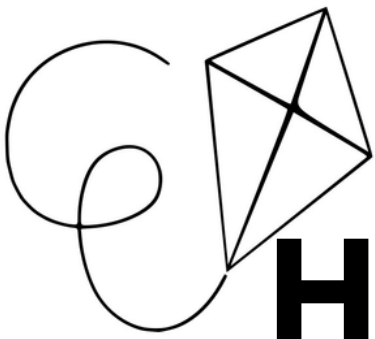
This year has been a rollercoaster of disappointment in authority and absolute incredulity of the community's sense of ownership, and responsibility that has been required for the NGO to thrive.

In July we hosted our first fundraiser and the turn out was fantastic, despite it being in the middle of the worst storm this winter. It was a women's wellness evening and the content of the talks was educational, inspirational and very entertaining. We managed to raise R25 000 to fund screening for a month.

On the back of that Dr Barlodien Kotze very energetically mobilised her training team for the Hyrox Event, that is going to be held on September 21st in Cape Town, to turn their personal ambitions into a social impact project.

We have thoroughly enjoyed participating in the social media awareness campaign, and we hope that we can use the social media skills gained through it to continue to spread important information to parents and caregivers to help them navigate the early years.

We have been humbled by the knowledge that despite the necessity of the role that the NGO plays in the community, and in spite of our commitment to improving lives and dedication to sustainable change, the end goal will never be accomplished without community participation and support. So thank you for renewing our faith in the cause, and for allowing us to affect change.



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### GROWTH AND BELONGING



#### Community

The screening technicians have become a constant in the Mowbray Maternity Hospital wards. Their bright smiles, and even brighter scrubs are achieving coverage rates of over 100%. This is essential for a successful programme.

A screening programme does not only consist of screening the babies, but tracking those babies who require rescreening to ensure that those babies with hearing loss are identified and receive early intervention.

We are currently tracking those babies and there are 380 babies who still need rescreening.

#### The Screening Team

The screening and administration team have grown so much in 3 months. These women are an example of strength, resilience, perseverance and kindness. HOPE has had its fair share of challenges in these first few months and were it not for their unwaivering support and belief in the project, it would be difficult to get up every morning and continue pushing ahead with our shared vision.

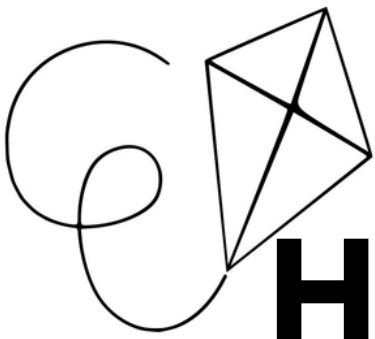
In May we screened our 3000th baby.

We also had our first external examiner assessment. The programme that these ladies are engaged with has been compiled by HOPE in conjunction with the University

of Cape Town's audiology department. Screening technicians offer a wonderful task shifting opportunity to improve access to screening by making it more affordable.

The screening technician training programme offers a standardised training programme guaranteeing that screeners are adequately trained. Overseeing audiologists will register with the Health Professions Council of South Africa to ensure accountability.

Watch this space for final assessments and for graduation pictures... Exciting times ahead!



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### HOPE-HEAR



Blindness separates us from things but deafness separates us from people.  
-Helen Keller



### A Necessary struggle

Did you know that the most common birth anomaly is hearing loss? Without a universal newborn screening and early intervention programme, these children are only identified on average at 3 years old.

The language centre in our brains starts developing 3 months before we are born. The critical period for language development is the first year of life. Children who do not receive language stimulation within that first year - are never able to acquire normal language. If, however, they receive intervention by 6 months old, it has been shown that they develop like their typical hearing peers.

### The First Universal Newborn Hearing Screening Programme

HOPE-hear established the only universal newborn hearing screening programme at a public health facility at Mowbray Maternity Hospital on 1 February. We screened our 1000th patient in March (image above).

The goal is that this project serves as blueprint for universal screening at a regional, provincial, and eventually a national level.

Babies born at Mowbray Maternity Hospital are currently offered hearing screening and early intervention according to best practise guidelines on par with the best centres in the World. This service is only available in the private sector at Netcare Hospitals and we hope that this will encourage the other hospital groups to prioritise universal newborn hearing screening.