



Update from Denise Kingdom Grier November 2021

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your ongoing prayers for the work our staff continues to do at Setshabelo Family and Child Services in South Africa. I know these have been difficult days for all of us as we have had to adjust to change, perhaps bury loved ones, and find a new normal in the face of a global pandemic. Thanks for not just thinking of yourselves but also remembering the 30,000 orphaned and 15,500 vulnerable children in Botshabelo.

Friends, you have heard me ask for prayer many times as gender-based violence in South Africa has been on the rise during the pandemic. Well, the stats are in. In 2020 alone 34,587 girls under 17 gave birth to children and over 600 of these new mothers were between 9 and 10 years of age.

Here's a very sad story involving one of those babies and the way God invited our staff, and us by extension, to serve. Setshabelo Family and Child Services truly cares for orphaned and vulnerable children in their community and our support makes their burden lighter.

About two weeks ago, the police called and needed help with a baby found abused and abandoned in a local tavern by her homeless mother. It was little Tshepang, only four months old. She was placed in a temporary place of safety, but five days later she suddenly died. When the grandmother heard the news, she also died of grief! And there was no one willing to bury the little girl. So, the Setshabelo staff, with the help of some of the neighbors, stepped up to help. Here are some pictures and a WhatsApp dialogue today between Kaybe and Paul, our partner at Encompass Kids:

KB: Here are some pictures of the funeral today. It is so sad that a child's life can be taken because of deliberate neglect and abuse. More so by the person who should have protected her. We just wanted to give the child a decent, dignified send-off. The grandmother's funeral is tomorrow.



Would you like to receive these updates digitally? Please email Kelli at kgilmore@rca.org to be added to the email list. You will receive more timely updates from the missionary you support and help us be good stewards of our resources.

P: Thanks for what you and the team are doing for the vulnerable families in your community. Who is the lady in the second pic at the gravesite?

KB: The lady is holding the mom of the child and is a friend to the mom.

P: Thanks. So sad. We trust God's grace, and that this may be a turning point in the mom's life.

KB: And for her friends. The incident has created division in the community. Some feel the mother should not have been supported while others feel she needs to be given a second chance. We see it as an opportunity to engage the community in child care and protection. The councilor, the one wearing a blue shirt, has organized a community meeting next week and asked that we facilitate the dialogue. So, yes, we trust this process will help the community heal.

P: That is what God is allowing Setshabelo to do for the kingdom.

The municipality donated the gravesite at the Botshabelo cemetery. Pastor Salamane, a longtime friend of Setshabelo and chairperson of the Pastors Forum, volunteered to conduct the burial service. Family members and or friends are active in the actual burial process; lowering the coffin into the grave and filling in the grave as a part of the service. Food is an important part of the post burial fellowship of family and friends. This time of remembrance, fellowship, and sharing was hosted at the Setshabelo offices.

Please pray for these young moms, for protection against violence, and for our staff who walk into the shadows in their community and bring forth light. Pray they too know God's protection as well as healing from the effects of the pain they see and hear in their work. If you feel led to financially support a child or a family during these challenging times, you can give by visiting my webpage: www.rca.org/grier.

With a Grateful Heart,
Denise