



September 2024

Dear Friends,

Mami was a young mother, and from the moment her daughter was born, she knew her love for her child ran deep. However, she also understood that love alone couldn't change her circumstances. It was an agonizing decision, but Mami wanted more for her daughter than she could provide. She had heard the heartbreaking stories of desperate mothers abandoning their children on the streets or leaving them in trashcans, but that was not a path she could take. Her daughter deserved better, and Mami was determined to find a future where her child could grow and flourish.

Fortunately, Mami learned about Setshabelo Family and Child Services (SFCS) during the pandemic. The organization's work in the community had become a beacon of hope, especially during COVID-19, when many families faced overwhelming struggles. She knew SFCS could help her give her daughter the life she envisioned—one filled with care, opportunity, and love.

On a Wednesday morning, Mami stood in front of Ms. Bele's office, the adoption supervisor at SFCS. Ms. Bele was known not just for her ability to place children in loving homes but for her deep understanding of the emotional journey that birth mothers like Mami faced. She believed a community could only truly thrive if everyone, including the biological mothers, was supported with compassion and care.

Ms. Bele invited Mami into her office, her voice soft and reassuring. "I want you to bring the blanket your daughter was first wrapped in at the hospital," she said, "along with any pictures of yourself and anything else that holds meaning for you." These cherished items would become part of a memory box—a precious gift for Mami's daughter to open when she turned 18, a connection to her roots, her history, and the mother who loved her.

As Mami gathered the blanket, photos, and other keepsakes, her heart felt heavy yet full. The most challenging part came when Ms. Bele gently encouraged her to write a letter to her daughter. Mami's hands trembled as she put pen to paper, her tears staining the pages. She wrote about her hopes and dreams for her



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child, about the love that had guided her every decision, and about the painful choice to let her go so she could have a better life.

Ms. Bele sat beside her the entire time, offering comfort as Mami poured her heart into the letter. When she finished, Mami felt a sense of peace wash over her. This memory box, sealed with love, would ensure that her daughter would always know where she came from—and how much she was wanted and cherished.

SFCS is more than just an adoption agency. Their mission is to strengthen the entire community, ensuring that orphaned and vulnerable children like Mami's daughter are placed in loving homes where they can thrive. By supporting birth mothers and families, they have helped build a future where no child is left behind, and every child has the chance to grow up in a safe, nurturing environment.

Mami left Ms. Bele's office that day with a heavy heart, but also with hope. She knew she had made the best decision for her daughter, trusting that the love she carried for her would live on in the hands of a family who could offer her the world she had always dreamed of.

"I thank God for you every time I think of you..." Philipians 1:3

Your prayers and contributions make it possible for Ms. Bele to give children the permanency of adoption and birth parents the closure necessary to make peace with their decision to offer their children up in love instead of abandonment when their parenting is not in the best interest of the child.

Please continue to support SFCS in these ways:

Prayer: Gracious God, would you give biological parents the courage to choose adoption over abandonment in Botshabelo and all over the world? God, continue to open the hearts of God's people in the Free State province of South Africa to welcome orphaned children into their families with love. May you continue to give wisdom and direction to Ms. Bele and the other social workers as they work to strengthen the community for the benefit of thousands of orphaned and vulnerable children in Botshabelo. In the name of our Lord Jesus. Amen

Purse: Thank you to all who contributed towards staff laptops. There is still time to contribute to the fund to resource our social workers so they can provide efficient reports and communication. You can do so here: <https://www.rca.org/give/the-south-africa-project/>.

Presence: Return to Belhar 2025. Trip dates:

- **February 11-21, 2025**

Join us as we:

- Rehearse the history of Apartheid in the Western Cape by visiting the District 6 museum, and Robben Island where Mandela was imprisoned.
- Gather at the church in Belhar to revisit the composition of the Belhar Confession with officers from the Uniting Reformed Church of Southern Africa.
- Travel to the Free State Province to learn from Setshabelo Family and Child Services how to galvanize communities around one issue—care for orphaned and vulnerable children—toward justice, reconciliation, and peace.

- **July 14-24, 2025:** Students and teachers consider traveling with us. Scholarships are available for students.

Ke a Leboha [Thank you in Sesotho],
Denise Kingdom

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