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“It’s not what is poured into a student, but what is planted.”

Linda Conway
This year has been both challenging and rewarding. As we deepened our commitment to children and youth in our valley, we built more meaningful relationships and also became more acutely aware of the daily struggles many young people battle - and overcome.

The teams of dedicated people behind each of our core children and youth programmes took time at the beginning of the year to articulate their vision, goals and plans for the year ahead. I am incredibly proud of the progress made, and the incredible grit and passion from each individual that has made this possible.

A tremendous success this year has been the investments made into the capacity of our staff over the past two years, which have really manifested and become evident through the incredible care, attention and leadership increasingly being demonstrated.

We also have made meaningful first strides to our vision of establishing a Safe Home and a Student Development Unit to support our most vulnerable children in the community. Neither would have been possible without the profound care and generosity of spirit of many volunteering behind the scenes to make this possible.

We recognize with deep gratitude the longstanding support of our founder and board member, Eve Annecke, who this year stepped down from our board to focus on her teaching and writing work as she steps into new explorations. Eve has always held a vision for Lynedoch as a place where children come first, gently held by nature in all that we do, and she has inspired so many of us to commit our work to this dream.

We wish her every success and adventure in her exciting new chapter, and can only say that where words fail to recognize her boundless contributions, we hope that the work will speak for us.

This year we also celebrate the incredible partnerships that make our work possible. The Lexi Cinema celebrated their 10th birthday - marking over a decade of support from our unbelievable champion supporters Sally and Teresa, who founded the Lexi as a social enterprise with the vision of a community cinema in London that would support our children and youth work here in Lynedoch. Their support through both funding and mentorship has established many of the programmes we run today. Our youth who are stepping into positions of community leadership today are an incredible testament to all that they continue to make possible.

Our longstanding partnerships with both Spier and Meerlust are built on their respective commitments to the true wellbeing of everyone in the Lynedoch Valley, and their deep support extends far beyond the funding contributed. Their generosity of care and compassion has meant we have thought partners in our work, and long-term partners in our shared vision of a community where everyone has the potential to thrive.

We are thrilled with the success of the Indaba Institute, our close partners in teacher training and Montessori pedagogy. This year, the Indaba Institute has successfully graduated their first intake of teachers in training (in the AMI 0-3 Programme), including five bursary recipients from the Winelands who are truly stepping into their roles as Community Shapers. The leadership and team behind Indaba Institute provide not only funding to support the Lynedoch Children’s House, but an incredible wealth of guidance and mentorship to deepen our learning practices. Successfully
“Most of all, we celebrate our children and youth. Walking into our infant community on any day, where our youngest are busily in the flow of learning through practice, casually switching between many of our South African languages and showing an exceptional kindness and joy as they do, I am renewed in my commitment to the role of transformative learning experiences in unlocking the very best of our human potential.” Jess Schulschenk, Director

hosting the Educators sans Frontiers (EsF) bi-annual conference in August this year was a small testament to their incredible ability to lead through humble practice – rooted, values-driven and always centred around the child.

We also are deeply grateful to the Lunchbox Fund for the fantastic nutrition our children receive daily, Mieke and the team at Community Keepers for keeping our children’s minds and hearts safe, Cape Wine Auction Trust and Remgro for making a revolutionary concept of a quality school for everyone possible, and the tremendous staff at SPARK Lynedoch who work with such energy to inspire our children to greatness!

Most of all, we celebrate our children and youth. Walking into our infant community on any day, where our youngest are busily in the flow of learning through practice, casually switching between many of our South African languages and showing an exceptional kindness and joy as they do, I am renewed in my commitment to the role of transformative learning experiences in unlocking the very best of our human potential. I see this manifest in our primary school learners who weave through the Lynedoch campus with a great sense of belonging and voice, our youth who are confidently figuring out who, and how, they wish to be in the world, and always our staff, who quietly, humbly and with a tremendous sense of humour, are committed to the daily practice of showing up and holding space for this all to unfold.

Jess Schulschenk, Director
Nestled in Lynedoch Eco-Village, just outside of Stellenbosch, our objective as a non-profit trust is to have a transformative impact on our children and youth in the educational programmes we offer from an early age. We value community engagement and adopt an integrated approach to immerse our children in a nurturing learning environment.

**Bursaries**

Bursaries provide learners with reliable transport, meals and socio-emotional support alongside necessary academic learning and extra mural/sporting activities.

**Spark Primary School**

A primary school with accessible, affordable, high quality independent education.

**We adopt an integrated approach to understanding nature, love and other core values necessary for personal development.**

**How You Can Support**

- Bursaries for primary school learners or school leavers
- Fund our curriculum development as we look to provide more learning in arts, indigenous knowledge, nutrition and nature-based learning
- Fund the emerging Community Wellness Hub - a space for trauma counselling and healing
- Become part of our network of options for youth for further education or employment
- Infrastructure investments for educational spaces

**Lynedoch Children’s House**

A preschool that promotes independence, peace, love and practical skills to guide our children in realising their full potential.

**We are situated in a setting surrounded by nature and it has become an important part of our daily work.**

**Highlights of 2018**

- A campus full of learning, increasingly in our beautiful outdoor spaces
- Safe parents to assist with at risk children in the community (pg 18)
- Student Development Unit to provide additional support for learners requiring academic support (pg 18)

Infographic designed by Robyn Bodmann, Stellenbosch Design Academy volunteer 2018
South African context

Early childhood development (ECD) and youth unemployment remain systemic challenges for many communities in South Africa. The socio-ecological context in which these challenges exist is equally important to both understand and address, including key factors such as access to resources, nutrition, safety, health care, mobility and access to quality education.

The first 1000 days of a child’s development is the most significant period - important learning and connections take place, foundations are laid to grow confidently, language capacity develops and it shapes their minds for future learning and development. Yet, 242,000 children aged under six years in the Western Cape live in conditions classified as poverty. Nearly two-thirds of children under six in South Africa live in the poorest 40% of households, where unemployment rates are high and living conditions are poor. It is a large burden for these households to care for the young children.

The unemployment rate of youth aged between 15 – 34 years stood at 38.2% during the first quarter of 2018. Overall, 6.2 million people in South Africa are unemployed, and two-thirds of these are youth. Many youth have become despondent and apart from not being employed, they are also not in education or training. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, long-term unemployment causes significant mental and material stress for those affected and their families. Once a person has been in long-term unemployment, the probability of finding a job declines, leaving them at risk of being permanently detached from the labour market.

Talent is distributed equally, opportunity is not.

The Lynedoch Valley

In 2017 we conducted our first household survey in the Lynedoch Valley through the Poverty Stoplight assessment tool. A positive result from last year was that many of the high school and unemployed youth joined the Youth Hub this year, after having been a part of the household surveys in 2017. This year, we were able to build on the relationships that started last year.

The survey focused on six key areas:

- Income and Employment
- Health and Environment
- Housing and Infrastructure
- Education and Culture
- Organization and Participation
- Self-awareness and Motivation

As we engaged with many families for the first time last year, many respondents were hesitant to give answers that might give a negative impression of the household. We noticed a downward trend in some areas this year, when families were more comfortable to be more honest. We view this positively, as the trust of our community carries a much heavier weight for building future relationships. The sample size was also smaller this year as we focused on quality of engagement during the survey process.

1 SA-ECD Review 2017
2 SA-ECD Review 2016
3 StatsSA
4 StatsSA, ‘Who is most likely to be affected by long-term unemployment?’ http://www.stats.gov.za/?p=11688
**Income and Employment**

There was a positive increase of 22% of families earning above R5000 per month, yet it is also concerning that 25% of families earn less than R2000 per month. There was a decrease of 13% in the number of households that have a stable income – referring to income sources based on full-time employment and secured income. This decrease could be due to factors such as seasonal work opportunities.

Comparing the decrease in stable income to the increase in household income, this gives us a good indication that families are proactively looking for income opportunities when they are not employed full-time.

**Health and Environment**

Mobile clinics play an important role in enabling many families to access health care. There was an 18% increase in the number of families that are within easy reach of a clinic or hospital, while 36% depend on mobile clinics.

In terms of nutrition, 86% of families eat three meals a day, which is a 16% increase from 2017. No families eat less than two meals per day. At the Institute, all children in the Lynedoch Children’s House receive breakfast, lunch and healthy snacks, while the bursary scholars at the SPARK Primary school also receive breakfast, lunch and snacks.

Looking at parenting, in 71% of households both parents are involved in the family unit (if not physically present, referring to emotional or financial support), with 25% of households having just one parent present. Four percent of households have no parents present and depend on grandparents to run the household. The decrease in both parents being involved could be due to, for example, a father no longer playing an active role in his child/childrens upbringing.

Fifty percent of households indicated that alcohol and drug abuse gets uncomfortable and/or violent, with the remaining 50% indicating that they only use alcohol during social gatherings. The decrease in strong abuse is positive, yet this remains a concern in our community.

**Housing and Infrastructure**

As a farming community, many families in the Valley rely on accommodation provided by farmers. Many families have lived on farms for many decades, and even though they do not hold trust deeds, 29% of families perceive the house as legally being their own.
There was an increase of 10% amongst families that live in brick structures, and a concerning increase of seven percent of families that live in unsafe structures.

Families are often between six and 12 people, with rooms being shared, which is not ideal for children of different ages.

Mobility access has improved by 29% which is very positive - these families have access to either their own transport or that provided by the farmer, a friend or via the bus service provided by us to go to clinics, school, shops or to access other services. Public transport is accessible for 32% of households, while 4% have to travel by foot or hitchhike.

*Education and Culture*

Amongst the households surveyed, 50% of adults can read, write and speak English while 32% can only understand or read simple English. There was an increase in the number of adults who indicated that they cannot read, write or speak English.

We note a decrease of 25% in the number of children that have access to quality primary and secondary education. We are concerned about this trend and are taking time to engage with our parents to understand their concerns and how we can work together to address them.

It is very positive to note the 67% increase in the number of households that are confident enough to generate their own income, which also speaks to the 22% increase in Income (point 2).

*Key challenges:*

- Although mobility has improved, many families still experience transport challenges, which limits the opportunities they can benefit from as they are unable to move around independently.
- Accessing full-time employment remains a challenge, and affects households' ability to save money and grow financially.
- Financial literacy remains a challenge, yet we did notice an improvement from last year.
- Alcohol and drug abuse remains an area of concern.
- The level of hope within communities is impacted negatively by the trauma and stress experienced on a regular basis through abuse, gangsterism and violence.

We navigate a considered balance between supporting and uplifting our beneficiaries - to encourage but not do it for them; to listen and guide but not step in and take over; to provide a safe space that can be used responsibly by everyone.
With everything that we do, we realise each day the importance and value of relationships built on trust. Many of the beneficiaries we work with experience challenging social circumstances and we firstly need to be a safe space for them. As such, we attempt to work through a holistic approach to upliftment to provide each child and young adult we work with the best chance to develop fully.

This year a strong network of partners supported our programmes, which in turn enabled us to deepen our impacts at an individual level.

Centrally placed within the Lynedoch community, the Sustainability Institute aims to have a transformative impact on the lives of the children and youth in the Lynedoch Valley through the educational programmes we offer.

The impact of our various programmes extend into the wider Lynedoch community, consisting out of more than 200 families who otherwise could not afford these education opportunities, and benefit the primary beneficiaries and their families in different ways.

- Full school bursaries for 172 pre- and primary school children
- Academic assistance for at risk learners
- Socio-emotional support to beneficiaries when needed
- Transport to and from school for 60+ learners in the Valley
- More than 170 children receive meals every school day
- Youth programme for 25 - 30 youth from the Valley, aged 13 and up
- Sports such as karate (21 children), soccer (70 players) and swimming (14 children)
## Vision and 2018 Goals of the Trust Programmes

### Lynedoch Children’s House

**Vision:** To empower passionate guides to nurture and empower our children and unlock their potential to become responsible and caring citizens in the Lynedoch Valley.

**Values we work by:** Follow the child; Learn through play; Respect the potential of each child; Nature-based learning; Empower the educator

### SPARK Bursary programme

**Vision:** Every child in the Lynedoch Valley has access to the best education to realise their full potential, and no child is left behind.

**Values we work by:** Service, Persistence, Achievement, Responsibility and Kindness; Positive narration; Socio-emotional consciousness

### Youth Programme

**Vision:** Supporting all youth to become change agents in their community by unlocking potential in a practical way.

**Values we work by:** Be prepared; Come with expectation

### Beneficiaries

- **Children 0 - 6 years** (approximately 65, majority from the Lynedoch Valley)
  - Parents

- **Children 6 - 12 years** (172 children)
  - Parents

- **Youth in Lynedoch Valley aged 13 - 25** (20 - 25 youth)
  - Parents

### 2018 Goals

#### Lynedoch Children’s House

- Increased parent engagement and understanding of Montessori teaching methods.
- Ensure structure and space supports growth and that intake numbers are optimal.
- Continuous training for staff (guides) to have a full complement of qualified ECD guides.

#### SPARK Bursary programme

- Increased parent involvement, including quarterly parent meetings.
- Stronger focus on place-based learning, ‘Learnings from Lynedoch’.
- Support at-risk learners in and beyond SPARK, and ensure as many as possible finish primary school.

#### Youth Programme

- To have a well-functioning youth space.
- At least 80% of the youth engaged in the dream space.
- Ensure the curriculum remains relevant and contributes to self-discovery and skills development.
- Organise/identify opportunities to expose youth to a network of options.
- Assist at-risk youth.
2018 has been a good year for personal growth for employees. Our people have really stepped into their roles, and taken ownership of programmes with even more dedication.

We continuously encourage staff to focus on personal and professional development, and support staff when they need time away from work to focus on learning and studies.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lynedoch Children’s House Team</th>
<th>Lynedoch Youth and Aftercare</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff member</td>
<td>Staff member</td>
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<td>Position</td>
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<td>Training attended</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christelle Jansen</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
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<td>0-3 Assistants to Infancy AMI; SAMA annual Conference 2018; In-house values workshop</td>
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<tr>
<td>Colleen Erasmus</td>
<td>Directress</td>
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<td>SAMA annual Conference 2018; In-house values workshop</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jackie Plaatjies</td>
<td>Classroom Aid</td>
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<td>In-house values workshop</td>
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<tr>
<td>Julia Jansen</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
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<td>SAMA annual Conference 2018; In-house values workshop</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lisa Plaatjies (Malan)</td>
<td>Teacher Assistant</td>
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<td>In-house values workshop</td>
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<td>Mandisa Sakawuli</td>
<td>Teacher Assistant</td>
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<td>SAMA annual Conference 2018; In-house values workshop</td>
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<tr>
<td>Melicia van Wiese</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
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<td>0-3 Assistants to Infancy AMI; SAMA annual Conference 2018; In-house values workshop</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nosakhumzi Maneli-Mnyaka</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
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|                                                      | In-house values workshop                                 | Ross van Niekerk completed an online course about storytelling for change, and the group she worked with was amazed with how hard she worked and her excellent performance. Ross is one of those people who understands the importance of trust and relationship to work effectively with the community, and she is a strong pillar in Lynedoch for many people.

At the end of last year, Colleen Erasmus took over as directress of the Lynedoch Children’s House and she has grown tremendously into this leadership role. She has developed in terms of how to manage the team and in handling challenges at work, and her confidence and independence has also grown.

We celebrated the graduation of Christelle Jansen and Melicia van Wiese from the Lynedoch Children’s House in August. They completed their internationally accredited AMI Assistants to Infancy diploma, and this is a remarkable achievement which all of us are very proud of! Their increased confidence is wonderful to see. Melicia was also promoted from Teacher Assistant to Teacher based on her newly acquired skills.

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OUR PROGRAMMES

Lynedoch Children’s House

“The child’s development follows a path of successive stages of independence, and our knowledge of this must guide us in our behaviour towards him. We have to help the child to act, will and think for himself. This is the art of serving the spirit, an art which can be practised to perfection only when working among children.” (Dr. Maria Montessori)

For the past 18 years, a generation of children have walked through the doors of what is now known affectionately as the Lynedoch Children’s House.

This beautiful, calm learning environment follows the Montessori education philosophy to allow our young ones to develop at a pace they are comfortable with, while still optimizing their development and learning in each development plane.

Beneficiaries

This year we welcomed 52 children ranging from eight months to six years old, primarily from the Lynedoch Valley. Sixteen of these children received full bursaries. The two environments where our young ones learn and apply themselves are the Infant Community (birth - three years) and the Children’s House (three - six years).

The unique approach of Montessori creates an environment that is extremely conducive to cognitive, emotional and sensory development. The role of the teachers, or guides, is not to teach in the traditional sense. Instead they will show the child how to use various learning tools, step-by-step, leaving the child then free to explore and experiment.

Often referred to as the work of childhood, this pressure-free experimentation allows each child to focus on their inherent development needs they have at a specific time. Their absorbent minds will automatically move from simple to complex activities once they have mastered each level.

The children settled well and we focused on deeper work, concentration and working in nature. We have a group of 13 young graduates this year who will go on to do extraordinary things and start a new chapter in 2019.

22 Girls

30 Boys
“The prepared environment is a very important principle and key to the child’s development. The last few years we have worked hard to create and improve this environment and make it a more enriching and fulfilling space, and this is work that will continue inevitably. To support the optimal functioning of our environment, investment in staff training is important and we continuously host or attend workshops, conferences and meetings to improve and keep our knowledge relevant.” Colleen Erasmus, Directress of the Lynedoch Children’s House.

Highlights from 2018

We are in a privileged position to have the Indaba Institute as a key partner with us in Lynedoch EcoVillage, providing tremendous support to the Lynedoch Children’s House. Indaba is the host partner for the internationally accredited AMI training programmes presented in South Africa. Two of our teachers, Christelle Jansen and Melicia van Wiese, completed the AMI Assistants to Infancy training this year and are now 0-3 international diploma holders.

“After my AMI training I am eager to implement what I have learned and build up the environment, myself and the children.

I also want to help children in their developmental stages, enrich them and be a positive role model in their lives.” Teacher Melicia
The Lynedoch Children’s House is a member of the South African Montessori Association (SAMA) and all the teaching staff attend annual conferences to connect with other schools and to refresh knowledge and skills.

This year Christelle Jansen (bottom left), Julia Jansen (bottom right) and Mandisa Sakawali (right) represented the Lynedoch Children’s House at the annual SAMA conference.

This year we decided to do our own ‘Santa shoebox’ initiative to bring joy and give our children something special for Christmas. We hope this will become an annual event.

Waiting patiently.

The grandmothers knitted beautiful bunnies for the children in the community.
Looking ahead

Our focus remains to serve the children of the Lynedoch Valley, and these children will continue to receive preference in terms of admissions. We will continue to nurture and build positive relations with our community, the parents and the children.

We continue to raise funds and resources in support of our work, which we hope will allow for more excursions and learning experiences during 2019.

Funders and partners

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the funders and partners that make our work possible. The children that receive bursaries are able to access the best possible early childhood education available to them, and the support of our funders enables us to keep delivering education of the highest standard.
This year approximately 460 learners were enrolled from Grade R to Grade 6 in total, 156 of which were on bursaries facilitated by the Sustainability Institute.

With the school’s focus on quality academic teaching, technology as a learning tool and embedding group values within learners, we are experiencing firsthand how much a child’s development depends on the academic environment they are exposed to. Learners are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning, while collaboration and critical thinking are practiced amongst learners.

Whilst the Literacy performance is still improving, the scholars seem to have a great love for and understanding of Maths. Many of the bursary scholars are in the top 10% of scholars in their grade, with scholars such as Abner Isaacs (Grade R), Caleb Claasen (Grade 1) and Paballo Nyakale (Grade 3) receiving above 80% for both Maths and Literacy.

The overall academic performance of the bursary scholars this year has been commendable. Despite the academic gap the scholars started with, having previously been taught in Afrikaans, many scholars are performing at the high academic standard required by SPARK.
University Day

A big focus of the SPARK schools is to build confidence amongst learners that they can one day go to University if they wanted to. SPARK believes in creating global citizens and try to expose scholars to the career options they have when they grow up. The annual University Day is always a highlight for scholars, and this year was no different.

During University Day scholars have the opportunity to interact with, and learn about, as many different professions from varying fields as possible. This year the fire department, traffic officers, food scientists, mechatronic engineers, a nurse, a beauty therapist, a journalist and even a few members of the army came to speak to the scholars.

After listening to all the interesting careers they can one day pursue, scholars had time to reflect on what they have seen, and begin creating goals for their own future.

This year, with funding support from the Ackerman Pick n Pay Foundation, a Knowledge Garden was finished for the children attending the SPARK Lynedoch Primary School. The garden was curated by Intaba environmental educators and landscapers. This is now a beautiful and inspiring outdoor learning environment with more than 400 indigenous and endemic plants.
**Bursary Learner Success Stories**

**Abner Isaacs, Grade R**
Abner Isaacs is a Grade R scholar with two older siblings in SPARK Lynedoch. He joined SPARK after finishing at the Lynedoch Children’s House in the Lynedoch Village.

He persisted in class, and does exceptionally well for a child that only speaks Afrikaans at home considering that lessons are given in English. He is such a bright boy, with a lovely heart. He cares for his friends and his siblings. Academically Abner is reaping what he has sown. His marks are a true reflection that shows us it does not matter who you are, or where you come from, as long as you are willing to make the right choices you will achieve great results.

**Sunay Swartz, Grade 1**
Sunay is a bright, dynamic and confident girl from De Morgenzon farm. Sunay started at SPARK as a Gr R scholar. She is from a predominantly Afrikaans household and in her first year at SPARK her ability to speak and understand English was very limited. With the help of our social and emotional learning toolbox and her parent’s persistence and involvement, Sunay is now one of our top achieving scholars in Grade 1. She has grown emotionally and academically into a patient, kind, helpful and achievement driven young girl.

**Ruduwaan Malan, Grade 2**
When the new Grade 2 teacher started at SPARK, the scholars had to settle in with the new teacher. They had to learn to trust again and to open up, and that in itself took some time. Ruduwaan was always the one that wanted to make his presence known when he entered the class, and at first he always had the teacher’s attention.

With support from both home and school, Ruduwaan is a more responsible scholar who has grown much on a personal and emotional level this year. Well done to you Ruduwaan, keep it up!

**Patronella Apollis, Grade 3**
Patronella’s Maths teacher says that she is a remarkable student, who constantly asks for extra work, including over the holidays. She is extremely persistent and mature beyond her years.

In terms of literacy, Patronella’s teacher is truly impressed not only with her academic progress in Literacy, but her overall attitude towards learning. Patronella is always eager to learn, contribute and be part of the class. She has steadily kept her grades up, and made the effort that was needed to obtain such great results. She motivates those around her, just by being the way she is.
ROMANO JOHANNAS, GRADE 4

This year Romano has grown into a hardworking, dedicated and persistent young boy. He has not only shown growth in his academics, but also shown huge amounts of personal growth. At the beginning of 2018 he needed extra support, and now Romano takes ownership for his actions and is always eager to help around the classroom when asked.

All he wants to do is give his 100% in class and he has made all the Flex four teachers extremely proud. He doubled his maths marks in term three and always requests extra literacy help. We are excited to see what the future has to offer him!

FLEX 6 CLASS, GRADE 6

Every single bursary scholar’s story at SPARK Lynedoch is a success story in itself, as every child has grown in their own unique way. However, should we wish to focus on one story it would have to be that of the FLEX 6 scholars as a whole. When SPARK Lynedoch opened in 2016, all of these scholars were present, but scared, confused and out of sorts. With the love and respect from their teachers, and their determination to make something of themselves, these scholars have grown in leaps and bounds.

The FLEX 6 group we have is now respectful, mature and self-reflective, and have taken their newfound leadership position in the school very seriously. As they are the seniors of the school, we have placed them on a program called the SPARK Agents. They assist with duties in the morning, and assist with behaviour management at Sparks Fly. Every child has taken this on with great pride, and interacts with the younger scholars with kindness and respect. Their school attendance is impeccable, showing their grit and determination to learn and grow, and each individual brings something unique to their class. We couldn’t be prouder!

A safe space for children

This year we identified the need for a safe, calm environment for some of the children in our community that were experiencing difficulties at home.

Two residents of the Lynedoch Eco-Village would like to establish their home as a safe space for children in need, to assist and look after bursary scholars that are in need of alternative accommodation and care.

They are trusted and respected throughout the community and didn’t hesitate to offer care and support for children that need it. During 2019 we will work towards formally establishing this, and more, safe spaces.

Student Development Unit

This year we established a dedicated learner support and development unit which identifies bursary scholars, living in the surrounding community, who are in need of additional academic, social and emotional support.

With the appointment of Jessica Eley, a qualified facilitator, academic support was provided to a handful of bursary learners attending SPARK.

By working diligently with these learners, academic performance improved by an average of 18% in one term.

We are extremely proud of the dedication shown by the learners, and the marked improvement in their academic work! This unit will develop further in 2019 and continue to support learners as needed.

Funders and partners

Supporting the learners on bursary requires holistic intervention, and without our partners and funders we would not be able to provide the support each individual needs. On an ongoing basis the Institute provides meals and socio-emotional support to learners. The Lunchbox Fund provides us with essential dry goods and additional support for our onsite feeding programme, and focuses on fostering education via nutrition by providing a daily meal at school for impoverished and at-risk school children in township and rural areas of South Africa. Emotional support and guidance is also given by teachers and the Community Keepers office, supported by Spier.

We acknowledge and thank each of our funders and partners for their ongoing support, helping us transform the lives of many children for the better.
It has been a year of extraordinary growth and opportunity for everyone involved. When we started with the programme for 2018, the intention was to support each individual in their personal development path, and we are thankful that this has happened. The youth have been able to develop their personal interests and grow in confidence.

In the past year the impact that this space has made is next to impossible to measure. It has been a place of hope, comfort, support, rest, safety and empathy. The youth that are a part of the programme, regard themselves as a family and it is touching to see how they have learned to support and look out for each other, even holding each other to account when needed.

The path each individual youth walks is not always straight and easy, and this year we realised the invaluable potential of a single cup of coffee, and the power it holds to unlock conversation. Over a cup of coffee we celebrated birthdays, built relationships, mended broken hearts, grieved over the loss of loved ones, shared frustrations and challenges, celebrated successes, laughed together and grew closer to each other.

We are very grateful for 2018 and will continue to build on the momentum gained from this year.
Activities and interventions
The first three months of the year various sessions formed part of the programme. The youth group participated in Drama sessions, we hosted the SHINE programme for the girls and a speaker came in twice a week and spoke about topics such as self-development.

The discussions and interventions this year focused on building life skills, self-confidence and responsibility. This year we were incredibly fortunate to have a counsellor available weekly to provide additional support to the youth, and group sessions were also facilitated.

During the second term, the group was introduced to gardening and gardening techniques, which they all enjoyed. Their sessions focused on practical as well as theoretical lessons in permaculture gardening.

The President’s Award
This year some of the youth enrolled in the President’s Award programme. This programme aims to provide a balanced, non-competitive framework for self-development that will increase self-esteem and enhance capacity to achieve in whatever context our high school children find themselves: enabling them to become responsible active citizens within their communities.

SHINE
Our high school girls completed a course called SHINE, with the aim of achieving the following:
• Deepen understanding of intrinsic personal value
• Increase confidence
• Develop decision making and problem solving skills
• Strengthen interpersonal communication skills
• Enhance social connection
• Increase self-awareness and emotional intelligence
• Identify personal desires and strengths
• Set and achieve personal goals

OntdEK
Sixteen youth in transition (or currently unemployed youth) from the Lynedoch Valley completed a programme called OntdEK. This programme aims to empower individuals to see opportunity around them and to realise that they are not defined by their circumstances, and that they have it within them to develop resilience and self-confidence. Every individual received a personalised action plan of what practical steps needs to happen after the programme, to pursue the line of work they are interested in. We continue to engage with and support those still in transition.

We were so proud to learn that 50% of the participants of this year’s programme, found employment and continue to support all who participated in the programme.

Drama Therapy
During the first semester our weekly drama therapy classes encouraged our youth to act and play out situations and scenarios in a safe and contained space. A qualified drama therapist guided and reflected with the group after every session, which was structured and set up according to the needs of the group.
In addition to the structured Youth Hub programmes, the following programmes were also offered to our community this year:

**Lynedoch United Football Club**

The Lynedoch United Football Club (LUFC) has 40 enthusiastic young players, aged between eight and 15 years. They meet twice a week for training and they take part in matches in the Stellenbosch League Football Association over weekends. The senior soccer team has 23 members and compete in the Promotional League, managed by SAFA Cape Winelands.

This year the teams played in 10 matches, and in each age category there were between 12 and 15 teams. Due to the water restrictions in the Western Cape, many soccer fields suffered and were not in the best condition, yet we are proud of our teams that finished mid table overall:

- U11 = 3rd overall
- U13 = 4th overall
- U15 = 6th overall

Three of the players that really stood out this year are Genovan Hartzenburg, Marcelino Jacobs and Justin Jules. Genovan struggles with attention deficit disorder, yet he is extremely committed to attend practice sessions and participate in matches. His dedication was noticed and he received a new pair of togs this year in celebration of his commitment to practice.

Justin and Marcelino assist with practice sessions as well as games on weekends and for coach Shaun it was amazing to see the effort they put in and their commitment, and it is clear that they really take the responsibility seriously.

“In 2019 we will be implementing a mentorship program to help the boys grow even more into responsible men. During our soccer camp in November we identified candidates for this mentorship programme. The camp itself was a highlight for many of the boys, 90% of whom have never been on a camp before. We did hikes, played games and focused on team building and reflection. We are also planning to have more volunteers that will enable us to achieve so much more. I thank Eve Annecke, Ray and Michael Swilling as well as James McWilliams for their continued financial support of the soccer programme, it is greatly appreciated,” Shaun Claasen.

LUFC won two trophies this year. The first was for a Friendscup tournament where six different teams from the Valley participated. The second trophy was won at a sports day held on Kanonkop.

‘I am very proud of the commitment from players and our team members Kerneels, Duran and Allistair. It was a difficult year and there were many stop and start moments, which is understandably disheartening to the players as they couldn’t get into a routine. Yet despite this the players remained motivated and excited to participate.’ Coach Shaun Claasen.
Karate

Sensei Tony Edwards teaches Kushido to 21 primary school learners during school hours. Kushido is an international karate system that was founded in South Africa in 1963. Classes concentrate on developing self-defence skills and true Martial Art characteristics within the practitioner. This includes a healthy body and mind, discipline, focus and respect.

This year the programme received generous funding from Stephen Pigott from the UK for which we are extremely grateful. The children enjoy these classes immensely, and really look forward to karate every week!

The karate team in Cape Town during their first grading for the year.

Swimming lessons

In the past year there have been three reported drownings from children all under the age of 14 years, coming from local farms in the Lynedoch Valley.

During the June/July holiday of 2018, 14 children from the Lynedoch Eco-Village partnered with a local Lifesaving club, X-stream Aquatics, to take up swimming lessons. The X-stream Aquatics and Lifesaving club promotes water safety education that aims to equip communities with the necessary knowledge regarding safety in- and outside of the water.

Enabling the children to acquire skills to be safe in water will empower them to one day know what to do in a potential life endangering situation in water.
Growth in development of youth

When the Youth Programme started in February this year, it was important for us to establish where our youth was at in their developmental path, to ensure that the programme would add value where it was needed most. Apart from academic support, we really wanted to help each youth member grow personally and emotionally as well.

Making use of questionnaires, we were able to identify self-confidence, relationships and sense of belonging as key areas of focus. The youth’s confidence has improved significantly over the course of this past year. The sense of belonging experienced by individuals improved the most (20%), indicating the value they hold in coming to the Youth Hub and sharing experiences together as a group. A lot of emphasis was placed on learning to trust each other, respecting the other and allowing each individual to be themselves in the space.

In terms of relationships, a few personality challenges were experienced which impacted the quality of the relationships within the group. This is understandable, and is the one area where we realize deeper work needs to be done.

Some success stories

**FERDINAND ENGELBRECHT**

Ferdinand Engelbrecht joined the Dream Team just over a year ago. When our facilitators first met Ferdinand, they knew that he was talented. His bedroom walls were completely covered by all of his drawings and he could not stop talking about his love and passion for art.

Ferdinand has incredible talent and an amazing spirit, and he is always willing to try something new. His motto is “I will never give up” and in the year that he has journeyed with us, we can testify to that.

Ferdinand has a few options that he can pursue after he finishes grade 12 this year, but he decided to first build up more experience in the field of art by working and volunteering locally so that he can make an informed decision about his formal tertiary education.

**ELDRICK OCTOBER**

Eldrick October (18) has been involved in the youth programme for a few years now, and he has grown significantly in the past year. He has shown great interest in the field of mechanics and always volunteers to fix anything that is broken in and around the Dream Space.

Eldrick has also matured into an amazing leader and has the ability to gently challenge the group in their way of thinking. Eldrick’s resilience is incredible and with a safe space and support throughout the year we have seen him step into a natural leadership role that has the potential to influence the rest of the group.
Looking ahead

This year we realized how much the family unit and surrounding community play a role in our youth’s development and confidence.

For 2019 we will continue supporting the individual journeys our youth need to take, but we also want to focus a bit more on the important people that are a part of our youth’s lives. We aim to embark on the following two projects:

Grandmother knitting club

This year we started out with a pilot project to see whether there would be any interest in a knitting group for grandmothers in the valley. We started out with a selected group of grandmothers and the feedback we received was great.

The grandmothers are very passionate to give back to their communities and this year they knitted little bunnies for the children in the Lynedoch Children’s House. We have already been asked if the knitting club can take place twice per week, indicating that the programme is well received, and gives the grandmothers something to look forward to, and an opportunity to get together in a social environment.

This programme has given many of them a renewed purpose at an age when they might feel they don’t have that much to contribute, and is creating new opportunities for conversation and engagement with their grandchildren in a new and positive way.

Parent Engagement

We would love to invest more time into building relationships with the parents of our youth that are attending the programme in 2019.

We want to create more awareness around the knitting project in 2019 and want to be able to extend the invitation to more grandmothers, so that this can become a weekly tradition for the grandmothers from the Lynedoch Valley.
A special thank you

The youth group would like to give a special thanks to:

Funders and partners

Volunteer involvement

This year we were able to present an array of programmes based on the support and generosity of a wonderful community of volunteers. We acknowledge and thank our volunteers for the difference you have made to the lives of our youth!

Danae Jetton (Counsellor) | Dillon Seals (Mentor for our boys) | Timo King (Photography) | The President’s Award | Hillsong Africa Foundation (SHINE) | Sp(i)eel - Amari Annandale (Drama Therapy) | University of North Carolina at Charlotte | Jesse Lee Flath (Extra maths classes) | Joe Warren (Connecting volunteers) | University of Stellenbosch Drama Department (Applied theatre) | OntdEK: Une Conradie (Youth in Transition and Knitting club) | Gerda Conradie (Knitting club) | Poverty Stoplight (Tool used for community surveys) | Friends of the Lexi (Donations)

Funders

We extend a big thank you to our funders for your investment in helping us shape the futures of so many young people. Your continued support is extremely encouraging and enables us to make a difference, big or small, every day. We look forward to working with you again in 2019.
We remain challenged by the deep and systemic inequality in our community, but are continuously blown away by the resilience and brilliance of our children once placed in nurturing learning environments.

We are working hard to support our educators to support our children, and grappling with how to support our communities to support their children when the challenges they face are often so tremendous.

We look forward to partnering with the University of Stellenbosch further this coming year to undertake more considered research on how best to achieve these. We continue to look for funding support for our most at risk and vulnerable children - extending the support of the Safe Home and Student Development Unit. Not only are these children at greatest risk of being taken into a life of gangsterism and crime, but they hold tremendous potential as we have seen in the few incredibly promising instances we have been able to support.

We remain challenged by the deep and systemic inequality in our community, but are continuously blown away by the resilience and brilliance of our children once placed in nurturing learning environments.

We have really learnt that building trusting relationships takes time and that we need to commit to the long term if we are to have a meaningful impact through our work. We have also learnt that our children have incredible potential that far exceeds our expectations of them, and there is much we can learn when we take the time to listen to each other.

We are reminded now, more then ever, that “There can be no keener revelation of a society’s soul than the way in which it treats its children.”

Nelson Mandela, May 1995

Our plans stepping into 2019 are to deepen our parent engagement and to continue to support our educators, to support our children.

We are looking to undertake research into systemic drivers and opportunities for enhancing transformative learning through our trust programmes. We are committed to building funder and partner relationships for the long term, realizing that this is key to achieving meaningful, intergenerational impacts.

We are exploring how better to incorporate the arts, indigenous knowledge systems and a rooted sense of place into all our learning programmes, and how we can start to actively shape positive identities for our young citizens who are growing, learning and inspiring in their everyday lived experience of Lynedoch.

We are committed to continuing to research, reflect and improve the quality and impact of our work, to truly deliver on our vision for a resilient and thriving community in Lynedoch - one that can showcase that education is indeed the most powerful weapon with which to change the world.
The SI is a registered non-profit trust and public benefit organisation. Our board of directors is governed by interim chair Naledi Mabeba, with Heidi Newton-King and Jess Schulsenk as fellow directors. The SI has developed clear reporting structures with programme coordinators taking full responsibilities of their programmes and that the staff is able to identify between core and non-core responsibilities. The SI complies with all statutory requirements and is subject to a full annual audit conducted by auditors Theron du Plessis in Somerset West. The SI receives an unqualified audit report each year.

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We invite interested organisations and individuals to visit us if you would like to find out more about our activities. Alternatively, please visit any of our online platforms for more information. Donation vouchers are available.

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