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Kids Haven protects and cares for children in crisis, and empowers families, children and communities to build safe and caring spaces for all.

## **KIDS JUSTICE**

### ***Who it is for:***

Anyone who approaches Kids Haven needing assistance with documentation.  
Children living in residential care at Kids Haven who do not have documentation, including foreign, refugee, and children in need of asylum.

### ***Where it takes place:***

The Kids Justice team, consisting of social workers and community workers, is based at the Kids Haven centre in Benoni. The team has undergone training to understand the pathways to citizenship and how to gather the necessary documentation to prove relationship. Kids Haven is assisted by a children's rights attorney, and partners in legal resource centres.

### ***Key outcome:***

To get birth certificates and/or Identity Documents for those who approach Kids Haven needing help.

The key reason for Kids Justice and our efforts to get documents is that we see citizenship as a key component of child safety or protection. Without a document you are invisible. Being invisible means you are most likely not to realise your rights - the right to protection, right to health, right to education, right to work, right to social support. All these rights are critical for your well-being. Without these rights, you are vulnerable to exploitation, abuse and hardship – even illiteracy, no healthcare, and no work.

We work closely with Home Affairs and have built a healthy working relationship. We get the requirements and a referral from Home Affairs to go to the National Health Laboratories for DNA testing if this is needed to determine parentage.

The Department of Home Affairs confirmed that DNA testing could now be done by private labs, resulting in quicker DNA test results thereby fast tracking the path to citizenship. Unmarried South African fathers can now register their child's birth linking citizenship to their child. At Kids Haven, all social workers are upskilled to identify and follow the best pathway for citizenship for each case.

Documentation is a key output for every child admitted into care. Kids Haven is working with Scalabrini in Cape Town to request permanent residency for undocumented abandoned children or children who are extremely unlikely to secure documentation due to lost or no family connections.

Kids Haven covers the transport cost for those who are not able to afford the fare to and from the Department of Home Affairs. There is as a lot of travelling throughout the process. We verify the documents and book a DNA test. DNA tests are done by the National Health Laboratory Service or private laboratories. There is a cost of at least R1 600 for a DNA test. Clients must travel from their

homes to Home Affairs for the late registration of birth application process, interview process, and documentation collection.

**Additional outcome:**

- Children who are documented can enter the formal schooling system.
- Parents who are documented can start looking for a job and providing for their families offering better care to their children.
- Youth can study and find employment as citizens of South Africa.
- Foreign, unaccompanied and refugee children will secure birth certificates and passports from their embassies. Kids Haven supports these children to return to families in their countries of origin.

**Results in 2023:**

- 37 clients have been assisted through Kids Justice.
- 10 DNA tests have been done to prove family ties as the first step to successfully being recognised as citizens of South Africa.
- 7 clients have received their late birth registration (SA birth certificates). Another 5 clients should receive their certificates in November or December 2023.
- 11 clients now have barcoded South African ID cards, including 4 of the clients who successfully applied for late birth registration.
- 8 foreign birth certificates have been issued replacing fake documents.
- 8 clients' cases are in the process with clear pathways to documentation agreed upon and being followed.

**Cost:**

Budget for the year is R246 989 which covers costs for documentation, transport, the team, DNA testing and medical costs.

R140 per ID certificate reprint

R75 per birth certificate reprint

**Funding:**

The HCI Foundation is a primary funder of Kids Justice supporting the Kids Justice team.

**How to help:**

- **Funding for programme**

Donations towards transport costs are much appreciated.

Donations to cover the costs of an ID/birth certificate reprint: ID is R140.00 and birth certificate is R75.00

Donate any amount on a monthly or annual basis