



ALMIE GOOSEN

ALMIE GOOSEN

How were you saved?

I grew up in a Christian home and gave my life to Christ at a young age. Like some young people do, I went my own way, but thankfully my parents were constantly on their knees and I found my way back to the Lord. My faith and my relationship with my Savior is very important to me, I don't know how I would otherwise have been able to cope with all the trials and tribulations I had to face in my life like dealing with infertility and the death of my 1st husband - Jacques. Jesus is my ROCK and I know I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me! (Philippians 4:13).

What do you do?

I'm currently involved with Tshwane Place of Safety Association. Our organisation takes care of abandoned, abused, traumatized, orphaned, sick and HIV+ babies and toddlers. At TPOSA we focus on the importance of family life and the family unit. We believe the best place for any child is in a loving and caring family, thus all our children are placed with individual volunteer families. We currently have about 109 families taking care of around 300 children in their own homes. I personally have 3 babies in our home, a 4 year old little girl in long term foster care that we are busy adopting (she's been with us since she was 6 months old) and my 7 year old son is also adopted.

How did you get involved?

I've always had a passion for children. Ever since I can remember I loved to play with babies. Some say it's because my mother had a crèche when I grew up, but I believe that it's a calling from God. After Jacques passed away I had this yearning to do more in life and to give back to the community. I started out as a volunteer at the Abba House baby shelter in 2001, but just spending half a day once a week with the babies, just didn't do it for me. I wanted to take them all home. Miriam – the manager at the shelter suggested I become a “place of safety parent” and so I did.

TPOSA was started in 2003 by a group of like-minded individuals that shared the belief that the best place for any child is in a family. Each and every child has the need to be part of a family and to feel accepted, loved and special. It is within the family unit that the child is exposed to the various crucial

role players. Here they will learn to communicate and form their own individual identity. Sadly, we are living in a society where more and more families are exposed to socio-economic circumstances, dying of AIDS & TB and therefore we are witnessing a serious breakdown in family life. Thousands of children are surviving on their own and many more are living on the streets. That's why TPOSA values a family as the most important factor in the lives of our children. We want to give every child in crises the experience of a caring and loving family – a home he or she can call their own!

How can other ladies be involved?

We are always in need of more “place of safety” parents. There is an alarming increase in the abandonment of newborn babies. At times we are full to capacity and have to refuse children that have been referred to us. Being a place of safety parent is not a passive act of opening one's home and providing food, clothing, and shelter. It is a proactive statement of nurturing, advocacy, and love.

People always ask me what you need or have to do to become a place of safety parent -

1. You must be an adult.

Place of Safety parents must be at least 18 years old. There is no upper age limit, as long as you are in reasonable health. A person may not be precluded from being a Place of Safety parent based solely on their culture, religion, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or marital/civil union or domestic partnership status.

2. You must be able to provide a safe environment for a child.

Whether you own or rent, your home must meet basic life and safety standards. It doesn't matter if your home is a shack, apartment or a house, as long as it is a safe place for children.

3. Your entire household must be involved.

Everyone in a home participates in nurturing a child. All the members of your household must agree to the commitment of providing a place of safety for a child.

4. If you can make a commitment to a child who needs help.

It's not always easy to be a Place of Safety parent. You must be willing to help a child through both good times and not-so-good times. You need to be counted on until a permanent home is found either through adoption or long term foster-care or until the child reunites with their biological family. Depending on the child's circumstances, this can take anything from a few weeks, months or even years.

5. If you can work as part of team.

Place of Safety parents are the most important members of a team dedicated to the safety and well-being of Place of Safety children. Being a Place of Safety parent means working as a team with the TPOSA staff, social workers, the children's court, doctors, therapists, teachers, and possibly even your Place of Safety child's birth family.

So if you are blessed with a loving heart and adequate resources to look after a child, please contact me for more information about becoming a “place of safety” parent.

Where can people help?

As our Tshwane Place of Safety parents are all volunteers who look after these beautiful babies, toddlers and scholars, every donation or contribution towards the care of our children are most welcome and donations of any kind are always received with appreciation. Food and toiletries are always in demand and we gladly accept second hand clothing, baby furniture and equipment, as well as toys - if these items are still in a good condition. Kindly contact me to arrange for collection. Our extensive needs list

can also be found on our website: www.placeofsafety.org.za

We are also currently busy with our Christmas Gift Box Project, where we source and collect Christmas gifts for the 290+ kids in our collective care. For more information and/or to choose a child to spoil this festive season kindly visit our project specific website: www.santasgiftboxes.yolasite.com

You can also support our great cause by donating just R30. All you have to do is sms the word HELP to 42137* (std T & C apply) or by completing a debit order (found on our website) and fax it to 086 510 8080. The fewer concerns a family has about resources, the more effectively they can focus on the emotional needs of the children in their care.

Mobile: 082 921 5365

Email: almie@kingsgrace.co.za