



## **Empowering SA's most vulnerable with the gift of giving**

According to the latest World Giving Index, the most common motivators for donors contributing to causes are: wanting to help people less fortunate than themselves (54%), realising they can make a difference (54%) and caring about the cause (50%). Other popular reasons for donating include believing that everyone needs to help solve social problems (40%) and because it makes donors feel good (38%). Scientific research has found that giving is a route to personal growth and lasting happiness. With this in mind, shouldn't everyone be able to experience giving and the benefits thereof?

It is for this reason that the [Santa Shoebox Project \(SSB\)](#), which has reached a total of 1,077, 289 children across South Africa and Namibia since launching in 2006, has added an additional element to their initiative in 2022. This year, underprivileged children will be empowered with the opportunity to also give a gift when receiving their Santa Shoebox.

SSB Chief Executive Officer, Deb Zelezniak explains that, under this year's theme of 'Share the Love', donors will have the option to duplicate an item in their box which will enable the beneficiary child to gift that item to a friend or family member. "This helps to empower the child while teaching them The Joy of Giving - the mantra of our beloved Project. The rationale behind this stemmed from the realisation that underprivileged children are usually not seen as powerful. All too often, these children are recipients of hand-me-downs and second-hand items that no one else wants. This is exactly the opposite of our ethos. An underprivileged child has the same potential, the same value and the same full, layered life that a child of privilege does. They simply aren't given the same opportunities. 'Share the Love' is about empowering that child."

She adds that mental and physical health benefits associated with giving are essential for children, especially those living with the uncertainty of poverty. "For starters, it increases self-esteem. This is reflected in research from Ohio State University which established that when people give, they feel like they are making a difference to others!"

Santa Shoeboxes contain a toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, a facecloth, school supplies, a toy, sweets and an outfit of clothing. This year, in addition to the duplicate item provided by the public, Book Dash, which creates African storybooks that anyone can freely translate and distribute, will be including two books - one for the recipient and the other for them to gift to someone else. "This amplifies the sharing, because a book is meant to be read together, either with a friend or by a parent or teacher."

Zelezniak states that the 'Share the Love' concept also extends to the participating public. "Because we are in an economic slump, a single donor may find it tough to fill an entire Shoebox. It might even be tricky for corporates to afford the same number of Shoeboxes they have in previous years - but this presents an opportunity for collaboration. When teams and families get together to pack boxes, they also get to share the rewarding experience and can walk away feeling good about themselves knowing that their efforts directly benefit the children they choose."

Pledges open to the public on 1 September, and team pledges of more than 20 Shoeboxes on 1 August each year. Virtual Santa Shoeboxes are available all year round. Educational and care facilities can apply to become recipients in April.

To share the love or for more information, go to <https://santashoebox.org.za>.

## **About the Santa Shoebox Project**

There are three initiatives within the Santa Shoebox Project:

Traditional Santa Shoebox: Over the last 16 years, 1 077 289 Santa Shoeboxes each containing eight specified items of treats and essentials have been given to underprivileged and socially vulnerable children throughout South Africa and Namibia. From 01 September each year, Santa Shoebox donors choose their beneficiary child/ren by name, age and gender and are given the child's clothing size. Each personalised shoebox reaches the very child for whom it was pledged. Using the Santa Shoebox app, donors are able to track their shoebox from the moment it is pledged to the magical moment it is handed to the child.

Virtual Santa Shoebox: These shoeboxes are purchased online by donors and are available year-round, meeting the needs of donors who live too far from drop-off points, are too busy to shop or are perhaps Covid-vulnerable. Components are chosen by the donor on the Santa Shoebox website, the shoeboxes are packed by the Santa Shoebox Team and delivered to children attending far-flung rural facilities. A Virtual Santa Shoebox contains the eight specified items, as well as additional items, such as masks, a lunchbox and books. A Virtual Santa Shoebox costs R450 plus an optional delivery fee of R30.

Santa Shoebox Legacy: All Santa Shoebox Project operating costs are covered by corporate sponsors. Privately donated funds have been accruing under the SSB Legacy Fund which are now being used to bring permanent change to the lives of Santa Shoebox beneficiary children and the impoverished communities in which they live

Fiduciary information: As a Level One Contributor to B-BBEE, the Santa Shoebox Project earns 100 points on the generic scorecard, and with Section 18A status, is able to provide a tax-deductible receipt in recognition of donations. The Project is an initiative of the JOG Trust (IT2671/2009). The Trust is registered as a Public Benefit Organisation (PBO-930031301), and a Non Profit Organisation (NPO 102-098).

### Social media:

Facebook: /SantaShoebox

Twitter: @SantaShoebox

Instagram: /santashoebox

YouTube: The Santa Shoebox Project

Pinterest: /santashoebox

<sup>i</sup> <https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/observations/give-and-you-shall-receive-a-boost-to-your-self-esteem/#:~:text=A%20growing%20body%20of%20literature,self%20esteem%2C%22%20Crocker%20says.>