

2017 Annual Report

Impact

Financials

Supporters

Future



Our Vision and Mission

Infinite Family envisions an Africa transformed by its youth, whose self-reliance leads to a better life and a stronger society.

Our Mission is to promote self-reliance—to augment what is taught in the classroom and the home to help develop resilient, responsible, and resourceful students as they prepare for their lives as young adults and beyond.

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Chairperson's Letter

There are two things I hear the Infinite Family team repeat regularly. The first is, "If it was easy, someone else would have done it." The second is, "We are lucky — and honored — that our struggles are a result of work we have chosen."

By facing our challenges and choosing the hard work that is needed to continue to improve our program for South Africa's teens, we strive every day to be worthy of the greatest compliment they can give us: to copy our example when it is their turn to step up in life.

All of which is to say that in our work with teens, we at Infinite Family are charged with setting the tone as role models every day. The truth is that our Net Buddy mentees have been let down so many times in their short lives. They are slow to trust but quickly recognize hypocrisy. Asking these young people to regularly make hard choices while we dodge the difficult conversations or avoid going the extra mile is simply not the way we operate. This ethos is partly why 90% of our 12th grade Net Buddy mentees qualified for college or university this past year compared with 59% of their non-mentored peers. Watching these kids work harder than they think they are able and then exceed all expectations (especially their own) is more than gratifying—it's as good as it gets!

Yet 2017 was also a year of tough discussions for Infinite Family, discussions that reaffirm our commitment to continuously learn and evolve, a commitment that drew us all to Infinite Family in the first place. For starters, we ceased our efforts with our proprietary ImpacTracker annual survey. After following best practices for five years in the design and implementation of this monitoring and evaluation tool, we concluded, as experts were also beginning to acknowledge, that it is simply impossible to eliminate subject bias from impact data gathered via self-evaluation survey. Furthermore, as you will see later in this report, we learned that the deprivation and complexity in our teens' lives affect subject bias in ways that invalidated the data we were trying to collect, starting with the pre-service assessments. For example, even our 11- and 12-year old mentee candidates consistently reported weekly computer use for Internet-based job hunting and other technology-based activities though most had never touched a computer before. To these children, the risk of losing the opportunity to be connected with a Video Mentor was so great that - no matter how much we reassured them - they responded with the answers they believed we wanted to hear rather than those that they would later admit were true. Monitoring and evaluation without trust in the process and results is not defensible, nor is it ethical to present to potential funders. We also believe it is not worth an ongoing investment of time and resources.





Instead, we pivoted, and found another way to measure our impact: our monthly Net Buddy Performance Reports, introduced this year. We are confident in this direction, which gauges the effects of our work based on our Net Buddies' quantifiable actions—actions we know are connected to skills they need to succeed in the work world, like the strength of their English skills (the first performance priority) or showing up to their VCs on time. By any standard, our Net Buddy mentees' results and progress can now be defined objectively, their progress determined by weekly, monthly and quarterly deliverables. Even better, just as in the real world, their overall performance is within their control, since we give each teen the option of earning “extra credit” (e.g., by doing additional activities such as *Steps to Self-Reliance* modules to bring up their scores). In this way, our Net Buddies are learning to plan ahead, to evaluate the implications of their behavior, and to work to improve based on tangible results they receive. Our Video Mentors and staff are also learning better ways to inspire and motivate our Net Buddy mentees based on their scores and level of engagement—a development that is especially gratifying since this new direction allows us to work more closely with more of you, our donors, volunteers and organizational partners. Indeed, Video Mentor feedback led to important activity clarification and report reorganization for the 2018 update. We know this system will continue to evolve and improve, and appreciate your help in moving Infinite Family toward the shared goal of our Net Buddy mentees' success and well-being.

This past year, we also started the process of making some hard choices about the challenges and relative costs of working in remote rural communities. We will always advocate for each and every teen to get the support they need to succeed in college or university and, beyond that, their career. But this year, we repeatedly confronted the reality that Internet connectivity options in South Africa are not yet reliable enough in these rural areas for sustained, trusting relationships to develop and be efficiently supported so they can flourish. Although we believe every teen is worthy of a Video Mentor, the cost of delivering and sustaining these services to young people in rural locales is considerably higher than in areas where more network options are available. Beyond cost, we must also consider how our Net Buddies are affected by the intermittent nature of these mentoring relationships (due to technical) challenges. Being forced to skip months of video conversations because underground copper wires have been stolen can be painful and detrimental to teens who have already experienced so many losses. Closing sites is a difficult decision to make, and one that will always be deeply considered. We don't make these decisions lightly, and these issues will continue to merit the time and attention of all of us as we determine the best course of action for our Net Buddy mentees and their Video Mentors.

We are thankful that many of our alumni continue to work with us and remain proud to be preparing South Africa's teens to follow a path toward a better life.

Joseph Sacca
Chairperson

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'JSacca', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Founder's Letter

Dear Friends,

In an age when "Influencer" is a job title with somewhat dubious skill requirements, it is reassuring to be reminded of the original definition of the word: someone who is truly in a position to change lives. This past February, as I was feeling guilty for escaping the cold and snow back home, Zoleka Petse and I were driving to Phola, Mpumalanga, about 90 minutes due east of Johannesburg, counting the minutes until we arrived at the only service station along the single road to our destination. Though it was early in the day, it was already hot and the wind was blowing clouds of red dust off the mounds of rejected silt that sat at the edges of the coal mines not too far from the highway. We really needed a few cold bottles of water; not to mention the last flush toilet we were likely to encounter all day. I also couldn't wait to meet our newest Net Buddies and see how things were going in one of our most challenging communities.

When we finally arrived, I saw a young girl named Nokalunga*, aged 13 or 14, typing with two fingers at a computer toward the back of the LaunchPad. As I looked over her shoulder to see what she was working on, I read: *What you must learn to be a pilot* typed into the search engine. I was impressed. For starters, it's important to recognize two important and huge hurdles this young woman had already surmounted by simply typing this question: 1) Infinite Family's LaunchPad computer lab was the first time she had had access to a computer and the Internet, and 2) Even beginning this research required that she pose the question not in her mother tongue but in English, her third or fourth language, since very few career information websites are translated into IsiZulu, IsiSwati, Sesoltho or Sepedi. It also occurred to me that the closest Nokalunga had ever gotten to an actual aircraft was 30,000 feet, as it flew overhead. There are no airports in Phola. When I asked her if she had talked about careers with her Video Mentor, she explained that she had not yet been matched with a Video Mentor of her own, but that her best friend had one and they had been talking about careers. Their discussion had inspired her to begin her own research.



* Not her real name because she is a minor.



I think that is pretty powerful influence. Without a doubt, Nokalunga's friend was learning about jobs that do not exist in their tiny village: marine biologist, systems analyst, industrial psychologist, anesthesiologist — the list is endless. But the fact that a teen once removed was also considering a job outside her village, one she could not see but could imagine, gave me a sense of abiding hope. If an adult living thousands of miles away had told her friend that she could aspire to something more, why couldn't Nokalunga? It is precisely because other adults — our partners and sponsors — also believe in what these teens are capable of achieving and invested in the LaunchPad and Internet that she could take the initiative to ask this question, in a foreign language no less, and begin her journey.

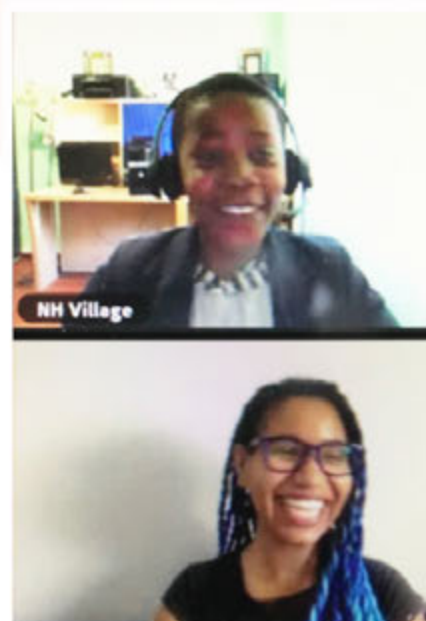
Internet connectivity in our township and rural communities still isn't what we want it be, and what we know it can be someday. But with the guidance of caring adults whose knowledge and enthusiasm ignite, influence and inspire our 529 Net Buddy mentees, it is enough. Through the more than 31,000 video mentoring sessions to our Net Buddy mentees and the technology literacy training we've given to an additional 258 students, we are helping Africa's young people build better futures for themselves. While we continue to evaluate the long-term economic viability and efficiency of video mentoring students in rural areas, there is no debate that the impact of connecting them with the opportunities available in the wider world results in a transformative and irreversible impact in our students' lives — along with everyone in their circle.

We thank all of you who support our work to prepare South Africa's students to make good decisions that truly matter for their lives and the lives of those around them.

Amy Conrad Stokes
Founder, President and CEO

Model

South Africa's teens are surrounded by poverty and violence on a daily basis. Growing up in the conditions of constant uncertainty and fear that poverty and violence produce creates a unique type of stress in a young person's life, specifically defined as toxic stress. Experiencing high levels of toxic stress, most people respond with reactions that avoid other situations that require focus or overcoming challenge, which for young people include school. Educators witness these students as withdrawn, reluctant to participate, often missing class, perhaps even engaging in frequent fights and conflicts themselves. These students become labeled with expectations of failure and develop patterns of apathy or "learned helplessness" as they fail to find ways to counter these stereotypes. Soon it becomes easiest to drop out of school, as many South African teens do, and accept the widespread expectations for their future. Despite the legal right to make different choices and build better lives, many black teens growing up in townships today are unable to break the cycles of poverty and violence that surround them.



"My Saturday VC time brings me back to my essence, the life I want to lead, and the world I want to provide for my child. We're so unconnected from our purpose in our daily life, this grounds me."

Nevah, Video Mentor

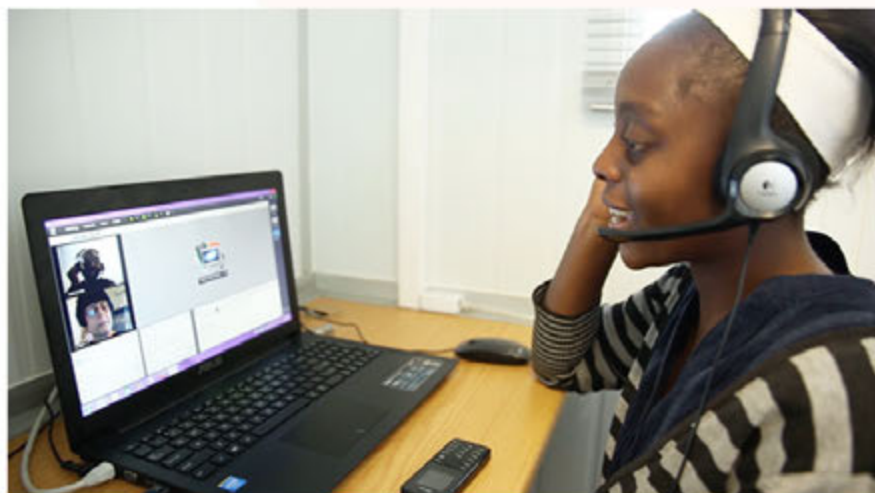
But none of these outcomes are inevitable. Decades of research confirm that the most common predictor of overcoming childhood adversity and learning to manage stress is "at least one stable and committed relationship with a supportive adult."

Infinite Family's experience across South Africa since 2006 proves that this adult can effectively and efficiently be part of a student's life via weekly video conversations through a computer. Video mentoring is a proven solution that gives black South African teens the additional role models they need to learn how to build resilience by transforming toxic stress into lifetime coping strength.

Through the powerful use of technology, Infinite Family makes adult life experience and work expertise worldwide available to South African teens. Our global volunteer Video Mentors represent a previously untapped resource for South African teens: adults who share their wealth of expertise, knowledge, and skills via weekly, half-hour, face-to-face video conversations (VCs) through Infinite Family's secure, interactive Internet platform. While learning from the life example of a Video Mentor, our model emphasizes building skills in: education, career preparation, technology literacy, life skills and communication.

These powerful and lasting relationships help our Net Buddy mentees recognize their own ability to defy expectations and tackle both the overwhelming challenges of growing up in South Africa and the universal difficulties of adolescence: overcoming peer pressure, learning to plan ahead, self-advocacy and resilience, building good relationships, and making decisions for future success.

But our connections don't end when our Net Buddies complete high school. Today, our pioneer Net Buddy alumni face unfamiliar workplace issues and confusing cultural interactions simply because "they don't know what they don't know." At this point, they call themselves "Net Blazers," because each is "blazing their own path." They recognize the value in the Infinite Family network, regularly devote Saturdays to continue working with the Infinite Family Team for career advancement, and continually use technology to stay in touch in expedient and innovative ways.



Our LaunchPads — refurbished shipping containers transformed into 21st century technology learning centers — are where our Net Buddies connect with their Video Mentors each week, and where even more students gain previously unavailable tech literacy skills. Created in partnership with local manufacturers, this replicable footprint is opening new doors for both the teens and Infinite Family trained local adults who earn income as part-time computer lab managers.



Monitoring & Evaluation

Tomorrow belongs to the people who prepare for it today. - African Proverb

This year marked a difficult but important turning point for Infinite Family's monitoring and evaluation processes. As described more fully in our Chairperson's Letter, after more than five years of concerted effort and investment we finally pivoted away from our ImpacTracker survey system. ImpacTracker was well crafted but:

- Untrustworthy due to self-evaluation subject bias;
- Too slow and intermittent to help us innovate and serve well;
- Separated rather than aligned our staff, volunteer and teen activities;
- Reduced valuable teachable moments with our teens; and, ultimately,
- Expended scarce resources without benefit to our teens or stakeholders.

The process to create and then move past ImpacTracker has taught us a great deal. We are not done learning yet but we are finally very excited by our new systems and results. Starting in 2017, Infinite Family created a monitoring and evaluation framework that aligns all activities that our mentees, Video Mentors and staff do toward our ultimate shared goal of moving our teens into advanced education and skilled careers. Our goal has been to design a system that uses every activity we do together as a teachable moment and also creates resources our Net Buddy mentees can use to secure their first job. Our new Net Buddy Performance Report is carrying out its mandates well with enough flexibility to continue to improve as our Net Buddy mentees' needs evolve.

Our Mentoring Model core skill areas of education, career preparation, technology literacy, life skills and communication remain as critical to workplace success today as they did when we started in 2006. In addition, South African teens who take the extraordinary leap across the technology, geographic and cultural divides where the majority of them are growing up to the 21st century workplace where they aspire to build better lives require immense personal resilience, resourcefulness and responsibility to see them through. Using these skills and strengths effectively requires testing and flexing them in different combinations, in a diversity of situations, day after day. Incremental improvements across a range of skills – e.g. researching, organization, editing, and speaking – eventually add up to being able to prepare and give the presentation that earns a promotion. Letting our Net Buddy mentees be responsible for their success helps them build motivation, initiative, problem-solving and other critical success attributes along the way.

CORE FOCUS AREAS MAPPING

Education	Career Preparation	Technology Literacy	Life Skills	Communication	Resilience	Resourcefulness	Responsibility	Total
		x	x	x			x	4
			x	x			x	3
			x	x			x	3
x	x	x					x	4
x				x				2
x		x	x	x			x	5
					x	x		2
	x		x	x			x	4
x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	8
	x		x	x		x	x	5
	x	x	x		x	x	x	5
4	5	3	8	9	3	5	8	45

SAMPLE MONTHLY MENTEE MONITORING REPORT

Net Buddy Performance Report	08.2017	09.2017 (school holiday included)	10.2017
Expected Actions	20	15	26
Expected Actions Measured			
Attending weekly VCs on time and prepared	6	4	8
Sending weekly thoughtful emails to Video Mentor	2	2	4
Writing weekly blogs in English	2	2	4
Doing homework or research sessions online weekly	3	2	4
Reading and reviewing digital books	0	0	1
Setting school subject goals and sharing results each	0	0	1
Total Expected Actions Earned	13	10	22
Extra Credit Actions Measured			
Working in computer lab when Video Mentor is absent	0	1	1
Participating in IF workshops or extra activities	0	0	1
Completing Steps to Self-Reliance modules	0	1	1
Receiving lab manager special recognition	0	0	0
Receiving community special recognition	0	0	0
Plus Extra Credit Actions Earned	0	2	3
Deductions Tracked			
Disrespecting computer lab manager or IF staff	0	0	0
Misusing the computers, lab or local partner property	0	0	0
Less Deducted Actions	0	0	0
Total Actions Earned	13	12	25
Score: Actions Earned / Expected Actions	65%	80%	96%

Employers in all fields value employees who demonstrate characteristics like taking initiative, being dependable and punctual, communicating well, and showing commitment, among other skills. Above all, they want to see a track record and have references from people who have already worked with potential young workforce candidates. Infinite Family's Net Buddy Performance Report allows our staff to maintain a solid track record on file ready to be a good reference for our Net Buddy mentees when they seek those critical early part-time or full-time positions. Our Net Buddy mentees can also demonstrate on their CVs and cover letters that they understand what is important to employers by describing their Infinite Family experience in similar metrics, e.g. Exceeded my performance targets 19 months in my final two years; Attended 95% of scheduled video conversations on-time and prepared; or Led my computer lab in receiving letters of community special recognition my matric year. By choosing to work extra hard and invest in themselves during their teen years, they are preparing for and creating the opportunities they want and deserve.

Impact

New Skills for South African Teens

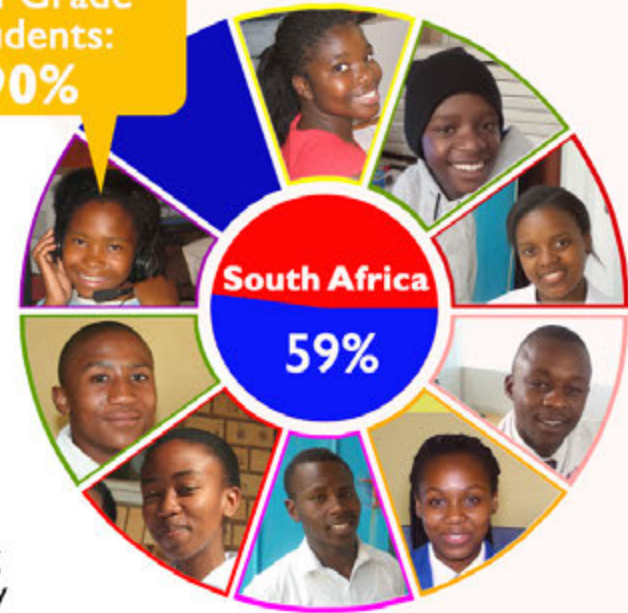
Tech Literacy 258

Video Mentored
& Tech Literacy 529

Upskilled 787

Mentor Volunteer Hours: 15,500+
Mentoring sessions: 31,057

Infinite Family
Video Mentored
12th Grade
Students:
90%



Our volunteer Video Mentors have provided more than 15,500 hours and 31,057 mentoring sessions to 529 South African students. Another 258 teens have learned valuable technology skills in our computer labs. More than 36% of mentorships last more than two years.

12th Grade Qualification for Advanced Studies

For the fifth year in a row, more than ninety percent (90%) of teens who had Video Mentors in 12th grade passed with the qualifications to go on to college or university, versus 59% of their non-mentored peers. They are among the first in their families to access education opportunities that will lead to a job with a brighter future.



"If any of you educators would like an English lesson, I would be happy to give it to you!" That's how Mduduzi ended his short presentation on the difference his Video Mentor, Sharon, had made in his life in the year and a half they had been connected.

He started his presentation by saying that in 8th grade, before starting VCs with Sharon through Infinite Family, he had been a shy and uncertain English speaker. He added that English had been one of his worst subjects and struggled with all of subjects that were taught in English, including math and science. Since meeting Sharon, he was proud to report that he was doing better in school overall, especially in English.

To Mduduzi's surprise his self-confidence had also increased dramatically, so much so, that he had begun to want to lead by example and be a role model for the younger students who were also struggling. Despite recently losing his father, he is always at the LaunchPad helping the Net Fundis and coaching the new Net Buddy as they learn the system. If he keeps at it, he will soon earn the title of Jr. Net Fundi.

Our Global Volunteers

Infinite Family's Video Mentors inspire their Net Buddy mentees from 16 countries. Their Net Buddy mentees live in South Africa's Gauteng, Mpumalanga, and North West provinces.

Abimbola Adegbite
Alyssa Aitken
Elinor Amlen
Amelia Antes
Wanda Arocho
Keith Baldwin
Monica Barraza
Joseph Batchelor
Angela Beekers-Uberoi
Floortje Beemsterboer
Nikole Bonnelly
Kristen Bonner
Deena Boykin
Virginia Bratney
Mary Jo Ann Briceno
Audrey Bricker
Marjorie Broffman
Alicia Cahill Ha
Tonia Callender
Diane Chang
Hylda Clarke
Christine Clover
Mike Collins
Nancy Cook
Millicent Cooley
Linda Coon
Kaitlyn Cooper

Lilian Cordoba
Kenneth Coulthart
Dennis Danner
Marla Daugherty
Sheena Davis
Paula Derrow
Tara DeWorsop
Alicia Drager
Jannis Drixler
Emily Du Plessis
Michael Edwards
Mia Eriksson
Laura Fè
Beth-Ann Finerman
George Firth
Joan Fischer
Loretta Franklin
Jagruiti Gandhi
Yury Garcia
Max Glaser
Loretta Goodwin
Robert Graydon
Julia Grzywinski
Nalleli Hassan
Nicole Haughton
Judy Hendler
Rhonda Herrera

Betsy Hohlfelder
Douglas Huffaker
Amy Humbert
Janet Huntley
Roy Irvine
Mickie Jacobs
Aniqa Jannath
Lisa Johnson
Maria Justice
Debra Kahn
Kohni Kennedy- Gonzalez
Sally Kilbridge
Anthony Lavelle
Alyssa Lee
Rebecca Batts Legg
Kris Lelli
Jacqueline Liesch
Johnnie Lloyd
Rachel Lovett
Katherine Maceda
Melody Mak
Shell Marston
Natasha Lee Martin
Rita Martinez
Parimal Mehta
Lizzie Mitchell
Michael Mitchell

Mashadi Monaledi
Helena Montalvo
Ilia Morales Figueroa
Stephen Mousdale
Michael Murphy
Jenica Myszkowski
Gustavo Navarro
Elise Nelson
Laura Norwood
Maria Oliver
Tim O'Mara
Nicole Parks
Jennifer Pereyda
Ellen Pinke
Swapna Pinnamaneni
Cheryl Pollard
Jennifer Potter
Sheila Prakash
Jessica Renz
Michael Robins
Erin Rocchio
Keith Rubio
Juliette Salas
Lisa Schneider
Barbara Scott
Karabo Shabangu
Michelle Sheikh

Abby Shumacher
Katrina Sinyagina
Karen Smith-Jackson
Amy Spangler
John Sterkowitz
Amy Stewart
Amy Stix
Laurene Stopford
Kim Svoboda
Macy Tanking
Lisa Tarcy
Nokuthula Thusi
Kelly Tooley
Flora Toveg
Tony Umadhay
Jeanette van der Werf
Nina Vaughan
Odette Veneziano
Tina Vine
Angela Vitaliano
Robert Vlahakis
Tameka Walton
Christopher Winn
Adela Winter
Lesley Yaniv
Keli Yeats

Infinite Family US and Infinite Family SA

Statements of Financial Position

December 31, 2017 (Consolidating) and December 31, 2016 (Consolidating)

	2017 Consolidated Totals	2016 Consolidated Totals
ASSETS		
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash	\$ 47,503	\$ 53,925
Unconditional promises to give	34,064	2,500
Prepaid expenses	884	795
Total current assets	82,451	57,220
EQUIPMENT AND SOFTWARE		
Equipment and software	174,952	163,500
Accumulated depreciation	(93,703)	(80,314)
Equipment and software - net	81,249	83,186
Total assets	\$ 163,700	\$ 140,406
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS (DEFICIT)		
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Accounts payable	\$ 33,651	\$ 15,530
Note payable	76,917	76,851
Working capital loan	10,000	-
Total liabilities	120,568	92,381
NET ASSETS (DEFICIT)		
Unrestricted net assets (deficit)	43,132	32,409
Temporarily restricted net assets	-	15,616
Total net assets (deficit)	43,132	48,025
Total liabilities and net assets (deficit)	\$ 163,700	\$ 140,406

Statements of Activities

Years Ended December 31, 2017 (Consolidating) and December 31, 2016 (Consolidating)

	2017 Consolidated Totals	2016 Consolidated Totals
UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS		
SUPPORT AND REVENUE		
Contributions	\$ 294,753	\$ 265,190
In-Kind contributions	164,290	171,623
Other	284	407
Total unrestricted support and revenue	\$ 459,327	\$ 437,220
EXPENSES		
Program services		
Mentorships	364,250	298,075
Supporting activities		
Management and general	48,518	48,945
Fundraising	47,114	52,723
Total expenses	459,882	399,743
Foreign currency translation gain (loss)	(4,338)	8,242
Net assets released from restrictions	15,616	36,924
Change in unrestricted net assets	10,723	82,643
TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED NET ASSETS		
Contributions	-	1,100
Net assets released from restrictions	(15,616)	(36,924)
Change in temporarily restricted net assets	(15,616)	(35,824)
Change in net assets	(4,893)	46,819
Net assets (deficit) - beginning of year	48,025	1,206
Net assets (deficit) - end of year	\$ 43,132	\$ 48,025

Our Global Supporters

Dawna Alliss and Chris Conrad
Amazon Smile Foundation
Elinor Amlen
Anonymous
Natasha Malhotra Bagchi and Indranil Bagchi
Angela Beekers-Uberoi and Hank Uberoi
Kristen and Cole Bonner
Deena Boykin
Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania
Briarcliff Congregational Church
Michael Campodonico
Lidia Fouto and Steven Cancro
Kathleen Casey
Ellen Clancy and Richard Rottkov
Judith Clark
Mike Collins
Community Foundation of Tennessee
Rita and Jerome Conrad, MD
Sue Daun
Maya and Dino De Angelis
Sharon Downing
Neil Duffy
Carol Durst-Wertheim, PhD, and Les Wertheim
Peggy and Mike Dwyer
Lisa and Sally Ekus
Pam Ferroggiaro
Loretta Franklin
Marla and Frank Franzese
Give with Liberty

GlobalGiving
Florence Goldsmith
Roberta Gumbel
Claire Gutekunst and Art Perlman
Alan Hackel
Heather Hall
The Happy Elephant Foundation
Brittany Held
Betsy and Alan Hohlfelder
Jody and Joseph Horowitz
Amy Humbert
Janet and Ray Huntley
Ginny Hutchings
Jonathan Jen
Jockey Hollow Foundation
Miles Josephson
Patricia Ceruzzi and Martin Joyce
Daniel Jurow
Debra Kahn
Tamiko Kamara
Kathleen and John Karber
Mitchell Karp
Ginny and Bill Kerwin
Jeff Kimball
Christine Krause, MD and Ed Krause
Kristy and Chris Kubacki
Maria and Ken Laberteaux
Rita and Thomas Laberteaux
Dona Laketek

Nora and Pat Latta
Gwyneth Leech and David Wilson
Julie and Paul Leff
Kris Lelli
Robin and Stan Lent
Dana Lent
Sarah Lent
John Loehrer
Marilyn and Al Loomis
Rachel Lovett
Franci Lu
Twinkie and Brad Lyman
Mia Marais and Johannes Hanekom
Judy Schoenberg and Jonathan M. Mayers
Lauren McGill
Lauren Mellor
Katie Michel
Terry Newman
Judy Nie and Phi Nguyen
Laura Marie Norwood
Kathy and John Osterholzer
Angela Paolicelli-Ortiz and Elliot Ortiz
Ken Owen
Monika and Deven Parekh
Chris Parker
Mita Patel
Alison Paul and Mark Pomerleau
Antoinette Peragine
Michael Robins

Sophie and Joseph Sacca
Frances Sadler
Barbara Sahagan
Mariam Sarrafan and Fati Sanil
Mary Beth Sasso
Caryn Seidman Becker and Marc Becker
Nadine Sewell
Abby Shumacher
Barry Skolnick
Skolnick Family Charitable Trust
Lucia Skwarek and Alex Gutierrez
Helen and Jay Smith
Kyle Smith and John Webber
Paula and Stephen Smith
Amy Spangler
Maria Stark
Amy and Chris Stokes
Diane and Cary Stokes
Janet Sullivan
Betsy and Mike Terry
Kevin Travis
Heather and Chris Tressler
Jebra Turner
Karen and Chip Van Klompenberg
Tiffany Vos
Dawn and Dana Wales
Kyle Smith and John Webber
Lee Ka Yan



When Precious' mother fell sick while she was in 11th grade, she knew she would have to carry even more of the family's concerns, including caring for her younger sister. "I couldn't talk to her [mother] about a lot of things and didn't want to subject her to stress," she explained. She also felt her own stress affect her studies and, she feared, her future.

Her relationships with her Video Mentors, Sarah and Angela, helped her dig deeper to find the strength to keep her studies on track. "Both my mentors helped me to realize that the situation I was going through at the time was not the end of my world. They encouraged me to work hard and do more to create opportunities to further my education." And Precious did – she held things together all the way through college to earn a degree in Sports Management. Today she has a full-time job as a Sports Facilitator at Afrika Tikkun, a highly respected non-profit.

Our Global Partners

BT has as one of its core strategic drivers the Better Futures Programme and that dovetails perfectly with what Infinite Family is doing.

- Joanne Shields, Head of Operations, BT Global Services



We have forged powerful, enduring alliances with some of the world's most forward-moving technology drivers— companies like Internet Solutions, BT Communications Services, and Pulse Solutions in South Africa, and Adobe, Clarix Technologies and Salesforce in the U.S. They are problem-solving leaders that share our quest to break down technological barriers and erase the social and economic separation that keeps students in places like Alexandra and Soweto Townships (Gauteng Province); Bodibe (North West Province); and Phola (Mpumalanga Province) off the grid and isolated. Skadden Arps and Webber Wentzel help us navigate agreements and contracts that protect our Net Buddy mentees, volunteers and assets. Holiday Inn Sandton allows our team to be highly productive when working on the road. Our corporate sponsors believe in us, stay with us, and provide cutting-edge tools to advance our work. We are grateful and know our greatest strengths lie with our partnerships.

Directors

Richardt Dannhauser
Head of Operations and Systems
Internet Solutions

Carol Durst-Wertheim, PhD, Secretary
Educator, Author, Entrepreneur

Bette Kun
IT Marketing and
Communication Specialist

Sarah Lent
Executive Director Growth, EMEA
R/GA

Rachel Lovett, Secretary
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For Colin, a 16-year-old who lives in a village in the Mpumalanga province, the idea of talking to a Video Mentor across the world felt intimidating. "It was scary, because I had no idea of the kind of person she would be. But when I did meet my Video Mentor, Nina, it was," he says, "a dream come true." Colin wasn't always a boy who would speak about his dreams. Before he met Nina, he says he would never have had the courage to stand in front of a crowd to speak. "But Nina gave me advice on how to do it—instead of meeting people's eyes, which gives me the heebie-jeebies, I look at their forehead so I'm not nervous. Recently, I stood in front of my entire school and delivered a prayer," he says.

Nina also helps Colin with his schoolwork, getting down and dirty with exponents and algebraic functions. "It's pretty difficult, but since we started our Video Conversations, my performance has been improving." They also talk about their mutual love of travel, and teach each other. "I tell her about places to see in South Africa like Table Mountain, Gold Reef City, and Cape town," says Colin. For her part, Nina, who is Canadian, is teaching Colin French. "I've always wanted to learn, and now I can speak a little," he says. Since becoming an Infinite Family Net Buddy, Colin's world has gotten larger, and the possibilities feel endless. "My favorite subjects are life and physical science," Colin says. "Eventually, I want to become a scientist and be the first person to find a cure for AIDs."



Future

We know that measuring our impact on an ongoing basis matters, both to help us work smartly and efficiently and so that our donors, volunteers and organizational partners know they are investing their time and resources wisely. Ultimately, though, our goal is to help South Africa's teens break generations of poverty and violence by being first in their family to go college or university and then into a skilled career. That's why, in addition to our Net Buddy Performance Reports, we are working to help our Video Mentors become more systematic in how they support their Net Buddy mentees, particularly in regard to their education. Unfortunately, most of the secondary schools our Net Buddy mentees attend are not equipped to prepare them for college or university, and our Net Buddy mentees do not initially expect to achieve this level of higher education. Yet this year — 2017 — was our fifth in a row where more than 90% of our 12th grade students qualified for college or university compared with 59% of their non-mentored peers. Next year, we will put even more effort into preparing our students for this milestone and being prepared for their future studies.

After eleven years, we have learned how video mentoring works best, from the training and technology needed to how to cultivate and support long-term relationships with teens who have experienced unbearable tragedy to the organizational relationships that most enhance our impact rather than diminish it. We have witnessed astounding transformations in our teens from densely populated urban townships and remote, rural villages. Through the force of their example, it is now time to challenge the pervasive culture of dependency and resignation that exists in so many black South African communities, a culture that makes it acceptable for teens to give up and drop out, first from school and then from making tough decisions that lead to a better future. Shifting these long-held attitudes will require concentrating our impact. The goal? To motivate enough students to become home-grown role models who show their peers that it is possible to leave behind decades of poverty and dependency by learning the skills required to exceed expectations in high school and establish a new status quo based on earned success and self-reliance.

Join Us

We are working to make self-reliance created through video mentoring a strong counter force against widespread failure, poverty and violence in South Africa. To do this, we need your help if we are to succeed in increasing the number of South African teens who reach their goals and serve as role models for living a successful life.

Corporations, please contact us to start your own employee-mentoring program and harness thousands of years of employee experience and talent to spark sustainable life changes.

Individuals, join us as a Video Mentor for 30 minutes a week, 32 weeks a year, to inspire a South African teen to exceed all expectations and create the opportunities their elders once envisioned with the defeat of apartheid. If this is not your time to be the weekly voice of experience, please donate to support video mentoring scholarships.

Lastly, please follow our progress and share our work on social media with your friends and family and encourage them to expand the impact of their lifelong experience on the international stage via video mentoring.

We thank you



DONATE

BE A MENTOR

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