



Update from Denise Kingdom Grier May 2023

**Warning: This letter contains sexual violence and content that might be triggering.*

Dear Friends,

Greetings and *lumela* in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Letsi* is 25 years old and lives in an unsafe house with her younger sister. It is unsafe not only because the windows and doors are easily accessible to intruders but also because she has become a target for those who visit sexual violence in her community.

On the day we visited, Letsi reported having been gang raped once on her way to church and another on the way to volunteer at SFCS. She reported her rape to the local authorities and was able to identify her assailants who have been incarcerated. Today she lives in fear of the threats of retaliation from his co-conspirators along with the trauma of having been assaulted this way three times in her community. We prayed with her as her eyes glazed over with fear and sadness.

“Do you still believe in prayer?” I asked with both curiosity and compassion for whatever her answer would be. “Yes,” she nodded and whispered, “I still believe.”

Letsi needs our prayers and she needs a safe house to live in to heal and to take refuge from

those who wish to visit further violence upon her. Today there is no secure home for her.

During the COVID-19 lockdown, support for SFCS allowed them to add a victim's empowerment component to their work to be able to respond to the significant rise in Gender Based Violence in their community.



In response to their work, the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa donated a home to be transformed into a safe house for survivors of domestic and sexual violence. Survivors like Letsi will soon have access to counseling, refreshment, and a sense of real security for themselves and their children while living in this home. SFCS and their local partners have worked tirelessly to make this an accessible home for people with all abilities, welcoming to gender diversity and conducive to the spiritual, emotional, and physical needs of assault survivors. It lacks only one more thing to be ready to welcome residents—your participation.

You can help!!! Here's how:

Prayer

Only God can deliver perpetrators from the urge to visit such heinous violence upon the women in South Africa [and the world]. Please pray for God to change the hearts of evildoers and heal the body and souls of survivors. Pray that this home will be filled with the presence of Christ as a refuge of strength and hope for those who dwell there. Pray that partners will soon provide funding for the security measures necessary to open this safe home.

Purse

It will cost \$5,000 to acquire and install state-of-the-art security that will give SFCS the confidence necessary to open this home this spring. **Will you or your church consider giving a special gift above your usual support to meet this urgent need so women like Letsi who live in fear can move into this place of safety?** Any funds received above the \$5,000 amount for security will go toward programming and maintenance of the safe house exclusively. You can give in the following ways:

Online: [Give here.](#)

By phone (U.S. only): Call Terri Boven at 616-541-0835

By mail: Please send your check, made out to “Reformed Church in America,” and designated “South Africa - Botshabelo” to Reformed Church in America, Attn: Finance Dept., 4500 60th St. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49512, or, in Canada, to Regional Synod of Canada, PO Box 1583 Stn Main, Woodstock, Ontario, N4S 0A7

[Give a Safe Home](#)

Presence

Come and see how God is growing Setshabelo Family and Child Services and strengthening their work in the Free State Province of South Africa. If you have been before, come and see how it is growing. If you have never been before, wait no more. Join me October 16-27, 2023, or get in the pipeline for Winter and Summer 2024. The cost is \$2,200-\$2,500 all-inclusive plus airfare.

Thank you again for your ongoing prayers and support for Setshabelo Family and Child Services in South Africa. Because of you, the township of Botshabelo is becoming a safer and stronger community for the benefit of the thousands of orphaned and vulnerable children who live there.

Ke a Leboha + Sala Hantle [Sesotho- Thank you and Be Well],

Denise Kingdom Grier

**Letsi's name has been changed to preserve her dignity.*

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