

The epitome of empathy and care

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"At the Children's Hospital Trust, we value integrity, collaboration, accountability, kindness, and being dynamic in everything we do," says Chantel Cooper, CEO of The Children's Hospital Trust.

Chantel joined the Children's Hospital Trust in 2013 as the head of fundraising and communication, and was appointed as CEO in 2019. For her, 2020 was a year that reinforced the importance of the core purpose of the Trust and the difference the organisation wants to make in the lives of children. "Our cause is driven by the need to make a difference in the lives of sick and injured children. We are people who work together to save lives of the children who matter. We all have a purpose!" she says.

Sharing excerpts from her journey, Chantel says: "My purpose in life is to serve those who are most vulnerable: women and children. My career was driven by my passion to make a real difference in the lives of women and children. When I was 18 years old, I volunteered for an organisation that provided support for women who had been raped. While volunteering, I started working with women in rural areas in the Eastern Cape where we found opportunities to grow their businesses.

"My passion for women led me to Cape Town where I became director of Rape Crisis Cape Town when I was 27 years old. After the birth of my two children, I moved to an organisation called St Joseph's Home for Chronically Ill Children. St Joseph's is a step-down facility for tertiary hospitals like the Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital. It was a profound move for me as I was able to work with children, who inspired me.



Chantel Cooper, CEO of The Children's Hospital Trust

"One of the most valuable lessons I learnt is the power of love. You can offer a child the best healthcare in the world, but what a child wants most is their parent to love them and be by their side. This is the value I most appreciate about the Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital and my past experiences. This hospital believes in child-centered care and knows that a child heals when their parent or caregiver is by their side – even during the Covid-19 pandemic. All other hospitals had restricted access to patients, but the presence of a parent is imperative to their sick or injured child's healing."

Overcoming adversities

"The Covid-19 pandemic taught our team that life can change in a blink of an eye and that we need to be prepared for all possibilities. The pandemic hit the world with such speed and velocity that we had no choice but to find a way to not only sail through the storm but also find ways to get out of the situation stronger than before."

Chantel also states that 2020 provided the Children's Hospital Trust with the opportunity to learn extraordinary lessons that they would not have normally had the opportunity to learn. Some of these are:

- The value of deep listening and the importance of demonstrating kindness.
- Working in collaboration created the opportunity for meaningful impact for our beneficiaries.
- Opportunities do exist during challenging times; positivity exposed the opportunities.
- Adapting to change during uncertain times helped to build a resilient team.

"Our Trust team demonstrated ingenuity, compassion, resilience, commitment, and fortitude during a very difficult time. As

a result, we surpassed our goals, and this enabled our organisation to reach more children and families. We are grateful for the contribution from every individual,” adds Chantel.

“Walking through the corridors of a children’s hospital during a crisis gave perspective on the real value of care, kindness, and collaboration. While children were not the face of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Social Work Department experienced first-hand the profound impact the pandemic had on children’s health and well-being.

“Unemployment, food insecurity, child safety and schooling were common concerns for many patients and their parents who entered the doors of the Hospital. The Red Cross War Memorial Children’s Hospital values patient and family-centred care which includes care for the whole family from a holistic perspective.

“In response to the needs of the families, the Trust secured funding to enable the social workers to provide additional counselling services and material support such as the provision of food, hygiene, and homeschooling supplies to vulnerable families when children were discharged from the Hospital.” [Read more on the Family Care Project here.](#)

Redefining excellence

The core to achieving our vision is upholding our values of integrity, accountability, kindness, dynamism, and collaboration in every aspect of our work. The Trust has a sound financial record in administration and good governance. For the past 28 years, we have raised funds to address many pressing needs, but much has yet to be done. With the help of many donors, we continue to give hope and healing to our little ones who need it most.

The Trust raises funds for the upgrade and expansion of the hospital’s buildings, the purchase of state-of-the-art medical equipment, and new medical treatment projects and funds the training of medical professionals across Africa – ensuring that the hospital not only retains its world-class stature but is able to continue providing life-changing and life-saving care for children.

The Trust relies on donations to fund these needs. When you donate to the Trust, 100% of your donation goes towards funding projects that change children’s lives (and the lives of the people who love them). The operational costs of the Trust are funded from an endowment, so your generous contributions are never used to cover administration costs.

Donate to the Children’s Hospital Trust today! www.childrenshospitaltrust.org.za

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The Children’s Hospital Trust



Advancing child healthcare through sustainable funding for the Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital and other paediatric facilities in the Western Cape. Our vision is to give all children access to high quality healthcare.

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