

*“Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in God.”*

Psalm 31:24

## Hope and Transformation

Many tourists share their stories of unparalleled relaxation and breathtakingly beautiful accommodations while visiting the motherland. To them, Cape Town is paradise. Yet scores of South Africans struggle daily from the unaddressed injustices that flow from apartheid. Underneath the city’s glamorous surface are the often-unreported realities of Cape Town citizens who live in unspeakably horrible conditions.

Among those in Cape Town who live in such conditions are children, particularly girls who live on the streets. Having escaped from physical/emotional abuse and neglect, poverty, gangs, and many other deplorable conditions, these girls learned to survive by navigating the often violent and unforgiving realities of street life where they lived in fear and constant danger. Left to fend for themselves, many of these girls have found safety and security in Ons Plek, a Cape Town residential child and youth care center designed specifically to provide support and care for street girls.

Ons Plek provides educational, developmental and therapeutic services to Cape Town’s former street girls. Ons Plek offers a bridging school program for girls who are currently not enrolled in school to gain admittance and perform at their proper grade level. As a teacher at the school, I typically begin my mornings with the girls sharing stories, laughter, and their favorite songs. This helps us form and strengthen relationships with each other.

My life has been transformed dramatically through serving at Ons Plek. Everyday, my belief in the life-changing ability of God increases and I feel grateful to play a role in this process. I am inspired daily by the strength and resolve of the girls, and the commitment and love expressed by the staff members. Although so many of the girls have endured injustice and trauma in their lives, their past does not prevent them from experiencing moments of laughter, learning, and growth. Without a doubt, the redemptive power of Christ is at work in the lives of all at Ons Plek.

*Nia Sullivan serves as a Global Mission Intern with Ons Plek Projects for Girls, South Africa. Her appointment is supported by Week of Compassion, Our Church’s Wider Mission, Disciples Mission Fund and your special gifts.*



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