



Sylvia Mchunu embraces Dr Isabel do Vale, the hero who put a smile on her daughter's face. *Photos: Motlatsi Mailula*



CEO of the Smile Foundation Kim Robertson Smith is happy to see smiles.

Foundation celebrates 21 years

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Restoring the smiles of children for more than two decades should be celebrated every day.

This the Smile Foundation has done as they celebrated 21 years of making an impact in the lives of children suffering from various facial abnormalities.

Situated in Joburg north, the Smile Foundation is a non-profit organisation that assists children who are in need of facial surgery due to facial deformities such as Moebius syndrome, cleft lip or cleft palate.

The milestone was celebrated in Joburg on February 24 and prominent figures, who have been supporting the organisation through the years, attended.

Guests were all welcomed by

the the newly appointed CEO of the organisation, Kim Robertson Smith. "We have helped over 4 000 children and families during our 21 years of existence," she told the guests. "I think that it's a huge achievement and a huge milestone.

"I want to continue to help and support every single child that cannot smile. We are doing it for them at the end of the day."

During the celebration, guests had the privilege of listening to the story of a mother when she received news of her child's condition.

Thabile Manyathi's daughter was the first child who the organisation assisted. Manyathi was so determined to get her daughter, Thando the treatment she needed for Moebius syndrome that she wrote a letter to the late President Nelson Mandela. Two years after

writing her first letter to Mandela, she received a call that changed her life forever.

"I received a phone call one afternoon from a person who said that they were President Nelson Mandela. At the time people perfected his voice so well that I didn't believe him.

"After he told me the content of one of the letters that I had sent out, that's when I rejoiced."

Mandela then contacted Marc Lubner who is now the executive chairman of the organisation and discussed how they could help Manyathi. The Smile Foundation took shape after Thando's successfully surgery.

Without the kindness of the late president Mandela, Manyathi's determination and Lubner's knowledge, the organisation would have been a dream.