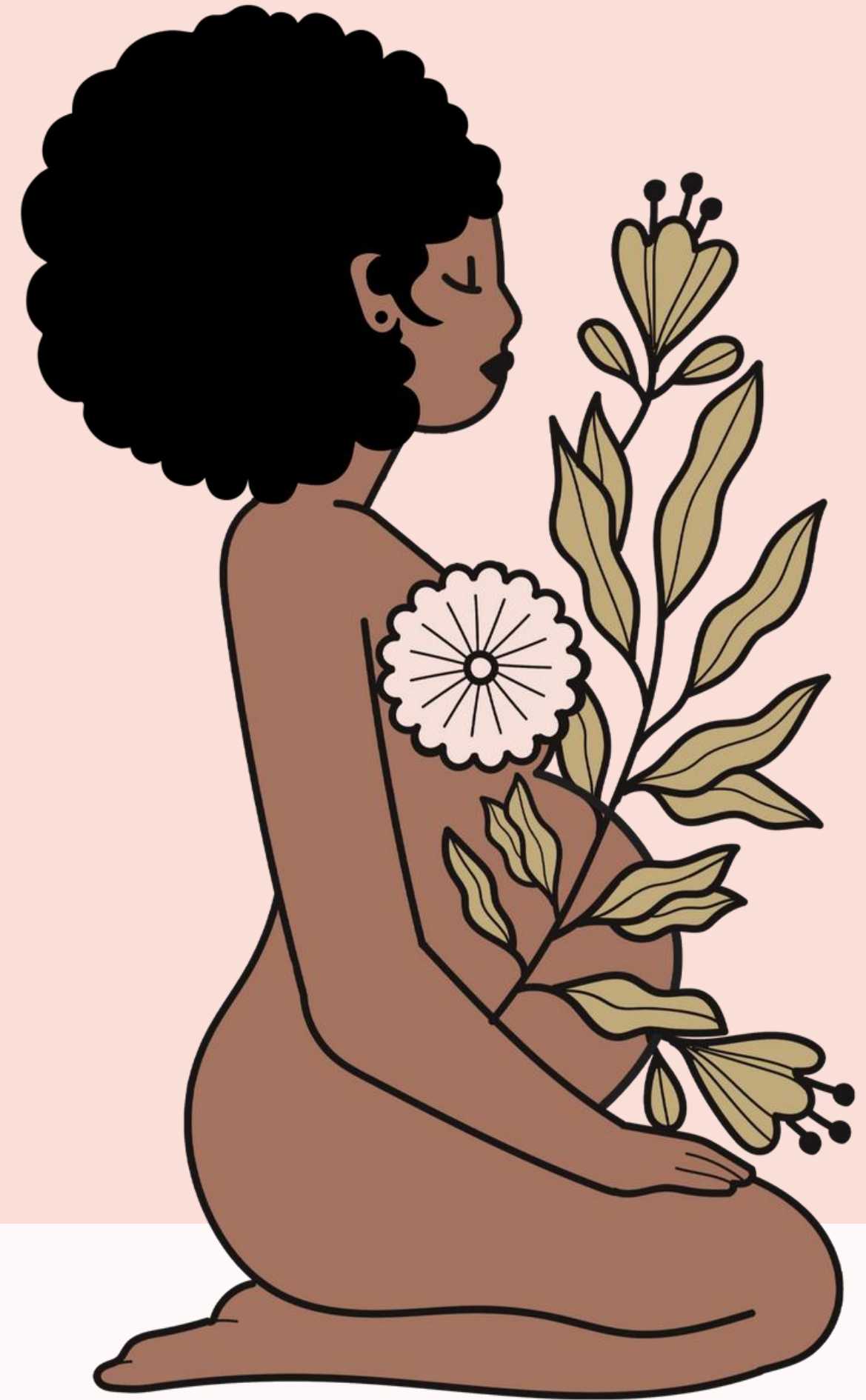


1000 Days of Grace Foundation

Promoting Breastfeeding

Taahira Tara Williams



The need for skilled breastfeeding support

Breastfeeding provides optimal nutrition, strengthens the physical and spiritual bond between mothers and children, and offers protection against various diseases (Agunbiade & Ogunleye, 2012).

The presence of bioactive components in human breast milk plays a crucial role in disease protection and shaping the infant's immune system (Lokossou et al., 2022).

To improve breastfeeding rates and outcomes, support from lactation consultants and counselors has been shown to be effective (Patel & Patel, 2015).

Future research should focus on addressing barriers faced by lactation consultants, improving interdisciplinary collaboration, and examining the cost-effectiveness of these interventions to enhance breastfeeding support and outcomes (Anstey et al., 2017; Kim et al., 2018).



CURRENT

• picture

**32% Rate of Exclusive Breastfeeding
until 6 months in SA**

**Stunting as at 2023 figures show that
28.8% of children under 5 are
stunted which is increasing yearly**

**Projections show that 1.7mil children
will remain stunted by 2025.**

BFHI – MBFI

NEO-BFHI

**INDEPENDENT
LACTATION
CONSULTANTS**

**INDEPENDENT
PEER
COUNSELLORS**

CURRENT

• picture

In hospitals, both private and public sick and vulnerable infants are least likely to be breastfed and those that are admitted breastfeeding leave formula feeding after a hospital stay

These are the infants and children that are in most need to the benefits that breastfeeding can provide but due to the lack of skilled support they dont get the benefits of breastmilk as a targeted medicine.

RMMCH Hospital Lactation Program

Since July 2024, 1000 Days of Grace Foundation has been providing skilled breastfeeding support to RMMCH and in October 2024 the full lactation program model was initiated through consultation with the Paediatric and Neonatal Units.

The pilot program has already created positive impacts in the lives of mothers and babies at the hospital and has played a role in decreasing of infection rates, reduced re-admissions, reduced jaundice admissions and faster discharge for jaundice treatment and faster healing of sick infants through exclusive breastfeeding.

There is no program like this in SA and we are privileged to be steering this important need and assisting in bringing lactation support into the multidisciplinary model.

Scope of Practice

Our duty is to protect, promote and support breastfeeding by:

Providing evidence based education to families, health professionals, educators and the community.

Participate in the development of policies that protect, promote and support breastfeeding or human milk feeding in all situations including emergencies.

Advocate for breastfeeding in all settings and promote breastfeeding as the child feeding norm.

Support practices which promote breastfeeding and discourage practices which interfere with breastfeeding by:

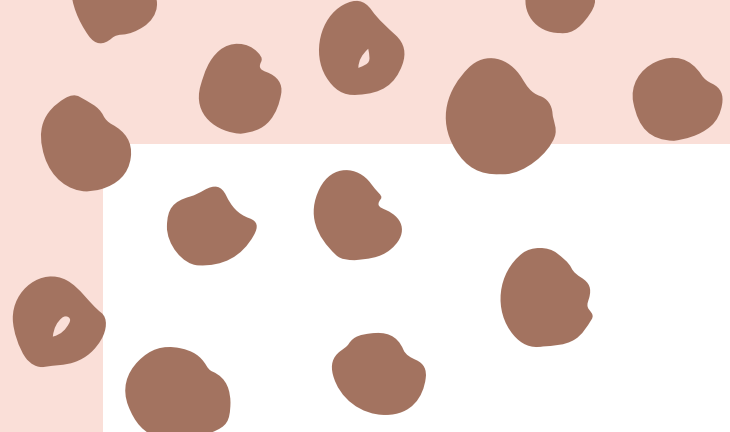
Promoting the principles of the BFHI, and carefully choosing the method of supplementation when necessary using strategies to maintain breastfeeding.

Lactation Program

- Lactation Consultants training in Breastfeeding Medicine
- Building relationships with Drs, Nurses and allieds and becoming a part of the multidisciplinary team
- Including lactation specific research study reviews and exploring complex lactation cases with all staff as training
- NICU/PICU support with expressing of breastmilk (including hospital grade breast pumps) until feeding can start directly at the breast
- Support in all postnatal wards and general paed wards with lactation support

- Outpatient consults where mothers have continued access to skilled lactation support after hospital discharge for 2 years and beyond.
- Data and monitoring systems for detailed impact reports that can support future breastfeeding statistics specifically for our country
- FREE to all mothers and their infants





Stats for 6 Months of the Pilot Program

PATIENTS OVERALL HAVE BEEN HAPPIER AND WELL SUPPORTED AS REPORTED BY PATIENTS AND STAFF

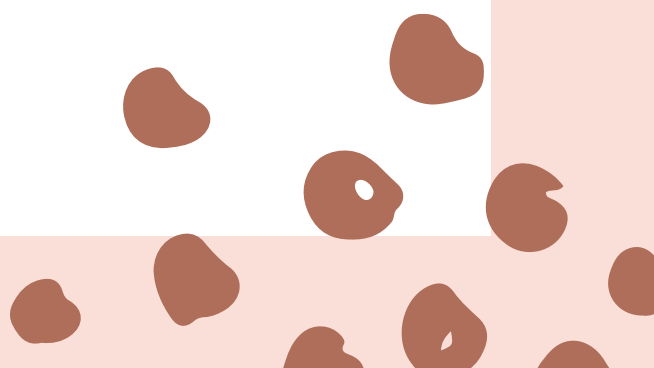
Specific patient referrals from Drs – 20-30 patients per week

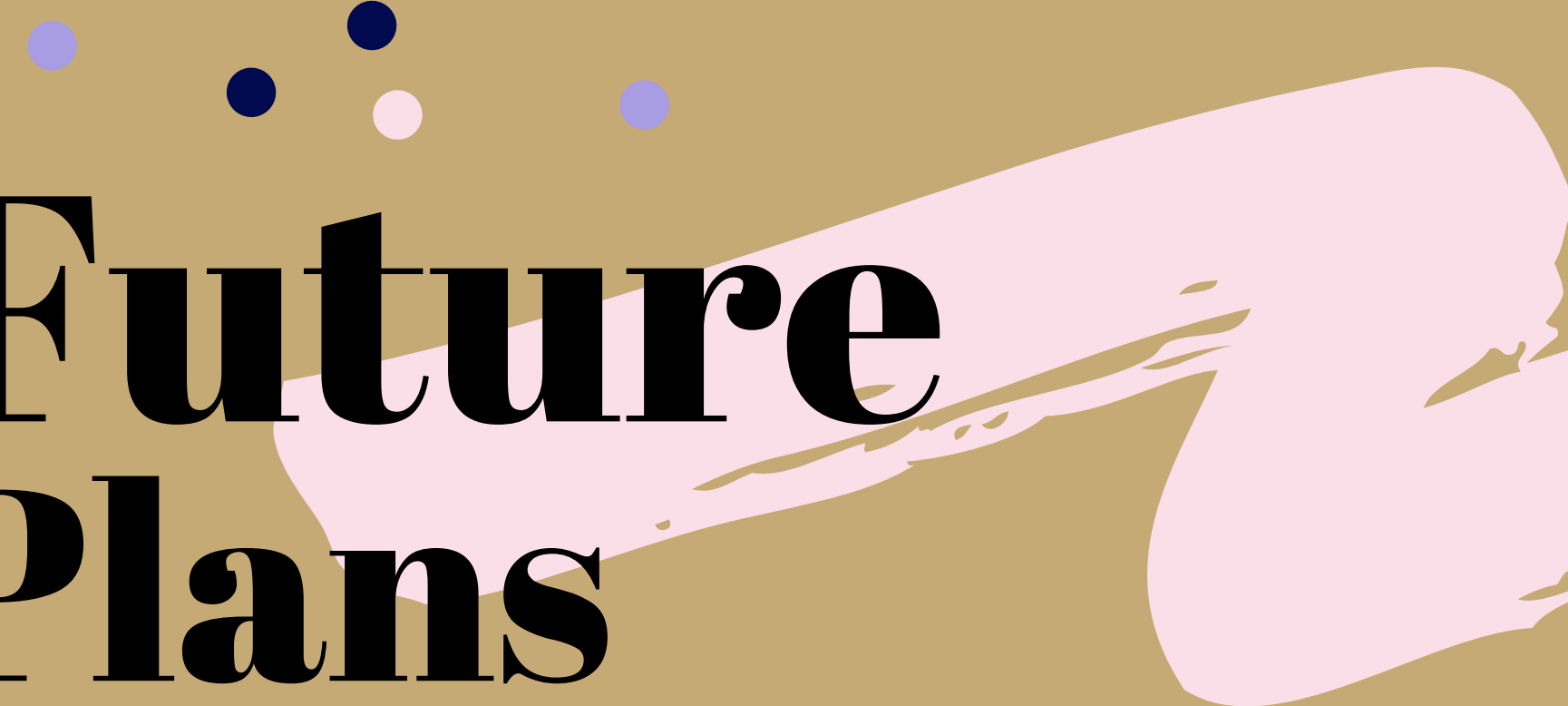
General consults and outpatient support to all mothers from postnatal wards, NICU and KMC – 50-70 patients per week

Antenatal breastfeeding education and prenatal assessments – 300-400 per week

Impact of over 8000 families supported in the last six months

3 Full Time Staff at RMMCH daily
2 Student LCs
6 Volunteer Doulas/LCs





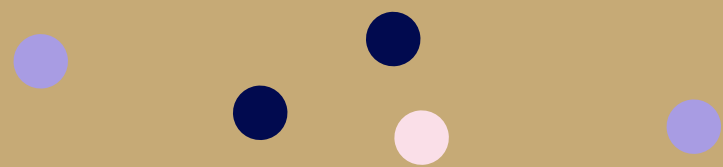
Future Plans

The world is our oyster for increasing breastfeeding support in SA

**Working with
other hospitals
for specific
cases until
expansion of
the program**

**Outpatient consults and
in hospital consults at
more hospitals across
the country**

**Training of
health
professionals
at more
facilities**



World Breastfeeding Week



Prioritise Breastfeeding

Create sustainable support systems

WABA | WORLD BREASTFEEDING WEEK 2025

August 2025

support@1000daysofgrace.org
www.1000daysofgrace.org
074 616 2922