

81^{of} 100**Pontso
Madona**

Here to be Protective

The Founder of Ellen Glen Home: A mother's struggle turns adversity into a community safe haven.

What began as one mother's determination to understand and support her son has grown into a place of care, dignity and hope for children with special needs and their families. "I didn't set out to build a home, I set out to understand my son. Everything else grew from there."

For Pontso Madona, the Ellen Glen Home for Children with Special Needs represents what can happen when a deeply personal challenge becomes a reason to create change for others. Pontso's journey began in 2004, when her son started experiencing difficulties at school. As a mother trying to find the right support for her child, she discovered how overwhelming

that journey could be when information and resources were difficult to access. A support group in Johannesburg became a turning point, giving her the knowledge and encouragement she needed to better understand her son and advocate for his needs.

It also opened her eyes to something bigger. Pontso realised that other families in Snake Park, Soweto, were facing many of the same challenges, often without support for what they were going through. Rather than keeping what she had learned to herself, Pontso chose to become a solution for others. This is how the Ellen Glen Home for Children with Special Needs was born.

Today, Ellen Glen provides full-time residential care for children living with physical disabilities and mental health conditions, including vulnerable children who have experienced abandonment or neglect. However, the home is about far more than providing somewhere to live. Pontso has created an environment where children are cared for with dignity, where their individual needs matter and where they have the opportunity to feel safe, supported and valued.

Her vision has also inspired others to become part of the journey. Community volunteers, church groups and corporate partners have supported improvements to the facility,

helping to create a safer and more comfortable home for the children in Pontso's care.

There is still more that Pontso hopes to achieve, but what she has already built is a powerful example of how personal experience can become a catalyst for wider change. What started with one mother searching for answers has grown into a source of hope for children and families who might otherwise have struggled alone.

Through compassion, perseverance and faith, Pontso has created the kind of support system she once went searching for herself. "When you've stood where these mothers are standing, you don't walk away. You build the door you wish someone had opened for you."

Your
story
matters

