

# Hope Project SA offers performers a ray of light



By [Evan-Lee Courie](#)

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The pandemic that we are currently faced with has negatively affected a lot of industries. While some measures have been put in place to help some industries in South Africa, the entertainment and event industry remains affected. Livelihoods have been suddenly shattered, and hunger has become frighteningly real for professional entertainers.

In light of this, Hayley Bennett-Freidin, managing director of [Tailormade Group](#), and her husband Warren Freidin, managing director of [AV and Beyond](#), together with business partner Liam Anthony, head choreographer at Tailormade Group, have decided to start the [Hope Project SA](#). This project aims to create jobs for performers who are currently without any source of income.

Hayley Bennett-Freidin, director, producer and creative director at Tailormade Group, shares a story of hope in these dark times for professional entertainers in South Africa...



Hayley Bennett-Freidin

## ■ Can you tell us a bit about Hope Project SA?

The Hope Project SA is a non-profit organisation that's building a community creating job opportunities and relief for the artists and crew members who find themselves in dire financial trouble during our current economic climate.

## ■ When, how and why did you get started?

Well, I think we all kind of predicted which direction things were headed towards when the number of Covid-19 cases in our country began to increase steadily. By the time lockdown measures were implemented, it was clear that our country would be facing huge economic challenges.

Our immediate concern was obviously the impact that these measures would have on the many artists and crew members, whose livelihoods relied on the commencing of events and productions. So we put a collaborative team together with the idea of "bringing hope" to the people in our industry and this was the result. The Hope Project SA was started.

■ **What is the core function of Hope Project SA?**

The core function of Hope Project SA is to, pun intended, provide hope to the creatives in our industry.

“ Currently, we are selling protective masks of which all proceeds go to the relief fund we have in place, which provides applicants with food vouchers. ”

However, this is just one of the many face projects we are working on to bringing hope and work to our industry of performing arts.



■ **What are some of the obstacles you've had to overcome since starting out?**

To be honest, there are so many that we're all facing. Setting up a new initiative in a time like this is taxing and the hope is that we can create so much awareness and mask sales that we can truly help many.

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We are also looking at effective ways of bridging the gap from live performance entertainment to a digital platform, allowing for the continuation of productions and live events in a safe environment. Thankfully, that is an obstacle which no longer seems to be an issue, as our online streaming hub at The Galleria Venue in Sandton is up and ready for use. So we do hope that clients will continue to include our creative and uplifting entertainers in their virtual productions.

🎪 ***What's the biggest challenge you are facing during this pandemic?***

Many artists and technical crew are going hungry. We are getting calls every day from people who don't have any money to buy food.

🎪 ***What sort of assistance will you need going forward?***

Any sort of assistance is appreciated, really. You can choose from our wide range of certified protective face masks - patterned or branded - or make a donation, provide any funding or sponsorships towards The Hope Project SA. Alternatively, follow us on [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#) or contact us to find out more about our exciting range of virtual and green screen entertainment.

■ ***If you are able to operate, What steps are you taking?***

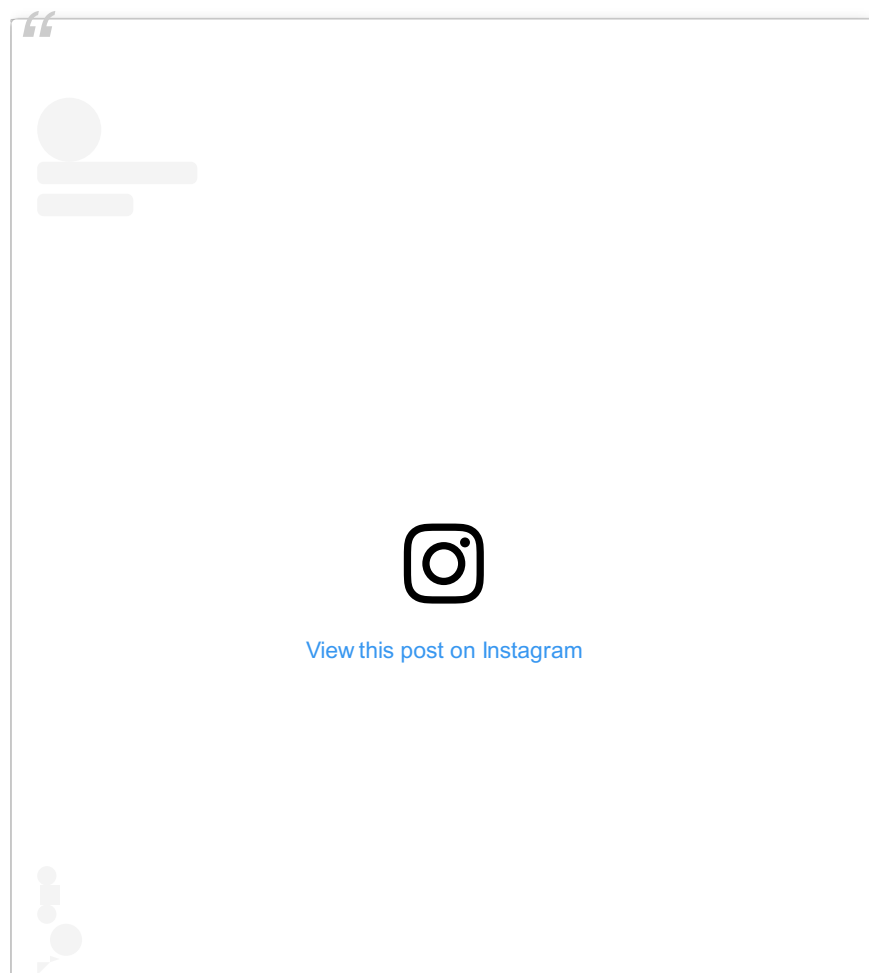
All live entertainment came to a grinding halt and we face months of cancelled or postponed work. Our production warehouse and dance studio has been turned into a hub to manufacture our protective face masks. The reality is we need to continue to fight in order to keep our small business and assist as many freelance performers and event people as we can throughout this.

■ ***What measures have you put in place for your employees?***

We've implemented, like many companies, systems that will allow some employees to work from home and or use their personal cars to carry out safe mask deliveries to customers and of course, as stated in the previously, we have introduced a strict PPE requirement inside the production warehouse. The reality is if we can continue to provide masks or virtual entertainment we will be able to continue to employ many who currently sit not only without work as performers but without food.

■ ***Are you communicating with your customers? If so, how?***

We are absolutely communicating with our customers, many of them reaching out on social media. You can find us on [Facebook](#) or [\[\[Instagram Instagram\]\]](#) or head over to our [website](#) and there you'll also find our email address.



ANNOUNCEMENT 💎💎 @thehopeprojectsa thehopeprojectsa consists of a team of entertainers, dancers and creative thinkers who are taking it upon themselves to create an opportunity to support fellow artists and crew who are struggling in our current economic climate due to the COVID-19 pandemic. @tailormadegroup in partnership with @avandbeyond has turned their dance studio into a production line, creating jobs for seamstresses and tailors that have been manufacturing costumes for the company for many years; together with providing jobs for performers/crew in logistics, packing and courier services for our first initiative, Hope Face Masks. Artists and crew will be up-skilled through the project by offering their time, skills and efforts to help in the safe and sterile production and distribution of these masks. A percentage of the proceeds will go directly to #TheHopeProjectSA fund, helping provide relief in the form of vouchers to reputable stores for food, electricity and data costs to those artists and crew facing dire financial emergencies due to COVID-19. We #TheHopeProjectSA stand together to exchange in ways that can be mutually beneficial for all parties at hand so that no one will go hungry, our world will not turn to grey and that we never lose the hope of a better and brighter tomorrow. We encourage you to be properly protected and urge you to do so by supporting a cause far greater than you and I. Apply for relief and place your order today! Visit [www.thehopeprojectsa.co.za](http://www.thehopeprojectsa.co.za) / [orders@thehopeprojectsa.co.za](mailto:orders@thehopeprojectsa.co.za) 💎💎💎💎 #HopeProjectFaceMasks

A post shared by [The Hope Project SA \(@thehopeprojectsa\)](#) on May 13, 2020 at 2:48am PDT

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Hmm, I predict that in the next six months the initiative and work will be supported and recognised nationwide and The Hope Project SA will be one of the leading NPO's for the creatives and by the creatives.



#### 📊 What has been your biggest lesson from all this?

The most important lesson from this all, is the importance of community and service.

“ Without the support and selfless service from the artists, tech crew, seamstresses and many more from our industry, the Hope Project SA wouldn't be the beacon of Hope that we preach. ”

It is our ability to recognise that “no man is an island”, that an injury to one is in fact an injury to all, that allows us to come together in collaboration for the help and service of those who truly need it in this time.

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