If you did not know you were in trouble, the name of the organisation delivering food to my primary school would have cleared any lingering doubts. It was the Cape Flats Distress Association, known by the locals, to this day, as Cafda.

It happened with rhythmic efficiency: every Monday and Friday milk and bread, and from Tuesday through to Thursday soup and bread. In my seven years of primary school, the food always arrived in clanging enamel buckets. Cafda did not miss a single day of delivery.

Yet food remains one of the major obstacles in the lives of young people trying to complete school. You cannot concentrate. The pain of an empty stomach is a special pain.

More and more boys, especially, drop out in search of food or little bits of money to buy food. The availability of quality textbooks and good teachers do not complete the full puzzle of schooling; a satisfied student enables learning.

It was a shock to me when I realised that not only school youth but also university students often fail or leave campus because they cannot eat a regular, let alone nutritious, meal. So several volunteers decided to create a food bursary on campus for academically strong students, and the No Student Hungry campaign was born. As the year comes to an end, the full value of these food bursaries appeared through student testimonies.
Lerato

I am lucky. The NSH has definitely made a change in my varsity life, especially when it comes to my lecture attendance.

I knew I did not have to worry about food and my sugar levels going down on campus. I now look forward to attending classes, and so far I'm passing my exams.

Mdunusana

Being on NSH touched me in a special way; it cultivated a passion for helping other young people like myself, especially pupils.

I now give back to those less fortunate than me. As a matter of fact, I am currently running a project with a high school in Rocklands, where I help pupils who come from poor families with groceries on a monthly basis.

Gloria

This initiative made me realise that the world is not as cold as people make it out to be and that there are still some people and organisations that are actively involved in making the life of a needy student easier through projects like NSH.

Primrose

NSH filled a huge hole financially and this impacted positively on my studies. The feeling that someone out there cares enough to make sure I do not go to bed hungry motivated me not to disappoint those who believe in me, and thus I worked even harder than before.

Mohammed

Before I got the bursary it was tough for me to go through a day without money. I was a foreigner but I was helped as a human being, and I truly believe the Almighty will help all of you in one way or another.

Asinkatha

This would have been an extremely long year without my daily meals from NSH. This year the initiative has inspired me to get good marks. I see this project as a ray of sunshine, a bit of hope every day. I will definitely hold on to this spirit of giving when I work one day and remember how R25 a day got me through my years of studying.

Nokuphela

It is hard for a student to stay in residence and have nothing to eat. Your parents are not working and you don't have anyone to cry with. I am very grateful and hope this project continues.

Tebogo
Very often pangs of hunger can and do obstruct a student from excelling academically. I am now within an inch of completing my studies because the NSH initiative allowed me to fulfil my academic obligations without having to worry about where my next meal would come from.

It is clear from student testimonies that the gift of food is only in part about being well-fed.

Giving food motivates students; it allows them to get on with the business of studying; it builds bridges to those who might otherwise feel excluded; it inspires altruism, the desire to give in turn; and it alters the way students see themselves and others.

It is not enough to provide students with money for accommodation and tuition, or textbooks and computer access. There is this simple thing called food which we can all provide through simple acts of kindness.

Watch this: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YY3ctVqofO8