



# The Open Circle

Joining hands for care and love

ANNUAL REPORT

2016-2017

A Residential Home for people with Intellectual  
Disability and challenging behavior.

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## Message from the Chairperson

The Open Circle is now in its third year of operation and during these fledgling years a solid foundation has been laid on which to build the future. The Annual Report, prepared by Helita Mankahla, details the services and programs in place at The Open Circle.

As the first three year cycle of our pilot project draws to a close, we have much for which we can be collectively proud, while also acknowledging mistakes made and lessons learnt.

The departments of Health, Social Development and Public Works have made significant contributions. However the pivotal operational role has been that of Facility Manager, Helita Mankahla. Her guidance, organisational skills, and insight have spearheaded the project from the start.

At the heart of the home are the residents supported by a wonderful team. To the staff- professional, administrative, caring, kitchen, cleaning and maintenance – we thank you all.

To the Project Manager and Management Committee - thank you for the manner in which you have competently and quietly devoted time and effort to The Open Circle.

Thank you to our donors, volunteers, members and families for your ongoing support - it is highly appreciated.

Cheryl Barratt

Chairperson

## Vision & mission

The Open Circle strives to provide a safe, nurturing and therapeutic residential home to people with Intellectual Disability (ID) requiring medium to high levels of support for varied challenging behaviours. We endeavour to limit and manage behaviour in order that residents achieve their unique potential and have a fulfilling life.

## Our history

The Open Circle is a Pilot Project, in partnership with the Departments Health, Social Development and Public Works in the Western Cape.

After registering as an NPO and lobbying government for support, a joint decision was taken to renovate and open a 30 bed supported living facility on the grounds of Alexandra Hospital in the old nurses home.

Members of The Open Circle Management Committee, with encouraging support from a Task Team of experts from Departments of Health and Social Development and the Western Cape Forum for Intellectual Disability initiated the ground-work for this exciting venture.

The Open Circle was formally opened by Prof. Househam (Department of Health), Minister Albert Fritz (Social Development) and Minister Grant (Public works) on 6 May 2015.

We admitted 30 residents between January and July 2015.

In **2016-2017**, the Management Committee undertook a Project Review with inputs from the Facility Manager in order to start documenting lessons learnt from the process of commissioning the Home. Being a pilot project, learning and documenting remains a part of our core-business, with the end-goal being to advocate for more services like ours that cater for those with challenging behaviour.

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***STRATEGIC GOAL 1:  
Creating a medium-  
high supported living  
environment for residents.***

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## A home for our residents

The people calling The Open Circle their home are men and women older than 18 years, who have an Intellectual Disability and other associated disorders which may include Autism, genetic problems like Down syndrome, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, and even psychiatric problems including psychosis. Our residents further display one or more types of challenging behaviour which may include: destruction, aggression, obsessions and compulsions, anxiety, sexually inappropriate and self-injurious behaviour. Most of our residents have been excluded from existing residential facilities or programmes, due to their challenging behaviour and therefore The Open Circle is the first of its kind and fills a crucial gap in the ID sector.

During 2016/2017 The Open Circle maintained bed occupancy of between 93%-100% (30 beds). There were three voluntary discharges and three admissions of new residents. At the end of this financial year, we have a waiting-list of 29 residents with roughly 3-5 new applications received per month throughout the year. The need for more facilities like The Open Circle is evident from the monthly visits by interested parties as well as the numerous telephonic enquiries received during the year.

We have created a homely environment where residents' individual needs, strength and weaknesses are treated accordingly and they have the opportunity to make choices. Maintaining a homely environment amidst a population with challenging behaviour has however proven to be costly. The organisation has signed a part-time contract with a handyman this year who assists with general maintenance, saving the Open Circle expensive outsourcing costs. This keeps our environment neat and presentable.

The handyman has been working closely with managers on creative new ways to allow residents to be more independent for example creating laundry shelves where residents collect their own laundry daily and pack it in their cupboards and ensuring all residents remain orientated through the use of sticker-signage that cannot be removed by the autistic residents. Another home-improvement project pursued this year was tidying up the area around our swimming pool, allowing residents to spend more time outside socialising.

We are very proud of the 15 formal, written compliments received by external parties over the last year. Our home also celebrated a 100% Satisfaction rate expressed by families in the annual Family Satisfaction Survey conducted in November 2016 relating to household aspects like care, cleanliness and communication.

## Training and support of staff

The Open Circle is once again eternally grateful to and proud of the 33 full-time staff members who form a part of our wonderful team. New staff members welcomed this year include: Tasneem Toyer (OT), Zanoxolo Mnogemisi (Carer), Aviwe Mfazwe (Administrative assistant) and Mncedi Jam-Jam (Household Aid). We trust that you will feel right at home.

Two additional posts were created this year bringing our total to 33, including an administrative assistant and second cook-assistant. The administrative assistant has streamlined reception and clerical functions, enhanced privacy for residents by assisting visitors in the foyer and relieved the administrative burden on managers and other staff. The decision was also taken to employ a second cook-assistant in order to ensure that the kitchen service is always covered between 07H00-19H00. This has improved the quality of meals over weekends and has also taken the additional kitchen duties away from nursing



staff, freeing them to supervise residents at all times. The increased capacity in the household department also ensures that we are compliant with infection and hygiene standards and have not had problems with the outbreak of opportunistic infections in 2016-2017.

Staff morale remains an important indicator for success at our home and this year the management undertook a Staff Satisfaction Survey in June 2016 in order to gain feedback from staff. Other initiatives to boost staff morale included an annual Strategic Planning meeting with staff, Nurses Day celebrations, Staff Wellness Day and a Year End Function in December 2016.



**Nurses Day celebrations**

The Annual Training Plan was finalised in April 2016 and thanks to the funding of Syringa Trust, staff attended various courses towards our skills development objectives.



**Staff members attended First Aid Level 1 Training at St. Johns. From left Yonela Mzoboshe, Siyabulela Ndabeni, Andrew Gilton, Joan Apollis, Sabela Songelwa, Vuyo Kraai, Amanda Gxabuza**

## ***STRATEGIC GOAL 2: To promote quality of life by preventing occupational deprivation and encouraging independence***

The Open Circle prides itself in a well-developed, structured stimulation programme and routine that has been designed based on the needs of residents. Residents are divided into three groups based on their functional levels and engage appropriately daily in either a sensory/motor activity, group stimulation or vocational skills training session in line with their individualised care-plans.

This year we involved residents in 1000 individual stimulation sessions and approximately 700 group sessions. Our leisure opportunities for residents were improved by taking residents for more frequent walks, using the swimming pool in summer, starting a gym for residents and staff to use and ensuring all lounges have access to a television and DVD facility. We have further sourced the services of a drumming instructor who conducts weekly drumming and music sessions with all residents.



**Resident enjoying a weekly drumming session**

She has a wonderful way to get all involved and residents now look forward to this weekly treat.

Residents in the vocational skills group are always being encouraged to learn new skills. This year we taught them mosaic and beading. The residents produced some beautiful pieces which were sold to generate income towards procuring more craft-supplies.

We started a vegetable garden with the assistance from a volunteer, residents and staff. It was very rewarding for residents to harvest ingredients to be used in our own kitchen.



Volunteer planting seedlings with the assistance of two residents



Residents in the gym

Our basic stimulation and sensory sessions also developed with the arrival, passion and ideas of Tasneem Toyer (new Occupational Therapist) in January 2017. This has been very exciting as we have seen more participation from residents than before and those that used to require individual stimulation are

also starting to participate better in smaller groups, showing improvement in their socialisation skills.

We made sure that residents have had more outings and events to look forward to this year including:

- Various movie outings and shopping trips to the shops in Maitland and Canal Walk
- One-to-One Day presented by WCFID annually was attended by 20 residents in August 2016



Concentrating during a sensory stimulation session



A volunteer and two residents at One-to-One day in August 2016. A day well-enjoyed by all with thanks to the WCFID

- Birthday celebrations for all residents
- A visit by the Companions in October 2016
- A weekend camp at Ou Skip in Melkbosstrand during November 2016 with 10 residents
- Family Day on 16 December 2016 where we were joined by family members for a Pool-Braai picnic



Father Christmas paid us a visit at our Annual Family picnic in December 2016





Nothing quite like camping in nature enjoying a braai-leis. (Above). Below Bridgitte Loubscher (staff nurse) is enjoying the cool water at Blouberg with three residents



Target throw at our sports day in March 2017.

- Valentine's Karaoke in February 2017
- A sports day hosting visitors from Alexandra Hospital during March 2017.

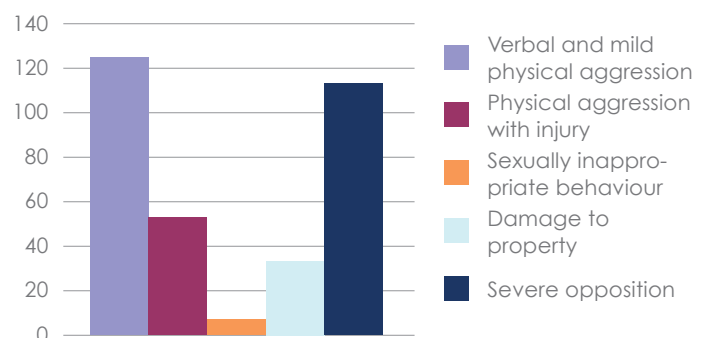
We continued with student training during 2016-2017 and received and trained a total of 7 UCT third year Occupational Therapy students. These students see individual residents and assist our Occupational Therapist in conducting individual therapy sessions under her supervision.

### STRATEGIC GOAL 3: Helping residents to behave appropriately by teaching and supporting them through difficult moments

The Open Circle continues to strive to offer the least restrictive care to residents through using the low-arousal approach and other proactive strategies like distraction. Restrictive approaches like time-out, physical restraint, sedation and stimulus control are continually monitored and reported quarterly by the Facility Manager to management committee and Task Team, ensuring best practice and accountability.

Studio 3 remains the basis of our approach to managing challenging behaviour and staff members who needed additional knowledge attended workshops presented by the Western Cape Forum for Intellectual Disability. CCTV cameras were installed in public areas in our home to ensure more effective supervision of residents and to allow managers and staff to reflect on incidents, take appropriate actions and to use footage as a learning tool.

The graph below gives a picture of the distribution of recorded challenging behaviour at The Open Circle over the last year.



Graph 1: Main Challenging Behaviours reported during 2016-2017

Various strategies have been developed to ensure that staff are able to work under this pressure and continue to assist residents in the best way possible. This year The Open

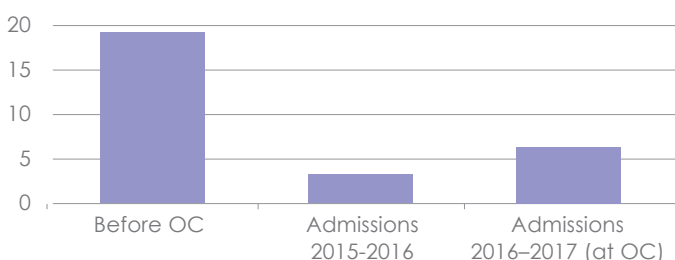
Circle linked up with The Trauma Centre in Woodstock and a volunteer who does on-site debriefing and counselling to ensure staff receive enough support.

**STRATEGIC GOAL 4:**  
*Health promotion through early detection and effective management of acute and chronic physical and psychiatric conditions*

The Professional Nurse heads up general health aspects in our home including managing the physical and mental health of each resident through regular checks of vitals and weights (monthly), administering over the counter medication on site as required, ensuring compliance to prescribed physical and psychiatric medication, managing follow-up appointments of residents as well as determining the need for new referrals to services and the management of physical and psychiatric emergencies.

During 2016-2017 staff escorted residents to 118 public clinic/hospital visits and 3 medical emergencies were managed effectively. 6 residents were admitted to the acute admission wards at Alexandra Hospital after the need for more specialised psychiatric intervention was detected.

The graph below shows the decrease in psychiatric admission required for residents since coming to The Open Circle. Apart from the fact that the more restrictive acute care provided by hospitals impacts on the quality of life of patients, it has a financial implication in what it costs government to provide



**Graph 2: Admission rate to acute units before and since**

such care for required periods and in some cases, permanent hospitalisation.

**STRATEGIC GOAL 5:**  
*Ensuring community reintegration through partnering with families, volunteers, Government departments and other NPO's and community integration activities*

A total of 11 volunteers from America, Canada, the UK, Denmark and the Netherlands were hosted this year through our partnership with SASTS and Magistra Volunteer agencies. These volunteers assisted greatly with the implementation of our program, but also other special projects like creating a sensory wall in our sensory room, developing an exercise and weight-loss program for identified residents, teaching adapted sports, starting up the vegetable garden and developing a booklet regarding diagnosis.



**A volunteer from America enjoying the sunshine with two residents.**

The family forms an integral part of residents' well-being and The Open Circle actively engages families in order to ensure effective communication and participation to the benefit of residents. During 2016-2017 we maintained a positive relationship with families through our individual parent interviews in June 2016, our Annual Family meeting held in November 2016 and our Family Picnic in December 2016. We published our first

internal newsletter this year with appreciation expressed by numerous families for the feedback.

Some sentiments from our families in our Family Satisfaction Survey conducted during November 2016 include the following:

**“It has had a very positive impact on my family. My younger daughter is doing much better at school and she does not feel scared of her brother anymore. My supervisor at work has indicated that my work has improved with my lower levels of anxiety.”**

**“The OC has made an enormous difference to our family life. We were imprisoned before and could do very little.”**

**“We are less stressed. We are happy because our child is happy.”**

**“It has improved our quality of life and allowed us to focus on work and our immediate family.”**

**“Wow, wow, wow! What a huge blessing. Family life is more manageable and less stressful.”**

**“Because we can see our child is happy we have this past year travelled, went on weekends alone and visited friends without feeling guilty.”**

**“The peace of mind cannot be described. Now that I am also a grandmother, I am able to spend time with my grandkids knowing that x is safe and cared for.”**

**“More peace, stability and security. Better order in his and our lives.”**

The Open Circle is a registered NPO with PBO status that needs to raise funds to supplement subsidies by the Departments of Health and Social Development to make ends meet. Only 40% of families can afford fees, leaving the other 60% of residents to only contribute a Disability Grant.

In 2016/2017, as in the previous year maintenance and staff costs remained high. The generosity of donors as well as small businesses opening their hearts to our organisation in

the last year has benefitted us in many ways and we hope to continue these partnerships going forward.

## The Open Circle wishes to thank

### The Management Committee for their commitment and service:

Cheryl Barratt-Chairperson • Tim Forshaw-Treasurer  
• Miranda Forshaw-Member • Les Nel-Member •  
Toni Tickton-Member • Dr. Judy Bentley-Member

### Project Manager:

Ellen Corrigan

### Advisory Panel:

Ekin Kench • Brian Robertson

Individuals, organisations and businesses who made a contribution to our vision in 2016/2017! We look forward to your continued partnership and support in 2017/2018:

### Businesses & Organisations

Syringa Trust • Cash Persuaders • Gift of the Givers  
• Frank Robb Charitable Trust • The Malopo Trust  
• City Varsity • WCFID • Zest Dance connection  
• AMKA • Eye Save optometrists • Osmands Spice  
Centre • Faldi Movie Mania • Mazars • Alexandra  
Hospital • Athlone Transport • Baxter Theatre •  
Sonnendal Dairies • Fresh Produce Market • Coca-  
Cola • Grand West Hotel • Table Bay Hotel

### Volunteers Organisations

VaCorps • UCT • Projects Abroad • The Companions

### Pro Bono

Bowman Gilfillan Attorneys • Legal Resources Centre  
• Prilli Stevens • Heather Coetzee • Graham Barratt  
• Simon van Gend

### Community

Gordons Bay Primary School • New Apostolic Church

### Individuals

Parents of The Open Circle • Committee members  
• Thea & Alan Ramsay • Rosemary De Waal •  
Libby Ardington • Mark and Anne Lancaster • Jo  
Oscroft • Jenny Smith • Robert Webster • Cheryl  
Blankenberg • Jenny Pannell