



The Open Circle

Joining hands for care and love

ANNUAL REPORT

2017-2018



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Message from the Chairperson

At the end of March 2018 The Open Circle was in its 4th year and 3rd month of operation.

As the first three-year cycle ended, The Open Circle has entered a period of consolidation. To this end, policies, procedures, operational and strategic plans were reviewed, and health and safety, and licensing requirements met.

Reflecting on the past year, we remain a work in progress, open to learning and sharing about the world of intellectual disability, running a home affording our residents our best efforts, dealing with daily challenges and delighting in successes, no matter how small.

The Annual Report, prepared by Helita Mankahla, details the past “year in the life” of The Open Circle. What is not highlighted is the very significant role played by Helita. On behalf of the Management Committee I would like to thank her for leading this project with admirable professionalism, insight and deep caring for residents, staff and families. Helita, her colleagues and staff have set a solid foundation on which to build our future. Our grateful thanks to you all.

To members of the Management Committee and Project Manager - thank you for your time, valuable input and dedication necessary to the tasks at hand.

Our thanks to the Departments of Health, Social Development and Public Works for having confidence in us and for their continued support for our next operational phase.

Fundraising remains a priority, not only to maintain the status quo, but to develop new and enhance current projects. We are most grateful to donors who have so generously supported us, and to family members who have shown wonderful initiative in organising their own fundraising events. The fruits of these events and the very successful “Fish out of Water” auction will only reflect in the next financial year but, as the auction was

our first big public event, I feel that it is worth mentioning now, the R120 000 raised. Thank you Miranda Forshaw for igniting the fire.

Cheryl Barratt

Chairperson

Vision & mission:

The Open Circle provides a safe, nurturing and therapeutic residential home for adults with Intellectual Disability requiring medium to high levels of support for varied challenging behaviours. We endeavour to limit and manage behaviour to allow residents to fulfil their potential.

Our history:

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

After registering as an NPO, a joint decision was taken with government to renovate and open a 30-bed supported living facility on the grounds of Alexandra Hospital in the old Nurses Home, which was opened by Prof. Househam (Department of Health), Minister Albert Fritz (Social Development) and Minister Grant (Public works) on 6 May 2015.

We hope to continue developing this facility and the services it offers to those with Intellectual Disability and challenging behaviour.

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

Creating a homely environment:

The Open Circle is a home to men and women older than 18 years, who have an Intellectual Disability and other associated disorders which may include Autism, Genetic problems like Down's syndrome, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, and psychiatric problems including psychosis. Our residents also display one or more types of challenging behaviour which may include: opposition, destruction, aggression, obsessions and compulsions, anxiety, sexually inappropriate-, 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 unique in its objectives.

During 2017/2018 The Open Circle maintained a bed occupancy rate of 100% (30 beds). At the end of this financial year, we have a waiting-list of 30 residents with roughly 3 new applications received per month throughout the year. The need for more facilities like The Open Circle remains evident from the numerous telephonic enquiries and visits received.

We are very proud to have obtained our license from the Department of Health this year and passed audit processes conducted by the Department of Social Development and City of Cape Town.

We continue to strive for a homely environment for our residents and undertook numerous smaller projects this year to allow us to see this vision come to life.

Some examples of improvements undertaken were to create more therapeutic seating

areas outside the Home where residents can socialise. Our Maintenance staff ensured that our swimming-pool area was cleaned, paving refilled and the braai stand was renovated. After we procured a rainwater tank and pool-cover we were able to spend countless afternoons this summer swimming, chatting and enjoying braais.

We fitted a Reception Desk at the entrance to our Home, to assist us in our response times, but also to ensure visitors do not walk through the home to get assistance. This has improved privacy and security for our residents.

Finally, we have started cleaning and securing the 4-bedroom neighbouring house for which we have signed a lease agreement for with Department of Public Works. Watch this space for service developments, as we raise the funds to do so!

Training and support of staff:

The Open Circle remains grateful to our 33 full-time staff members who fulfil various roles in the Organisation. This year, we welcomed a new carer, Nontyatyambo Kenene to our team. Staff turn-over remains low, which is something that is always considered and strived for by the management team. This allows us to develop our staff, but also keeps things predictable and consistent for our residents.

One way in which The Open Circle shows our staff that they are valued, is through quarterly staff events. This year we had an Annual Staff Meeting and braai where the vision and plans for the year were discussed, a Nurses Day event, Heritage Day function and End of Year Party. Staff received hampers at Easter and Christmas and a volunteer sister continues to assist with counselling those who express the need for support.

The Annual Training Plan was finalized in April 2017 and staff could again attend various training sessions thanks to the Syringa Trust who



Staff all dressed up for Heritage Day.

donated R30000 towards our skills development objectives. A highlight this year was that we were able to train half of our staff in Sensory Profiling, a technique that will benefit them personally, but also will assist in balancing our resident's most sensitive sensory needs. The rest of the staff will receive the Training in the next financial year.

Table 1: Summary of Training attended during 2017-2018

Health- and Safety	5
First Aid Level 1 & 2	8
The Importance of an activity programme	5
Carer Burn-out	4
Life skills and Sexuality Training	1
Nutrition and Intellectual Disability	3
Ethics	3
Dual Diagnosis	1
Assistive Technologies	2
Managing stress	4
Managing the death of a Resident	1
ID Looking back and looking ahead	1
Studio 3 Training	6
Household Training	5
Autism	8

Provision of training:

The Open Circle trained 6 UCT third year Occupational Therapy students this year. Supervision is also provided by one Occupational Therapist to numerous Health students attending the organization for practical learning experience from Zuid University in Holland

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

We remain committed to the daily stimulation and skills training of residents. Care-staff and volunteers go the extra mile in implementing our structured programme with guidance and support from our Occupational Therapist.

This year residents were involved in 200 individual and 600 group sessions, apart from leisure activities taking place like morning and afternoon walks, swimming in summer, socialization, movies and music.

All residents are functionally assessed, and their development plans are put in place every year. As a result, this year two residents travel daily by train to Merrypack Factory where they earn their own wages. These residents were excluded from such programs in the past, due to behaviour problems.

Individualized sessions with some of our most challenging residents have greatly diminished episodes of challenging behaviour and persistent implementation of the programme has seen those who used not to be able to engage in group sessions, starting to engage this year.

Group sessions include arts & crafts, life skills, gym sessions, baking, activities of daily living, sports and games.

Residents perform numerous duties in the home, like sweeping, emptying bins, assisting with laundry and making the tea. These jobs afford them opportunities to earn wages and to go on monthly shopping trips where they are encouraged to save, budget and spend their earnings on appropriate items.

Table 2 below shows feedback received from families during our Family Satisfaction Survey done in November 2017 relating to the

stimulation provided through our programme and the development they have seen in their family members.

Table 2:

Statement:	Percentage of families noting improvements
Needs less assistance to wash and dress	39%
Wakes up easier and stays awake for longer periods during the day	39%
Interacts better with others in the home	84%
Able to follow a routine at home	62%
Assists with small tasks at home	62%
Improved focus and concentration (decreased ritualistic and obsessive behaviour)	39%
Improved memory and "telling back" stories	46%
Improved interest to participate in activities of any kind	46%
Improved abilities in doing activities like colouring in, playing with blocks, making a sandwich	15%
Improved mood and emotional responsiveness	62%
Trying new activities	15%

Our highlights this year included various outings and events including...

- An Easter Egg Hunt in April 2017
- Performances by The Companions and the Jungle Theatre
- A visit to the science centre
- One-to-One Day 2017
- A Family Picnic for Christmas 2017



- A Valentine's Karaoke, February 2018



- Do-it-yourself day



- Braai's



- A Visit to Butterfly world



- Smaller Outings to Restaurants with those who do not have regular family contact
- Weekly Drumming sessions
- Monthly Music with Charlie Thompson

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

It can be seen from adverse incidents and other statistics this year, that the Low Arousal approach, implemented by The Open Circle staff, has had a positive impact on the frequency, type and intensity of challenging behaviour displayed by residents. Nurses and carers use distraction to manage risks, whilst the Occupational Therapist implements a learning approach on a longer-term level by taking away rewards and privileges and allowing residents to make choices and set goals.

Table 3 below shows feedback received from resident's families during the Family Satisfaction Survey done in November 2017. Improvement percentage refers to the number of families who completed the survey who indicated that they had seen improvement in their family member.

Table 3:

Challenging behaviour before coming to open circle.	Improvement
Receives regular Sedation to calm down	8%
Needed to be brought to OPD before 6 months lapsed	23%
Screaming/swearing/shouting	23%
Destructive behaviour	31%
Physical aggression towards themselves or others like pinching, slapping, biting	23%
Stealing food and overeating	8%
Obsessions/ doing odd things	15%
Over activity-up and down	8%

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

The Open Circle manages each resident holistically including seeing to 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 2017-2018 staff escorted residents to 156 public clinic/hospital visits and 2 medical emergencies were managed effectively.

This year has shown a decrease in the need for admission to the Acute Psychiatric Hospital System. The fact that only one resident required an admission is remarkable considering that approximately 60% of the residents used to require at least 1 admission per year before coming to our Home. It is also a drop from 6 admissions required in 2016-2017.

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

A total of 5 Volunteers from Europe was hosted this year. Volunteers were Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy students who were able to support the stimulation programme, implement daily exercise and gym sessions and to work closely with individual residents.

The Open Circle has also received support from volunteers assisting with driving and pick-ups, a Nursing Sister providing staff counselling and support and this year one of our own family members initiated running with smaller fundraising ventures on a voluntary basis to support the organisation.



Two Physiotherapy students from Zuid University.

Family remains an integral part of resident's lives. During 2017-2018 we continued to engage families through Family Interview sessions in July 2017, a Group meeting in November 2017 and a Special Family Picnic to end the year off in December 2017.

Some sentiments from our families in our Family Satisfaction Survey conducted during November 2017 included the following:

“We are able to have a freer life”

“I can actually go out and not be anxious that I will be contacted and asked to take my family member back home”

“We have learnt to relax and enjoy our independence.”

“Our family has been thrilled to see X back to his old self and having a good self-esteem.”

“My daughter is doing better at school since her brother came to live at OC. As a family we are freer to go out. I don't have to worry at work and I know he is safer than in our community.”

“Changes in routine have helped us in our home life.”

“My stress levels have decreased. I am happy to see my child happy and settled. Before when I used to visit him, he used to be aggressive and destructive. He now interacts better with me and I no longer feel nervous around him.”

“Since X has come to OC, we as a family can lead a more normal life, not having to worry about being on high-alert all the time. We are very grateful also for the assistance provided with medical problems experienced by our family member.”

“My daughter is more accepting of others and easier to manage at home since coming to OC.”

“Our autistic son's communication has improved since being at O. We as a family can also now go out; it has improved our quality of life.”

“OC is the first Organisation which has been welcoming to our son and where the management tries to understand and help with his behaviour. Our lives as parents have improved. We can go out with friends and go to church. We can return our son to OC with warm hearts.”

“Since X has gone to OC the rest of the family has time for normal relationships. We can enjoy our grandkids without worrying that she will hurt them”

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

Our vision for the next year is to expand our reach and to assist more families and adults with challenging behaviour, but we can only do this through partnerships and ongoing financial and practical support.



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

The individuals, organisations and businesses who made a contribution to our vision in 2017/2018! We look forward to your continued partnership and support in 2018/2019:

Business & Organisations

Syringa Trust • Cash Persuaders • Gift of the Givers
• WCFID • AMKA • Eye Save optometrists • Osmans
Spice Centre • Faldi Movie Mania • Inner Wheel
(Rotary) • Frank Robb Charitable Trust • City Varsity
• Old Mutual (RFA Charity) • Private Client Holdings
• Alexandra Hospital • Athlone Transport • Baxter
Theatre • Sonnendal Dairies • Fresh Produce Market
• Coca-Cola • UCT

Volunteers

VaCorps • Projects Abroad • The Companions

Community

Gordons Bay Primary School • New Apostolic Church

Individuals

Parents of Open Circle • Committee members •
Jolanda De Jager (Zest Dance connection) • R. De
Waal • Mark and Anne Lancaster (Rotary)

Pro Bono

Bowman Gilfillan • Prilli Stevens • Simon van Gend •
Graham Barratt