



# The Open Circle



## ANNUAL REPORT

2023-2024

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[The Open Circle](https://www.facebook.com/TheOpenCircle)



[@opencirclegrouphome](https://www.instagram.com/opencirclegrouphome)

## Vision:

Quality of life in a homely environment

## Mission:

By providing a safe, nurturing, and therapeutic home that limits and manages challenging behavior and sees residents achieve their full potential.

## Our goals:

- Creating a medium-high support living environment for adults with Intellectual Disability and challenging behavior.
- Prevention and Risk management of challenging behavior through proactive and reactive strategies.
- Promoting physical, emotional, and social health and well-being
- Early detection and effective management of acute physical and psychiatric episodes
- Ensuring community reintegration through partnering with families, volunteers, government departments and other NPO's and community integration activities.

Dear Reader

**"Success is not final; failure is not fatal: It is the courage to continue that counts." – Winston Churchill, Speech at Harrow School (1941)**

As I sit down to reflect on our 9th year as an organisation, I am very aware that it has been a year of persevering through many challenges, but also a year with many moments of joy.

The Open Circle continues to meet our goals through the implementation of our program and ensuring we have skilled and motivated staff. We strive to improve our service to see residents healthy, happy and reaching their potential, while preventing hospitalisation and adverse incidents. Our passion is people-our residents, our staff, our families and our community. We have made strides in all these areas again this year and I am proud of the organisation we continue to build.

We face the realities of the current economic climate in more than one way, yet we continue to see the generosity of donors as they partner with us to improve the quality of life of our residents.

Donors have not been the only ones contributing to our home in 2023-2024; animals have also added value and love to the daily life of The Open Circle.

This report will be dedicated to celebrating the things that brought us joy this year. I do hope it also brings you joy to read all about it.

Greetings

Helita

Facility Manager



## For the love of animals!

In an article by Hudson University, the benefits of involving animals like dogs and horses in your therapeutic program is outlined. These benefits include improving mental health, specifically agitation and anxiety by releasing feel-good hormones. It further aids skills development including communication and interaction and promotes physical exercise to name but a few.

### Feathery fun!

We introduced 5 chickens to our Open Circle family this year. The chickens are cared for daily by a resident who feeds them and takes their eggs to the kitchen for use. Our feathery friends are fun for the residents to look at and pick up at times, when they escape the coop and wander around the Home.



### Horses make us happy

We looked into Equine Therapy to find suitable activities for our residents on the autism spectrum. Engaging with and riding horses has motor







and sensory benefits. It has since become a firm family favourite that everyone (including the staff) look forward to. Some residents ride and others prefer to watch or feed or stroke, but the joy is contagious in these moments.

## Puppy love

This year we joined hands with Top Dogs Therapy, a pet therapy organisation that relies on volunteers (humans and their pooches) to enrich the lives of others. Dusty and Nomad, two beautiful Labradors soon became familiar with our residents and the environment. We are specifically excited about the improvement in engagement, concentration, and positive emotional responses we have seen during their monthly visits.

In September 2023, we welcomed Riley, our new four-legged friend, to The Open Circle family. She was found in a park, abandoned. The vet estimated her to be no more than







4 weeks old at the time. Our Occupational Therapist introduced the residents to Riley, and they immediately fell in love.

She is currently 1 year old and successfully completed puppy school in December 2023 - the first phase of becoming a qualified therapy dog. She has now moved on to the next phase of her training to become a qualified "Fur-Therapist" (Facility Dog) where she will be prepared for the official assessment and receive her KUSA Canine Good Citizen certification.

The joy and excitement she brings to the home is unmatched. She has brought a sense of calmness and has often worked as a distractor when needed. How lucky is she to have gone from being all alone in a park to being surrounded by the kind of people who have the most love to give!



## Exotic Animal World

Our Exotic Animal World adventure allowed us to move outside of our comfort zone and explore animals unfamiliar to us. We had a wonderful day!



We celebrate all the beautiful animals that have touched our lives this year!

## The Highlights Continue:

We now continue this joy-journey by highlighting more of our special moments.

### Longer-distance daily walks with Riley



### Self care/ Relaxation

On Wednesdays, we do finer Selfcare like nails and feet.





**Baking and meal preparation activities and other Skills Training**



**Work skills including gardening**



**Music Therapy sessions twice a month**

Our amazing Music Therapist has a way with the residents. Music is the one thing that each and everyone enjoys!





## Birthday celebrations

Individuality trumps institutionalisation. Celebrating each person's birthday is important to us.



## Valentine's day braai



## Easter celebrations

We thank Gordon's Bay Primary School for their donation of Easter eggs as well as the many individuals who contributed.

This year we swopped an Easter-egg hunt for Easter-themed Bingo, we had a ball!







## Open Circle's got talent!

Our residents love the Annual Talent show where they get to have the stage all to themselves. We make a lot of noise and have a lot of fun!



## Maiden's Cove Beach Outing

One thing about us, we like to go big or go home. Every year we take all the residents and staff to Maiden's Cove to enjoy the beach and summer sun and have a good time together!





## End of year Family Day

We value family. One of our main goals is to maintain the relationships our residents have with their family members through regular weekend outings, weekly phone calls home and through our annual family braai, just before Christmas. At the end of the day, we are one big family; this brings us great joy.



## Our very first visit to the Theatre

In February 2024 a group of our residents visited the Inclusive Theatre Festival at the Playhouse Theatre in Somerset west. We had the whole theatre to ourselves and had great fun watching the animated actors. Thank you, Inclusive Theatre and The Somerset-West Playhouse Theatre, for making this community space accessible to those with different needs.





## Advocacy Sessions

The Western Cape Forum for Intellectual Disability presents sessions on self-advocacy to adults with Intellectual Disability. Four of our residents attended this year.



Residents who perform chores in the home, get to visit the shops regularly to buy basic items they need. Everyone looks forward to this reward.

On our trip to Canal Walk, Spur treated our residents to a free meal to the value of R3000. What a highlight this was for those who could attend. Thank you so much Mexico Spur Steak Ranch.

## Shopping trips





## Our staff matters:

It is important to note that no moments of joy would have been possible this year without the hard work and commitment of our Open Circle staff members.

Having well-trained and motivated staff is the secret to our success.

Some of the training included various courses presented by the WCFID on Intellectual Disability and related information, First Aid Level 1 & 2 Training, Health and Safety training, sexuality group therapy training, computer training and back care training.



We celebrated Valentine's Day, Nurses Day, Woman's Day and Heritage Day and we ended the year with a braai to thank all staff. These events are important to ensure unity and to boost morale.



## The open circle wishes to thank:

### The Management Committee

Cheryl Barratt \* Frank Bold \* Miranda Forshaw  
\* Les Nel \* Ekin Kench \* Dr. Judy Bentley

Project manager: Ellen Corrigall

### The organisations and businesses who supported us in 2023-2024:

Syringa Trust \* WCFID \* Vera Grover Trust \*  
Woolworths My School \* Alexandra Hospital  
\* Pure Legacy Foundation \* Malopo Trust \*  
Robert Hamilton Trust \* Frank Robb Charitable  
Trust \* RS Nussbaum Foundation \* Government  
Departments

### Volunteers

Top Dogs Therapy \* Kelly Mansfield & Oude  
Molen Volunteers \* Michelle de Goede \* VA  
Corps

### Community

Gordon's Bay Primary School \* Gordon's Bay  
Church \* The Inner Wheel \* Vergelegen Medi-  
clinic staff

### Individuals

Mr. and Mrs. Uys \* Tim and Miranda Forshaw  
\* Ellen Corrigall \* Simon van Gend \* Les Nel  
\* Susan Luyt \* Brenda Coetzee \* Jacqueline  
Beckerleg \* Jacqueline Mostert \* R de Waal  
\* Jo Oscroft \* Rosanne De Klerk \* All Open  
Circle families