

St. Monica's Child and Youth Care Centre

Chairman's Report: Annual General Meeting 2014

I begin by giving thanks to our great and mighty God for guiding us in these challenging times in serving as a residential Home for children and youth from the KZN region. It was certainly a big challenge for me to follow in the huge footsteps left by my predecessor, Canon Cierigh Samaai who served as Chairman for 22 years.

The past year has been a time of transition for us at the Home with new board members, the adoption of different systems of work and new staff whilst ensuring full compliance to the legislation as set out in the Child Care Act No 38 of 2005.

We are very grateful to the National Lottery Board of South Africa for awarding us a substantial grant as we are one of the few organizations who were recipients of this funding, especially in these difficult times faced by non-governmental organisations.

The National Lottery grant enabled the Home to create 14 new employment opportunities to uplift the quality of care for our children. In the Child Care Sector, four shift programme monitors were appointed, two per alternating shift to support child and youth care workers, oversee the routines and behaviour of the children and facilitate life-skills programmes with them. Cushion-making, growing vegetables in our garden, flower arranging, and baking were some of the life-skills acquired by the children. Domestic helpers, more child-care workers, and other personnel were employed to enhance and make a positive difference in providing services for beneficiaries.

The after-care programme, initiated last year, continued at our Home with the various young ladies pursuing different avenues in their lives. Two of the youth continued to attend UKZN, whilst another was accepted at the iKusasa School of cooking – a project of St Martin's Diocesan Child and Youth Care Home. The other was offered a job at LABIS –an international accredited computer company based on the Bluff. Some of the youth have since found alternate accommodation. Two other youth who are still placed with us have secured placements through ICAN, a skills development organization who assessed some of our youth who could not be offered employment in mainstream society. ICAN placed both these young people in the catering and hospitality industries.

Intensive reunification services by our social work team resulted in many children reconciled with their families of origin. Our staff drove long distances into deep rural areas to locate families of the children and this brought much joy to them when they were afforded the opportunity to be reunited with family members.

The social evils of drug and alcohol abuse in our society more especially in our schools found its way into the lives of some of our children here at St. Monica's. These children had to be counselled at length and supported by the team here. They were further referred for psychological intervention to outside organizations for further therapy.

Debriefing was arranged for some middle-management staff who counsel the children daily. This will be extended to other staff in the near future.

Our partnership with Duke University in the USA continued this year and we were very fortunate to have a Duke student from Arizona placed with us once again for two months. Lindsey Huth shared close bonds with our children and added value to our work environment by hosting interesting thought provoking workshops with the older girls, creating a list of activities for the children to be engaged in, and also developing an easy to understand handbook for our younger children when entering the Home.

Youth from the Appleby Grammar school in the United Kingdom spent two weeks playing various types of sport and games with our children and contributed towards the purchasing of our uniforms for 2015.

The institution hosted several social work students, social auxiliary work and psychology students, medical school students and scholars from various tertiary institutions over the past year. The placement of these students added value to our services rendered to the children and their families whilst simultaneously offering the students an opportunity to be trained.

Volunteers played a pivotal role in our Home through offering the children spiritual guidance and encouragement, involvement in sporting activities, playing games and reading to the children, helping our children with their academic work.

We thank the Department of Social Development for the subsidies received for each. We welcome the positive news that one social worker post will be funded at the facility which is the first in the history of Child and Youth Care Centres.

We also place on record our gratitude to the Ubuntu Community Chest for your support over the years. Thank you to the Victor Daitz Foundation for the sponsoring of the interior fencing to enhance security at the centre. It has made an enormous difference.

We express our sincere appreciation to the Anglican churches in the Diocese of Natal as well as other churches for their support, contributions in cash and in kind, including, Omega and Believers in Christ, who have been a tremendous support to some of our children who worship there. Thank you.

Furthermore, we record our gratitude to all our funders, donors, volunteers and friends for giving of yourselves, your time and contribution to creating a better life of our children.

Caring for the lives of 84 children is no easy task and can only be achieved through a collaborative team effort. I extend my thanks and appreciation to the staff for their tireless efforts and dedication to this centre. Each one of you is valued for your input. I am immensely grateful to the Board of Management for their support, service and the sacrifices they have made during the course of the year.

On behalf of the Board, I extend our heartfelt thanks and appreciation to the Director, Mrs. Althea Govender, for her leadership, guidance and efficient management of St. Monica's Child and Youth Care Centre these six years.

In closing, I appeal to all present to become Friends of St Monica's Child and Youth Care Centre. This is a new initiative that is being launched to create a greater awareness of the services and keep you in touch with the happenings and going on at the centre.

Revd Alvin Sigamoney
Chairman