



Wilge Special Care · Group Homes · Central Administration · Contracts · Wood Workshop

Where winners never quit!

EXECUTIVE ANNUAL REPORT 2007

Introduction:

When visiting Orion during March to wish the organisation with its 25th anniversary, Emeritus Archbishop Desmond Tutu stated: "Passion, compassion and the hard work of Orion can enable the disabled to reach their full potential." Orion managed to overcome its challenges, and has become a beacon of inspiration and hope for not only the less fortunate people in its care, but also to other welfare NGO's now asking our advice on best-practice models.

The year 2007 has been a year of change for Orion, driven by significant changes in our reputation, corporate image and scope of services.

This year, serious decisions had to be made in order to secure the future of the organisation. We took a firm stand to survive, and with the help of the Departments of Social Development and Health, the Orion Friendship Circle and many donors, we can now truly plan the future with a focused mind.

A few highlights include:

- The incorporation of a professional marketing element and the development of a public relations strategy assisted with making powerful changes to the image and identity of the organisation. This has led to expanding the existing donor base, as well as increasing our level of visibility among corporate and industrial partners and in the media. It also resulted in more awareness amongst the community and broader public.
- A new perimeter fence, laying of a new entrance, a new vehicle, transport funding for the next year, a new logo, DVD and brochure, maintenance to walkways, ceilings and roofs, ADSL connectivity for our offices and substantial donations for operational costs, were all made possible by donor funding.
- Implementation of a new Skills Development Strategy to upskill staff.
- More regular therapy sessions resulting in consistent progress of the children at Wilge Day Care facility.
- 4 Group home residents successfully reunited with their families.
- The Job Placement Project was expanded when Bokomo Foods opened its doors for disabled employees. One of the contract work trainees was permanently placed as a "rusk breaker" at the Atlantis factory.

Future plans:

*** *New contract building:***

Making decisions in the interest of the organisation included closure of the wood workshop for operational reasons. Restructuring is never easy, but became inevitable to ensure the future of Orion. Selling of the workshop enabled the organisation to build a new contract work factory at the Sun Road premises which will benefit all the trainees in terms of transport and security.

This building will create much-needed space for contract work, which is growing rapidly. It will also free space at the existing Activity Centre hall, which is desperately needed for the development of a recreational area, a communal dining hall and laundry, and expansion of the bakery project.

*** *Couple home for Group Home residents:***

To demonstrate Orion's commitment to its vision and mission and the rights of people living with disabilities, it was decided to open one of the existing group homes specifically for couples who have been involved in long term relationships. Here they will be able to live a normal, dignified life as recognised couples, preparing them for coping in the community once leaving the protective environment of Orion.

*** *Friendship Circle:***

We are working hard to expand the Orion Friendship Circle with a trip to the UK and France planned in the near future. By doing this, we hope to increase international funding sources to supplement our local and corporate fundraising activities and increase our financial sustainability.

In conclusion:

It is clear that Orion is evolving, taking on a life of its own. As custodians of this project it is our duty to embrace the future and be willing to change, in order to keep up with the growth experienced by the organisation.

We thank:

- the trainees and staff for their hard work, commitment, dedication and devoted support through out the year;
- the Board of Executives assisting to make important decisions in the interest of the organisation;
- all our donors;
- our South African and German patrons, and
- our heavenly Father who is blessing us abundantly, watching over us, providing in all our needs, and guiding us every step of the way.

L Van Wyk

LIZELLE VAN WYK
Chief Executive Officer
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