

A Report to Winter Offbeat on the Past Year 2017

2017 has been a year of change and development. While there have been some difficult times, in general we have seen continued and growing support from the Bloemfontein community where material donations have increased - food, clothing, toys, cleaning materials, nappies, toiletries etc

The wives and girlfriends of the Free State Cheetahs – our provincial rugby team – “Adopted” Sunflower House and organized a wonderful makeover of the house and garden , bringing in a number of new donors to provide the materials to beautify the rooms , provide new cupboards, furnishings and curtains. A large area of the garden was paved and the office renovated.

We used some of **your funding** from last year to upgrade the large Wendy House used by the physio- and occupational therapists. We put in wall-to-wall rubber tiles , three new steel storage cupboards, a large carpet, new curtains etc. A great improvement !

After the death of our wonderful first Medical Director Dr Robert Book three months ago we received funding to develop a Memorial Garden and we are busy planting that area of the garden as a place where people can sit when they need a time of peace and quiet. Dr Book and his wife Heidrun continued to support Sunflower children even when he died.

We have a number of dedicated volunteers who assist the children, some have been with us for many years, and others who come and go. Our staff remains very stable although sadly we have had two retirements of very hard-working and dedicated staff members this year, mainly due to ill-health more than their age. Mme Winnie Taole our Teacher and Grace Swarts , the first Caregiver to work in Sunflower House are greatly missed.

We continue to have a problem discharging our children from Sunflower House and many remain far too long while the staff struggle to get their government social workers to arrange for them to return home or find suitable foster care. However we are slowly transferring our long-term patients home. Many have families who cannot provide suitable care to a child with multiple disabilities because they live far from health facilities and live in extreme poverty.

Poverty remains our main challenge with our children and we frequently need to send out food parcels, blankets and clothing to the children in the community.

Children at the heart of all we do

We have seen an increase in illness and death in or HIV positive teenagers as many are now stopping their anti-retroviral therapy or are not taking their medicines correctly. This is of serious concern to us and our Community Coordinator, Olga Molahloe, is working together with other organisations to try and discover why this is happening and what can be done to keep them on their medication. We are planning to organize a short camp for some of our teenagers and continue to look at ways to support them and help them choose life.

With Christmas coming up the staff and volunteers have been collecting gifts for the 350 children and young people in the community so that each one has a Christmas gift and some food to celebrate with their families.

Next year we celebrate our 20th Anniversary and plan to ask our friends in different parts of the city, the country and the world to "Celebrate with Sunflower" through holding an event either at home, at work or in their community; to "Sing a Song for Sunflower" with a concert (Winter Offbeat!) or church service; or become one of our "Thousand Helping Hands" and donate R100/10Euros/ £10 /\$10 a month as this would cover our basic running costs which at present are R120 000 a month.

We are so grateful to you Konstantin and your concert team, our friends in Rosenheim, Munich and Germany as the donation after the Winter Offbeat has been such a blessing to help the hospice sustain our programmes and meet the needs of the children we care for ; if it were not for support of the likes of yourselves , we would be unable to continue with the programme . It will be of interest for you to see from our ' donor breakdown' , just how important our overseas donors are

Analysis of all funding received for April 2016 – March 2017

Department of Social development	31 %
Home based care programme	21 %
Sunflower House (child grants)	10 %
UK Trust and Churches & Vitas in USA	29 %
South African Business	11 %
Local Churches	5 %
Local and international individuals	24 %
Winter Offbeat	10 %
Others	14 %
	100 %

Shows how important your contribution has been !

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