

ANNUAL REPORT ST FRANCIS CARE CENTRE
PERIOD UNDER REVIEW: 1 APRIL 2009 – 31 MARCH 2010

It gives me great pleasure to present this report for the period under review. I would like to start this report by expressing our sincere gratitude to our donors who not only assisted us financially but also in kind. During the past year the global economic recession affected both corporates and individuals. Many corporates had to cut back on their social responsibility budgets and were unable to support the services of charities to the extent that they did before. A special thanks thus goes to the National Lottery Board, the Department of Social Development and PEPFAR who were the Centre's biggest funders during the period under review. The Centre was able to respond to the needs of individuals affected and infected by the HIV and AIDS pandemic due to the generosity of these funders in conjunction with donations (both financial and goods in kind) received from many corporate and individual donors. The Centre appreciates every donation that was received, both big and small, and would not be able to deliver this report if it were not for the support of our donors. Thank you so much!

The HIV and AIDS pandemic is still affecting the lives of many people and has become further complicated by the co-infection with TB. National indicate that up to 50% of persons infected with HIV and AIDS who die are actually dying of TB which is a curable disease! This presents a real challenge to service providers, such as ourselves, to work harder at assisting in the identification and treatment of those individuals who are HIV/AIDS/TB infected. During the past year the following services were rendered by the Centre.

- **ST FRANCIS HOSPICE**

307 patients were admitted. These patients received medical, physical, emotional and spiritual care. The Social Worker counseled many of the patients and members of their family and bereavement counseling was also offered to those that required it. Unfortunately 166 patients passed on and 35 patients were transferred to SANTA due to them being diagnosed with MDR/XDR TB. . It is, however, encouraging to note that of the patients admitted during the year many were able to start antiretroviral treatment and 106 patients were strong enough to be discharged i.e. 32% - a huge improvement on years gone past when more than 75% of those admitted passed on. Many of the discharged patients are now outpatients at our Antiretroviral clinic and have been able to continue with their lives in a meaningful way. Taking care of the emotional well-being of our staff (care of the caregiver) is of the utmost importance and Sr. Irene, once again, assisted the Centre by presenting regular debriefing sessions. Unfortunately no subsidy was received from the Department of Health during the period under review. This

section thus runs at a huge deficit each month which puts the Centre under great financial pressure.

- RAINBOW COTTAGE

During the past year we cared for 50 children aged between 0-7years of which 22 were new admissions. We thank the Department of Social Development sincerely for their financial support and positive encouragement at all times. Service delivery focused on:

- Medical, physical, emotional and spiritual care
- Developmental milestones
- Family Reunification
- Family preservation
- Education and school readiness.

During the course of the year 8 children were transferred to the Epworth Children's Home so that they could start Gr.1 in 2009 and a total of 10 children were returned to the care of family members or placed in foster care. The children in the Rainbow Cottage are medically very stable since receiving antiretroviral treatment and only 1 child passed on during the course of the year – a significant decrease compared to the period prior to the introduction of antiretroviral treatment! Sincere gratitude is expressed to the pediatricians who serviced our children under the supervision of the Big Shoes foundation on a weekly basis. Your services are invaluable to our Centre! We thank SKF (SA) Pty Ltd for the financial support received for the nursery school and early childhood development program and I'm pleased to report that our nursery school assistant has completed the 2nd year of an early childhood development course.

The Centre has continued to offer our children Sandplay Therapy in partnership with the Rocco Institute for Psychotherapy, Japan and funded by JICA (a Japanese funding organization). A staff member has completed a basic training course and continues to see the children of the rainbow cottage on a regular basis.

- ST FRANCIS ANTIRETROVIRAL PROGRAMME

Both the antiretroviral clinics have been well utilized by members of the community during the past year and were, once again, fully funded by PEPFAR . The Centre provided antiretroviral drugs to 1257 people (1160 adults and 97 children) on a monthly basis during the period under review. More than 1000 people received voluntary counseling and testing (VCT). A number of workshops were presented to the carers of the children who attend the pediatric clinic as well as to the 10 – 15 year old clients. The theme was "Adherence to treatment" and the response from parents, guardians and those infected was good. Ongoing training was organized by both Catholic Relief Services and SACBC and attended by nurses, counselors, data capturers, and managers in order to

ensure that the Centre is fully compliant with all the PEPFAR requirements. On the recommendation of SACBC a medicine stock controller was appointed during February 2010. The nursing staff at the 2 ART clinics need to obtain their license to dispense medicine and will be enrolling for this course during 2010. A patient data system (PDS) was implemented at both sites and not only provides up to date information on the patients but is particularly helpful in identifying defaulters so that these clients can be followed up immediately.

- HOME BASED CARE PROGRAM

Home Based Care services have continued in Vosloorus (11 HBCW), Ramaphosa and Joe Slovo (20 HBCW) and Kathlehong (11 HBCW). We express gratitude to our donors, Department of Health in partnership with the European Union, Dorcas Aid, the Department of Social Development and Johnson Matthey SA (Pty) Ltd who have assisted us greatly in developing and sustaining the home based care program in these impoverished communities.

The Home Based Care Workers are not only a support to persons infected by HIV and AIDS but are also the “ears, eyes and mouth” of the community. They have played an important role in supporting clients and their families but also in educating them and promoting VCT in an effort to curb the spread of the disease. During the period under review the Home Based Care teams provided services to 1122 beneficiaries. These services included, inter alia,:

- assistance with obtaining ID and Birth certificates
- applications for grants and social relief
- antiretroviral treatment adherence monitoring
- TB treatment adherence monitoring
- daily home visits and psychosocial support
- provision of food parcels and nutritional supplements
- care of Orphaned and Vulnerable children (OVC's). During July 2009 the OVC program was extended in Reiger Park. A hot meal is being provided to 75 OVC's after school and they are being assisted with their homework. Holiday programs have been presented during school holidays and these are extremely popular with the children living in Joe Slovo and Ramaphosa. During December 2009, 14 OVC's were treated and attended a one week camp at Happy Acres in Magaliesberg. Sincere gratitude to Dorcas Aid International who provided the funding. The children not only enjoyed the camp but for them it was the first time that they had ever experienced something of this nature and even mixed with children from other cultures.

- OUTREACH PROGRAMME

During the period under review the Centre rendered an intensive outreach programme to the Greater Ekurhuleni community. This included, inter alia, the following:

- * Education and Awareness talks to school children approx. 5000 pupils
- * Educational Talks and training to church and women's groups
- * HIV and AIDS support groups
- * Talks, training sessions and on-site VCT at corporates
- * Awareness campaigns were hosted:
 - St Francis Day attended by pupils from local schools 500
 - World Aids Day 100
 - International Day of the Sick 120
- * Networking with other NGO's, Home Based Care Groups, Welfare Forums, and government structures.
- * 2 Holiday programs were presented to OVC's Residing in the Joe Slovo and Ramaphosa informal settlements.

- OTHER OPERATIONAL MATTERS

STRATEGIC PLAN

One of the highlights of the period under review was the formulation of a strategic plan for the Centre. I thank the Board members and senior staff members who participated in this task sincerely. The strategic plan has clear, measurable objectives and goals and focuses on funding, staffing and service excellence. The plan is currently being implemented with feedback on progress to the Board quarterly.

UNION RECOGNITION

During the period under review a sector of the workforce (care helpers, cooks, gardeners, security etc) at the Centre became members of the Brick and General Workers Union. As more than 50% of that sector of staff joined the Union the Centre was compelled by labour legislation to recognize the Union and to enter into discussion with them. Many issues have been raised by the Union regarding the working conditions of the members and this is being dealt with on an ongoing basis. Job gradings indicating salary scales have been done during the period under review and currently the procedural agreement and agency shop agreement is receiving attention. The Centre is extremely grateful to Mr. Jan Smit of Novas Labour Consulting Services (who has more than 27 years' experience in working with labour and union issues) for assisting us in these delicate, and at times highly volatile, issues. Mr. Smit has

offered his services on a pro bona basis and has been co-opted onto our Board in order to assist and guide us.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

During the period under review the staff have been afforded many training opportunities. Many staff members attended workshops and also participated in in-service training sessions that were arranged for them. One staff member received financial assistance from the Centre to study at a nursing college in order to qualify as an Enrolled Nurse and is currently undergoing her training. Keeping abreast of developments in the field of HIV/AIDS/TB and child care is vitally important and thus the attendance of staff members at workshops and seminars is encouraged at all times.

ACCREDITATION HPCA

The Centre has formed a relationship with the HOSPICE PALLIATIVE CARE ASSOCIATION (HPCA). This organization is a standard setting body and highly respected by government and large donors. Issues such as good governance, models of best practice and policy formulation are priority focus areas. During the period under review the Centre has started to pay attention to the requirements for HPCA accreditation and we are grateful to them for some funding which has been received. We trust that this partnership will grow and lead to much bigger things in the future.

- THANKS

Sincere gratitude is expressed to members of our Board, our volunteers, our staff and funders. We could not function without the support we receive, and we could not do our work without the considerable input these bodies offer. Thank you for working towards our common goal of serving the sick and vulnerable with compassion, love and warmth.

Funding is the crucial ingredient in determining the success of our efforts. To all our funders, both corporate and individual a huge thank you!

I can assure you that, without the financial support received from all our donors, both big and small, we would fail dismally in our efforts to achieve the objectives as outlined in our mission statement and constitution.

To the Board, under leadership of our chairperson, Mr. Alberto Fogolin, thank you for your dedication, guidance, assistance and encouragement at all times. Your commitment to the St. Francis Care Centre is greatly appreciated.

To Fr. Stan Brennan OFM, founder of the St. Francis Care Centre, a huge thank you for your ongoing encouragement and support. Your vision, prayers, faith and dedication inspire us to reach out to the sick, poor and vulnerable with love and compassion.

To all members of staff my sincere appreciation for your ongoing commitment, support, hard work and co-operation.

- CONCLUSION

Much was achieved during the period under review and it is gratifying to see that the objectives as outlined in the constitution of the Centre are being achieved. The Mission of the Centre “to provide a haven where people infected and or affected by HIV/AIDS can receive services” is being fulfilled. We thank God that He has brought us this far. Much still remains to be done and we will continue to render our services trusting in God to provide in our needs. We remain committed to fight the HIV/AIDS/TB pandemic and will continue to provide love, care, treatment and HOPE to those who require our services – for the ST FRANCIS CARE CENTRE is a place of NEW HOPE!

I wish to end with 2 quotes and may these inspire us to treat all people with compassion and kindness.

Elton Graham said, “Be kind to everyone you meet. They all carry a heavy load”
And

The Dalai Lama said, “If you want others to be happy, practice compassion. If you want to be happy, practice compassion”.

TILLY BROUWER
SEPTEMBER 2010