

Business Fighting Crime



In partnership with the Pietermaritzburg Chamber of Business

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REPORT on LOTS
20th June 2016

This being the last report to the BFC Board I will recap on the LOTS project from January 2016 when the Board attention to the project focused on the finances and the need to find an NGO willing to shoulder the responsibility for the project.

This has left something of a gap in the reporting on the actual project successes and challenges.

In my Annual Report to the Board this time last year I commented on the courage required to take on a project of this magnitude. And I would now salute Mrs Dugmore and the working group of private citizens and NGO leaders who have rallied to support the project and Mrs Dugmore going forward. It is very satisfying to leave this project that I have nurtured in the capable hand of the MIDI Director.

During this interim period it became necessary to identify the LOTS project outside of the BFC/PCB as the project was in danger of becoming completely paralysed and unworkable during this uncertain time. No major changes or decisions were made to the project however the everyday running and maintenance decisions were taken forward under the banner of LOTS as this has become a reasonably well-known brand in the city in a short space of time. Thanks to the donation of skills from Safe Community a simple but effective LOTS logo was developed. This enabled us to proceed with small local initiatives such as the shopping centres bins which is an effort to reduce the cost of food as the recent increase in fresh food as a result of the drought has impacted on the shelter's weekly budget.

L.O.T.S

Living off the streets

Registered Nonprofit Organisation: Number 027-519-NPO
Association Incorporated under Company Number NPC 2002/026810/08

Management: Messrs J.Vorster (Chair), Mrs M. Veness ; V Biggs, L Holtzhausen, D Winship;
Mrs Z. Sokhela



Currently the shelter residents have a safe haven, a warm place to sleep and a filling meal twice a day; an effort is made to provide variety and balance to the diet despite the low daily budget. They have individual and group counselling sessions and access to professional counselling on request. The social worker, Mrs Xaba, insists on basic hygiene, cleaning of the house and the exercise of respect for oneself and others. The residents receive assistance in conflict management and resolving issues without resorting to violence and threats of violence. The house at number 42 Havelock Street still has many problems but it now a peaceful place with some basic rules and something of a feeling of a place of care and nurture. Mrs Xaba is assisted by 2 volunteer social work interns.

With the help of SANCA and Harmony Rehabilitation Centre the counsellors are making headway with the dagga, glue and alcohol addiction. With help from the Department of Health and HIVTB Care all the residents have been HIV tested and are receiving medication as is appropriate. We have no incidents of TB which is perhaps a result of the previous 'outdoor' lifestyle. The Department of Health has also provided 2 sessions of information on contraception and family planning, diabetes and healthy lifestyle, as well as blood pressure and the treatment of minor ailments. This means that every second week there is an educational input at the shelter on a Saturday. Some residents had clinic cards at clinics near their homes and these had to be retrieved by the social worker in order for the resident to get access to their regular meds at central clinic. We thank Harmony and SANCA for their on-going interest in LOTS.

A few of the rehabilitated residents were invited to develop a vegetable garden in a small piece of land on the Cerebral Palsy property. While several youth started the garden only Bongani Mkhize continues to water it every week. He is pictured below. Bongani is no longer living at the shelter but he urgently needs an opportunity to work. He seems to have green fingers and I would recommend him to anyone who needs a young and energetic gardener but who is able to provide initial instruction. Both his parents are deceased.



Family reunification is the clear path for all but 3 of the residents who like Bongani don't have close family. This is fairly complicated as most of the residents were asked to leave home, by both parents and the community due to their drug related misbehaviours. Reunification thus includes ensuring the resident is no longer taking drugs before beginning a lengthy process of resolving issues with the

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family and the community. The need for medication to assist whoonga addicts to get clean is a fact. Northdale Hospital are very reluctant to take addicts, usually sending them home with panado. The need to negotiate entry to the medical wards and then to have an exit plan that relocates the youth to a healthier environment is not possible without funds, even SANCA cannot help us without some financial contribution. As a result the whoonga addicts have not been assisted during this time of minimal budget. However considerable work has been done to prepare the residents for rehab and relationships with many of the families are greatly improved.

2 Residents attended cooking lessons at Jail Break, though neither of them completed the course it seems to have led to greater contentment around food.

10 residents registered for a computer course, 3 passed the basic course well.

2 residents have been reunited with their families

3 residents have received new ID books

1 baby was re-homed with the father's mother, the young mom is now home with her mother and both grannies are taking on responsibility for the child who is HIV positive at birth and very underweight. The baby is now flourishing as I have visited the home unannounced to verify the child's safety.

Members of the public regularly donated clothing and food to the shelter

YMCA provides programmes to residents on Tuesdays and YFC often visit the residents

Mrs Xaba is a member of the ward policing forum and has an excellent working relationship with Constable Gumbi who is very helpful

2 residents whom we had spoken to Constable Gumbi about were found to be wanted house robbers and arrested from the shelter.

2 residents who we suspected were dealing from the house were identified easily but removing them without proof was difficult. Fortunately they resorted to threatening behaviour in front of witnesses so a formal process could go ahead and they are no longer live at the shelter. One of the two has since been arrested for dealing.

Security at the shelter is improved by the municipality allowing us two guards at night and the security company KSA working with us to get the best possible outcome. We thank both the municipality for the many levels of help and advice and Lucas from KSA for his cooperation.

Challenges are mainly associated with over-crowding and the incomplete building repairs and alterations. The municipal authorities keep sending more youth to the shelter even though it is overfull by their own health sector rules. In future the shelter must be limited to a maximum of 20 residents. Some residents continue to behave poorly, and the social worker will require some support with this from time to time. I was calling Saturday meetings once or twice a month to address issues but stopped this when I exceeded my hourly budget as per contract with the additional fund raising concerns.

It would be desirable if pressure could be applied by PCB on the Municipality to complete the building and meet their financial promises. If this could be resolved then most of the problems of the shelter will be more easily controlled.

Funding remains an issue. The Department of Social Development require a signed SLA with the municipality before they will negotiate. Dorcas AID wish to work with a Christian body which excludes MIDI. I had arranged a partnership between BFC and Dorcas BEFORE I was aware of PCB concerns and have therefore withdrawn the application. The NLC is likely to fund a small amount in the New Year – perhaps R5-300 000. The project is fundable but only if the documentation is in order.

Due to my association with Cerebral Palsy is has been practical for the Social worker to use the CPA computer, telephone, internet and photocopier and helpful to CPA that BFC has paid for this usage. The CPA bakkie is used for clinic visits, collection of food and home visits which aim to reunite

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residents with their families. This too has been a win-win solution which may be renegotiated with the new CPA director in August. Currently the CPA store room is full to the brim with mattresses and blankets and some food. It is not an ideal storeroom and we hope that during the month of July MIDI can make a storeroom available to the LOTS project for this purpose. The handover process will take place over the next 2-3weeks. A report to the Municipality on the use of the R250 000 must be submitted before I leave and I will liaise with Gill to ensure that a report is submitted. Minutes of the working group and the hand over process will be made available to PCB.

I wish the board and the LOTS project well and thank Kantha for her support in the past and for placing this report before the board today.
D Harrison

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