



29th Annual General
Meeting of MDFSA, Cape
Branch
Apr 2023- Mar 2024

Annual Report 2023/4

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1. Chairman's Report

A warm welcome to members present at this AGM and to those who have joined us on TEAMS.

As we celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Muscular Dystrophy Foundation we rejoice that this year has been a great improvement on last year and we can look forward to the 30th Anniversary of the Cape Branch next year.

We are most grateful to Linda Jonker who has returned to the branch as part-time Administrator and who has run the Bargain Shop for many years. This past year the Bargain Shop raised R10 180.00. Vanessa Jordaan who also previously worked in the Branch as Office Manager has also returned as part-time Office Manager. Our grateful thanks to these ladies who go above and beyond to keep the Cape Branch functioning well. Cupboards have been sorted, pot plants replanted, the blinds in the building repaired and quotes obtained to reseal the floors. The garage/storeroom has been cleared of old items and so it must be spring-cleaning time. Even the donated electric organ raised R1 000.00.

With advice and assistance from Viwe Kwaaiman and Lauren Schultz we have sorted and repaired the office laptops. We have purchased a new laptop for the office and this has given us access to our old email address and allows administrator and manager to work independently and often after hours. We need to supply the new social work staff with laptops and we are hard at work updating our membership list.

The Social Work team, lead by Samantha Muller, has been joined by new social worker, Sasha-Lee Julies and auxiliary worker, Phumla Ntutu. Mischka returns in October from maternity leave.

The Branch is grateful to be funded by the Department of Social Development annually by the sum of R680 842.00, which ensures essential counselling and support to affected members and their families.

One of our aims is to assist with the provision of equipment such as wheelchairs, bi-pap machines and batteries for electric wheelchairs. We have been able to fund and maintain these to the amount of R21 061.00 this past year.

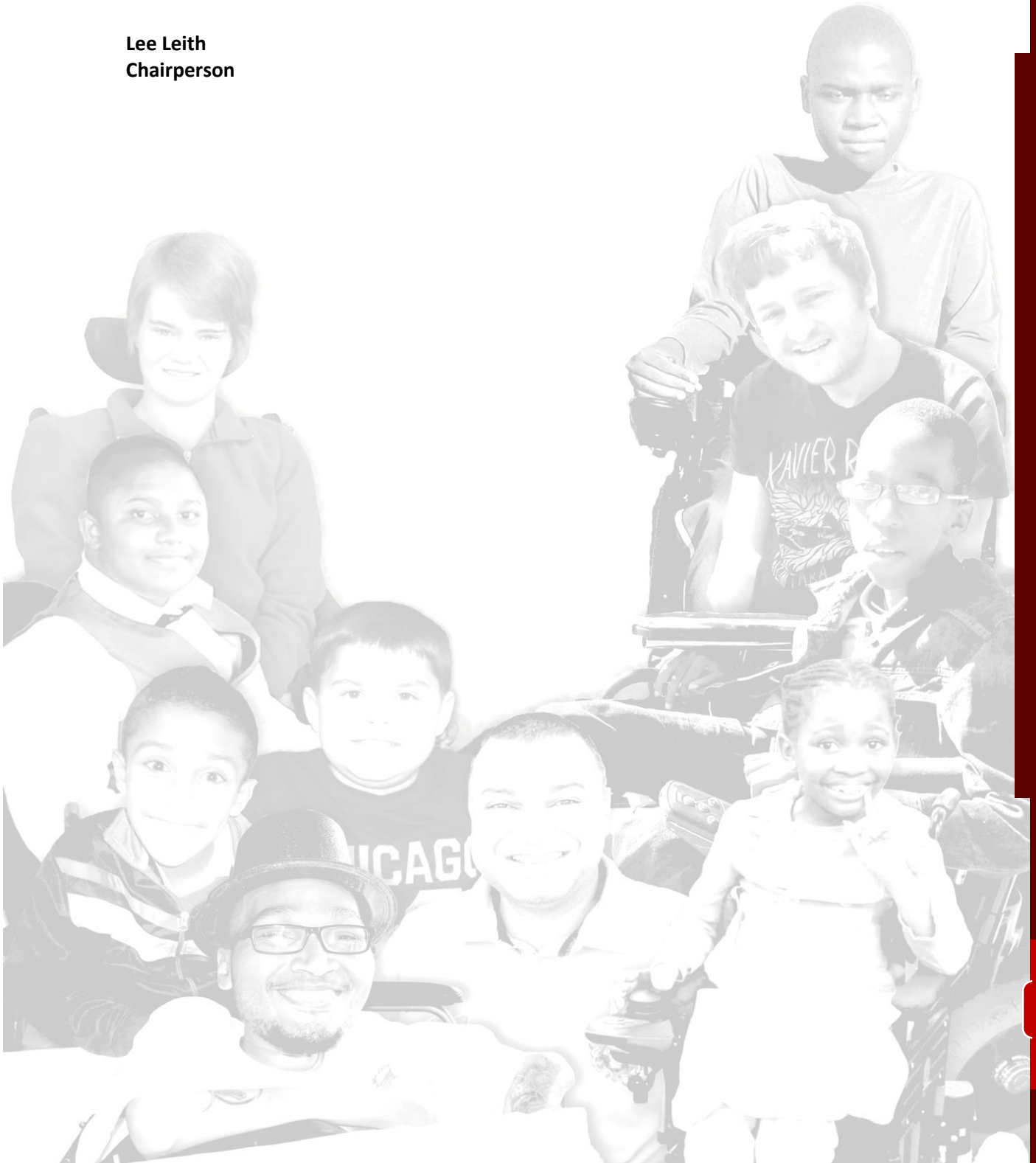
We have been blessed with financial donors and these will be covered in the Branch Manager's Report with a financial and expenses overview. The Cape Branch is so grateful to have the Rotary Club of Goodwood for constant support through the Annual Rotary Golf Day which raised R20 000.00 this past year. Thank you to our committee members who raised funds by having birthday celebrations with donations to Cape Branch instead of birthday gifts and in particular to Lauren Schultz who raised funds through her on-line raffle.

Last year we were unable to complete our Annual Financial Statements and this year they are completed and signed off. Our thanks to Thys Blom our Treasurer who has steadied our ship with his sure advice and support. Our Financial Report with an income and expenses overview will be presented by Vanessa in the Branch Manager's Report. However a brief glance shows the Branch to be in a Healthy position with accumulated

funds of R1.7 million and the major asset of the property owned by the Branch valued at R628 000.00.

Our thanks goes to Gerda Brown and Sarie Truter of the National office who helped us through difficult times last year and it will be good to share the 50th Anniversary with all members of the Foundation. Finally I wish to thank each member staff and the Cape Branch Committee for their support of the branch this past year.

Lee Leith
Chairperson



2. Branch Manager's Report

2.1. Financial

Income overview

- Donations & fundraising: R76 762.000. We would like to sincerely thank all our donors for their continued support.
- Other donations: We received three manual wheelchairs from a donor who wish to remain anonymous.
- Grants and Government funding: R680 842.00. We remain very grateful in receiving the funding from Department of Social Development. Unfortunately, we have not received any funding from the National Lottery Commission this year.
- Other income: Interest received from our Call account/investment – R76 703.00. This helps a lot to keep our office going, i.e. admin costs, general office expenses, debit orders and the salaries of temporary staff.
- Bargain shop: The volunteers have done a stellar job at overseeing the bargain shop and have raised R10 180.00. Due o severe winter storms, the shop flooded twice during this period. The additional drainage that we have previously laid in the back of the premises did not help much with the stormy weather.

Expenses overview

- Operational costs: R967 555.00 which means we have ended the year at a deficit of R99 700.00. We have shared the recently audited AFS with all to peruse.
- Wheelchair repairs: In spite of financial restrictions we have managed to fund wheelchair repairs and maintenance to the amount of R21 061.36.
- Event expenses and awareness: Our event expenses were very minimal as we have struggled to get in contact with many of the adults and parents. This means that we have very few support group sessions during this period. We have however, continued to meet with the different school, i.e. Vista Nova, Paarl School, and Eros School.
- Administrative expenses: Our highest expenses related to admin cost is our auditors. We are not able to compromise on this as we require sound financial audits for funders.
- Total expenditure: We have shared our recent audited AFS as indicated under "Operational costs".

Challenges

We have not received any funding from NLC this year despite one of their staff visiting our office to assist with completing the documentation. This means that funding is very limited to assist members with new assistive devices.

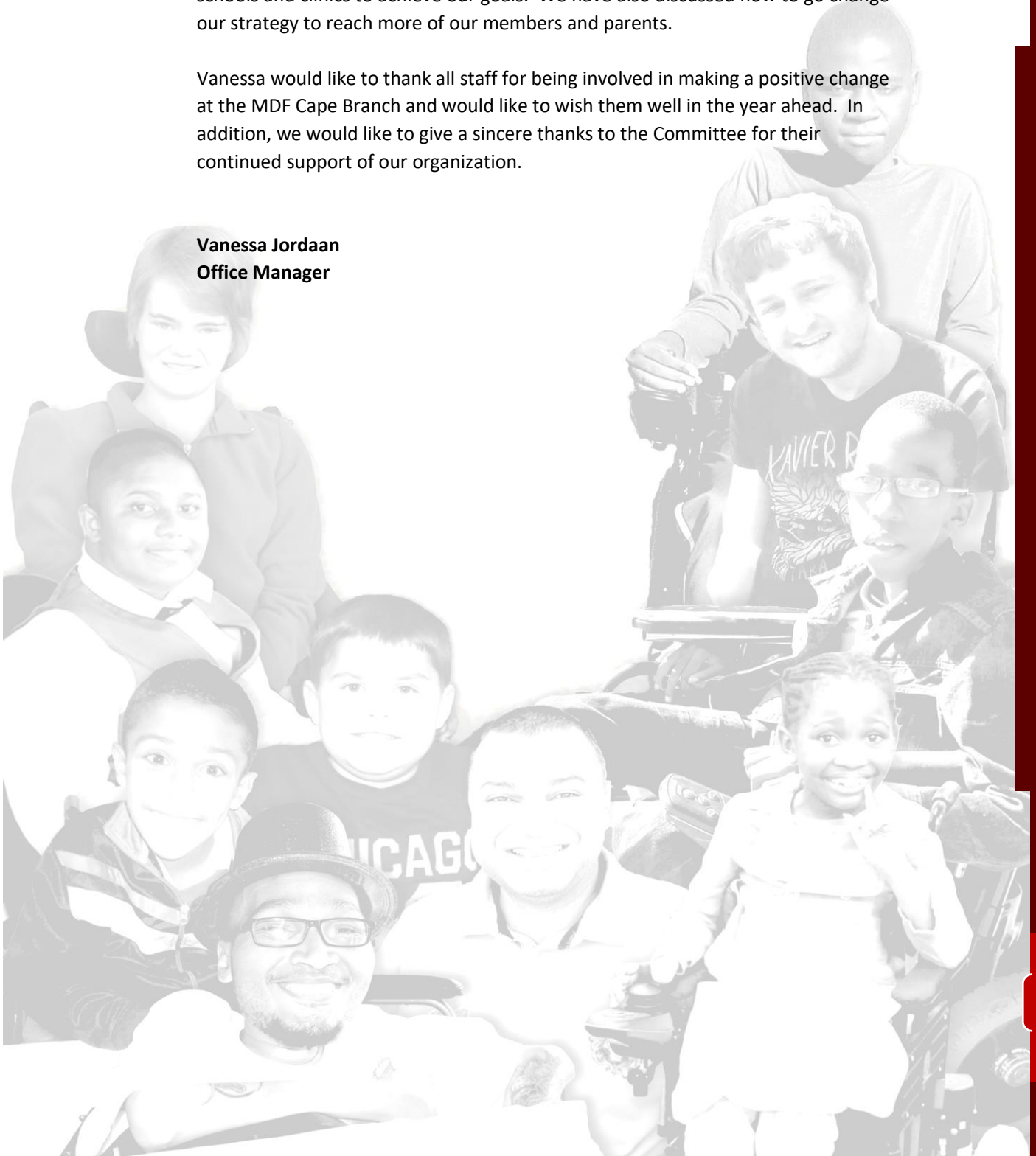
Conclusion and future plans

The start of this financial year already looks very promising as we have had several high and generous donations made by Lee Leith, our chairperson, as well as several donors. We would like to take this opportunity to once again thank all our donors for their continued support.

The Branch Manager, Vanessa, conducted a planning session with all staff to plan ahead for the rest of the year. Our staff have already reached out to different schools and clinics to achieve our goals. We have also discussed how to go change our strategy to reach more of our members and parents.

Vanessa would like to thank all staff for being involved in making a positive change at the MDF Cape Branch and would like to wish them well in the year ahead. In addition, we would like to give a sincere thanks to the Committee for their continued support of our organization.

Vanessa Jordaan
Office Manager



3. Social Work Report

3.1. Introduction

The following report provides an in-depth representation of the services rendered by the Muscular Dystrophy Foundation: Cape Branch from September 2023 to August 2024. The report elaborates on services such as caseload, related services, group work, support lines, community work and awareness. Furthermore the report focuses on the highlights and challenges faced by the organisation throughout the service year.

3.2. Casework

Casework at the Muscular Dystrophy Foundation: Cape Branch refers to counselling services wherein social service staff work directly with affected persons, families and medical professionals in order to ensure that all the medical, care, social and emotional needs of members are met. Currently, the branch has 458 members and open cases.

Between September 2023 to August 2024 48 new memberships have been completed. An average of 120 families received casework services from social service staff each month. Sadly, 3 members passed away this year. A total of 786 contacts/meetings have occurred during the last year. These are discussed in detail below:

Social workers work closely with the Neuro-muscular Out Patient Department clinics at Red Cross Children's Hospital (RXH) and Tygerberg Hospital (TBH). The social workers attend Red Cross Children's Hospital once a week on a Tuesday and Tygerberg Hospital every second Thursday for multidisciplinary meetings. Clients are either seen directly at these clinics or meetings occur between various professionals to ensure a holistic care plan for clients.

Red Cross Children's Hospital

Between October 2023 and August 2024 307 in-clinic assessments were completed with families were completed at Red Cross Children's Hospital.

Tygerberg Hospital

Between October 2023 and August 2024 58 individual counselling sessions were conducted by social workers with affected individuals at Tygerberg Hospital.

Multi-Disciplinary Team Meetings (MDT)

Separate to the attendance of clinics, social workers work closely with other helping professionals to determine holistic care plans for clients. Between October 2023 and August 2024, 9 separate meetings about clients have been conducted and follow-up intervention plans implemented.

School Counselling

Strong working relationships also exist between the Muscular Dystrophy Foundation Cape Branch and Jan Kriel LSEN School, AGAPE LSEN School and Vista Nova Primary and High LSEN Schools. These schools are not visited on a regular basis, however interdisciplinary services and care are coordinated and implemented via these relationships.

Special emphasis is placed on working with mainstream schools where affected members are placed. Social service staff work closely with teachers in this regard to

ensure understanding of the condition and that appropriate school-based support is provided.

Home Visits

Home visits were conducted depending the area and safety thereof. Between October 2023 and August 2024 16 home visits were completed. Immediately after conducting home visits and identifying the needs of clients, the social workers had on 1 occasion visit the Department of Social Development (Athlone) and on another occasion, Orion Organisation, and met with their social workers to get further support for 2 clients.

Office Counselling

Social workers regularly run individual and family counselling sessions at the Muscular Dystrophy Foundation Cape Branch offices. During the reporting period only 2 counselling session at the office was conducted, as this depends on the need of client and whether client is able to visit the office. 2 Family conferences also took place – 1 at Astra School and another at Sikelele Primary School.

Telephonic and Email Counselling

Telephone and email contact with clients has been an exceptional service to render, especially because face-to-face contact was not always possible. This permits regular contact and counselling with clients who reside in remote areas and cannot travel to Cape Town. This also allows the social workers and social auxiliary workers to conduct regular follow-ups with clients. Social workers are able to organise services from other organisations e.g. home-based care, schools, government departments, residential care facilities etc. During the reporting period 804 of these contacts were made.

3.3.GROUP WORK

Group work at the Muscular Dystrophy Foundation Cape Branch refers to extensive therapeutic counselling and skills development that occurs in a group setting. We currently have 4 group work programmes are running at LSEN Schools, as well as our Adult Support group and Parent support group. In total 28 group work sessions were facilitated within the reporting period.

Tembaletu School Muscular Dystrophy Support Group

Group meetings are held on a quarterly basis at Tembaletu School. This group is facilitated by the Social Auxiliary Worker and all learners with different diagnoses of Muscular Dystrophy attends. There was 1 session conducted within the reporting period. This group is incredibly effective and well attended. It focuses primarily on teaching life skills and skills related to condition management. This group plays a crucial role in evolving a support system for Guguletu and Khayelitsha based Muscular Dystrophy families.

Eros School Muscular Dystrophy Support Group

This program is held quarterly at Eros LSEN School, and renders group work services to children who all live with a different diagnosis of Muscular Dystrophy. This group is facilitated by the Social Auxiliary Worker and all learners with different diagnoses of Muscular Dystrophy attends. This group is effective and well attended. It focuses primarily on teaching life skills and skills related to condition management. It plays a significant role in managing the cases at Eros LSEN School and in identifying individual support required. There was 1 session completed during the reporting period.

Astra School Muscular Dystrophy Support Group

Group meetings are held on a weekly basis at Asta LSEN School. Between September 2023 to August 2024. The group has approximately 14 members. The group focuses on the provision of therapy and life skills to all children affected with various types of Muscular Dystrophy. It plays a crucial role in managing the cases at Astra LSEN School and in identifying individual support required. There were 19 sessions conducted during the reporting period.

Vista Nova MD Group

Due to too few group members, this group was not able to take place during this reporting period.

Paarl School MD Group

This group is facilitated once a term by the Social Auxiliary Worker. The group consists of learners affected with various types of Muscular Dystrophy. The group work focuses on condition management and therapeutic life skills. There were 2 sessions done for the reporting year.

4. COMMUNITY WORK/AWARENESS

Community Work/Awareness is mostly facilitated by the Social Auxiliary Workers at the Muscular Dystrophy Foundation Cape Branch, however, the Social workers assist with awareness via radio or with professional staff at schools and other organisations. This programme has been initiated to reach out to local communities to spread information about the condition. These services play a crucial role in addressing discrimination and stigmatization in our communities, as well as educating healthcare and education professionals about the condition. Overall community work and awareness leads to increased referrals and improved service delivery. In total 1 radio interview took place and 5 awareness events were completed within the reporting period. Awareness sessions took place at the following places:

- Voice of the Cape Radio Station
- Tygerhof Primary School
- Goodwood Clinic
- Vega School
- Vista Nova High School
- College of Cape Town (Crawford Campus)

5. HIGHLIGHTS

Despite a very challenging year, the social work staff of the Muscular Dystrophy Foundation (Cape Branch) are happy to highlight the following:

- 7 September is World Duchenne Awareness Day. On 7 September 2023 the social work team took a group of boys with Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy to Table Mountain. Thank you to the management of Table Mountain for giving us complimentary tickets for the day. The boys thoroughly enjoyed their experience in the cable car and exploring the mountain.
- On 30 September 2023, the Social worker, Samantha Muller, and parents of children with Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy attended a Duchenne Workshop facilitated by the staff of Paedspal. Parents were afforded the opportunity to share their experiences and learn from each other.

- On 22 November 2023, 13 Muscular Dystrophy children from Astra School enjoyed an outing to Grandwest Casino, where they played games and enjoyed the bowling alley. Thank you to Reach for a Dream for their assistance with this event. Lunch was donated by Spur (Grandwest) and arranged by Reach for a Dream, who also gave each child a gift.
- On 3 February 2024 our Adult and Parent support groups enjoyed a “bring and share picnic” with a Valentine’s day theme, at Green Point Park. Some parents brought their children along.
- A group of Muscular Dystrophy children were taken to Vredenheim Animal Farm on 29 February 2024. The children enjoyed this fun, yet educational outing as they gazed at the different animals on the farm and enjoyed the different indoor games.
- The Social worker, Samantha Muller, as well as some of our parents of children with Muscular Dystrophy, attended the Duchenne Workshop that was facilitated by the team from ATOM International Limited from the UK, ON 5 and 6 May 2024. The social worker subsequently met with the Managing Director of ATOM International Limited, Michelle Eagle, at Astra School, where Ms Eagle were introduced to the Muscular Dystrophy children during and after a support group session. Ms Eagle was previously a Physiotherapist at a special needs school in the UK and shared some of her experiences with the children, who were very interested and asked her questions. During her interaction with the children, Ms Eagle became aware of the challenges that some of the children are experiencing with their wheelchairs and decided to donate R50 000,00 to the Muscular Dystrophy Foundation Cape Branch for wheelchair repairs.
- On 7 August 2024 some of our Muscular Dystrophy children enjoyed a fun-filled day at the Norval Foundation in Tokai. The group got to learn about contemporary art and different types of art expression. Since Cape Town has had horrendous storms this winter, the group enjoyed being able to explore the entire exhibit inside, as well as outside, as the weather was beautiful.
- The appointment of the Office Manager was welcomed by the Social work team, who had to assist with office duties whilst being short staffed.

6. CHALLENGES

- High turnover of social work staff.
- Difficulty in finding placement for clients at residential care facilities due to long waiting lists and very few facilities accommodating clients with Muscular Dystrophy.
- Loss of clients due to their conditions.
- Very slow laptops.
- Lack of funding.
- The storms during winter.
- Transport problems of members / Dial-a-ride waiting list.

7. CONCLUSION

Despite various challenges faced throughout the year, teamwork amongst the social work team ensured effective service delivery to clients during this past year.

Muscular Dystrophy Foundation Cape Branch experienced a very high turnover of social work staff this year. After hearing from the Department of Social Development of budget cuts, the morale amongst the social work team was low and 2 staff members left for more stable financial jobs. The vacant posts had been filled, however, one of the Social auxiliary workers is currently on maternity leave.

Assistive devices have been maintained by Charlton from F & H Mobility and we are grateful to him for always assisting us and understanding the organisation’s financial dilemma,

however, batteries for disability equipment were out of stock throughout the country for a few months, which had a negative impact on some of our clients. Members were invited to attend Adult support group sessions via email and telephone calls, however, group sessions often could not take place as the members were not able to attend. The very cold and stormy winter could probably also have had an impact on this. Some members have transport problems. Dial-a-ride has a waiting list. The upcoming year the social work team will focus on the maintenance and improvement of current services. Thank you to all those who have assisted with and supported the social services rendered by the Muscular Dystrophy Foundation Cape Branch.

Samantha Muller – Social Worker
Sasha-Lee Julies – Social Worker
Phumla Ntuntu – Social Auxiliary Worker

