

AGM Report 2024/25



Contents

Chairman's report 3-10

Highlights 11-12

The Collar Club -

This Year We... -13

Beneficiaries - 14

Our Reach -15 - 16

**We couldn't have done
it without you! - 17**

**In Their Words- Words
of support from some of
our parents. 18-20**

Looking ahead. - 21-24

Conclusion - 25

Chairpersons Report



Chairperson's Report for the Annual General Meeting Covering the Period: 1 March 2024 – 28 February 2025

**Dear Members, Supporters, and Friends of Iris House
Children's Hospice:**

As we look back on the past financial year, I am filled with immense pride and gratitude for the strides we have taken, even in the face of ongoing challenges. The period from 1 March 2024 to 28 February 2025 has been marked by both innovation and resilience at Iris House Children's Hospice. It is with great pleasure that I present this report, outlining our key milestones and accomplishments during this time.

Chairpersons Report



Therapeutic Programs and Innovations

Unfortunately, our aqua therapy sessions at St. Joseph's indoor heated pool had to be suspended this year due to technical issues with the facility. While we hope to resume these sessions in the future, we are pleased to report that our other therapeutic programs have continued to grow from strength to strength.

Our equine therapy program flourished, with our much-loved therapy horses, Diva and Viltalgo, providing comfort, stimulation, and a deep sense of connection through therapeutic riding. These sessions have made a significant impact on both the emotional and physical well-being of the children in our care.

We were saddened by the loss of our beloved Shaun the Sheep, who brought joy to so many. His gentle spirit lives on through Sheila, one of our resident sheep, who has now formed a bond with our dedicated groom, McDonald. Our bunnies also continue to bring calm and happiness, reinforcing the important role animal-assisted therapy plays in our holistic care.

We also continued to develop our Autism Life Skills Program at both the Collar Club and Iris House. Our "Big Boys" shopping and craft program gave participants valuable experiences in budgeting, social interaction, and creativity. In addition, Massage for Autism remained a valued partner, providing regular sensory-friendly massage sessions at the hospice.

Chairpersons Report continued



Financial Stability and Growth

This year, we remained focused on maintaining financial stability and fostering sustainable growth. I am pleased to report that we closed the financial year with a positive bank balance once again.

We continue to receive valuable support from the Department of Social Development (Disability and Child Protection sectors), as well as the National GBVF Response Fund.

Ongoing contributions from long-standing supporters such as the FW de Klerk Foundation, Pep, M and D Designs, and our many loyal private donors have been instrumental in sustaining our work.

Our flagship fundraising events—including Cuppa4Care, the Purple Ball, and various online auctions—have not only raised essential funds but also increased awareness and engagement with our cause.

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Chairpersons Report Contd



Our small-scale social enterprise initiatives also continue to play an important role in supporting our financial health. The Collar Club, our protective workshop and doggy daycare for young adults with disabilities, has proven to be a remarkable success. In the year under review, it generated over R240,000 in profit, directly supporting the work of Iris House. Additionally, our Carers@Home programme contributed more than R60,000 to our financial statement, further strengthening our sustainability goals.

With our first batch of laying hens now enjoying a well-earned retirement, a younger flock has been introduced to ensure a continued supply of fresh eggs. These are used within the hospice and sold to staff and supporters, generating a modest but meaningful income. Our on-site hospice shop also continues to perform strongly, delivering consistent monthly profits thanks to generous donations from the public.

These combined efforts—along with careful financial management and an unwavering commitment to sustainability—have placed us in a sound financial position for the year ahead.

Chairperson's Report Contd



Organisation Staff Structure

In the year under review, I officially stepped down from my role as CEO of Iris House Children's Hospice to take up my responsibilities as Ward Councillor for Ward 113. While this was a significant transition, I remain deeply committed to the vision and mission of Iris House and continue to be actively involved in its strategic direction as Chairperson.

I also firmly believe that for any organisation to thrive, it must embrace growth and fresh perspectives. The leadership transition has opened the door for new energy and talent to contribute meaningfully to our future.

Significant structural improvements have been made across the organisation:

- Our grounds team has been expanded and strengthened, now operating as a three-person unit under the capable leadership of Salogladien, our newly appointed Grounds Manager. This has improved the upkeep and functionality of our outdoor therapy and recreational spaces.**
- We also welcomed Natasha as our new General Manager in June.**

Chairperson's Report Contd



- Our playroom team has also grown, with the addition of two new permanent carers, Nox and Suki. This brings our playroom staff complement to four, allowing us to better support and expand the Carers@Home permanent placement programme at the hospice.
- The Collar Club, under the leadership of Saul, has also expanded. It now boasts four permanent staff members and four additional workers on stipend placements. This growth reflects the increasing demand for services at the Collar Club and our ongoing commitment to creating meaningful, inclusive employment opportunities for young adults with special needs.

These structural enhancements reflect our ongoing dedication to delivering high-quality, person-centred care while building a sustainable and professional organisational foundation for the future.

Chairperson's Report Summary



Conclusion and Way Forward

As I look back on the 2024-2025 financial year, I am filled with immense pride and gratitude for the strides we have taken—despite ongoing challenges and a shifting funding landscape. The year has been defined by resilience, creativity, and a steadfast commitment to our mission of providing free, holistic care to children with life-limiting and life-threatening conditions.

We have continued to strengthen our therapeutic programs, including aqua therapy, equine-assisted sessions, and animal-assisted support—each playing a vital role in improving the quality of life for the children in our care. Our staffing structure has been enhanced across key areas, including admin, grounds, playroom, and The Collar Club, enabling us to deliver services more effectively and sustainably.

Financially, we have maintained a stable footing through a combination of public and private support, proactive restructuring, and the growing success of our social enterprise initiatives. The Collar Club and Carers@Home have demonstrated their potential not only as impactful programs but also as income-generating assets that support our core services.

Chairperson's Report Summary



Looking ahead, the road will not be without its challenges—particularly in light of uncertainty around future government funding. However, we are actively seeking alternative funding streams and forging stronger partnerships to safeguard and expand our impact.

Our priorities for the year ahead include:

- **Scaling up our Carerse@Home programme to accommodate more permanent children at the hospice**
- **Broadening the reach and impact of The Collar Club through skills development and employment**
- **Deepening our focus on sustainability, both financially and operationally**
- **Strengthening governance and support structures for long-term resilience**
- **Continuing to offer innovative, child-centred therapies that place dignity, joy, and love at the heart of all we do**

I remain committed to supporting Iris House in my capacity as Founder and Chairperson. While I have stepped into a new public leadership role as Ward Councillor, my heart remains with the children and families we serve. I look forward to working with our board, team, partners, and donors to ensure that Iris House not only survives—but thrives—in the years to come.

Thank you for walking this journey with us.

Sue van der Linde

Founder & Chairperson

Iris House Children's Hospice

Highlights



Transport Support – A Lifeline for Our Families

Once again, HG Travel has gone above and beyond for Iris House by generously providing us with another brand-new adapted bus. This specialised vehicle plays a critical role in safely transporting our children to and from the hospice for care sessions, therapy, and social interaction.

For many of our families, transport is a major barrier to accessing essential services. This adapted bus is more than just a mode of transport—it is a lifeline. It offers dignity, comfort, and safety to both our children and carers, enabling us to reach more families with consistency and care.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to **HG Travel** for their continued support and belief in our mission. Their generosity has a direct and lasting impact on the lives of the children we serve.

Highlights

Young Autistic Life Skills Program – Fostering Independence and Confidence

One of the most meaningful additions to our programming this year has been the launch of the Young Autistic Life Skills Program—an initiative designed to equip autistic young adults with practical life skills in a supportive, structured, and enjoyable environment.

Each month, participants are transported to a local shopping centre where they engage in guided activities designed to promote independence. With a modest budget in hand, each young person shops for their own essentials—learning vital budgeting, decision-making, and communication skills. The outing concludes with a shared treat, typically a burger, giving the group a chance to enjoy a meal together and practice social interaction in a public setting.

This program addresses key developmental needs through:

- Exposure to real-world sensory environments
- Structured opportunities to manage anxiety and navigate unfamiliar experiences
- Reinforcement of social skills and public engagement
- Hands-on money management and choice-making

While these activities may seem simple, they are life-changing for our participants. Each trip builds confidence, encourages autonomy, and supports their journey toward independent living.

We are proud of the progress made by the incredible young individuals in this program and look forward to expanding its reach. It is yet another way Iris House is working to build a more inclusive, empowering future for all.



This Year We **Trained 119 safety and foster parents**

Provided 1368 hours of Community Respite care

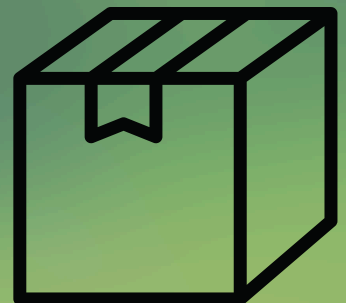


Provided 800 hours of Hospice Based Respite care

Trained 115 SAPS and First responders



Provided 218 Social Work Interventions



Provided 678 essentials packs to Families

Provided hours of therapies for our children - 1460





Beneficiary Overview

710 REGISTERED CHILDREN / OVER 2500 BENEFICIARY'S

In the year under review we served over 710 children and young persons. However as our holistic care covers the whole family this figure is realistically over 2500 . Serving so many diverse families, affected by life-limiting and life-threatening conditions is a great responsibility, and as we continue to grow and expand our services, we commit to continue providing quality care and support at no charge, to **ALL** of our families.

Further highlighting the diversity in the children and families we serve is the wide range of medical conditions they face. In the year 2023/2024 our families are affected by over 68 different medical conditions,

70 Medical Conditions



70 Communities

Our Reach

RETREAT
PHILIPPI
RICHWOOD
NOOITGEDACHT
KRAAIFONTEIN
BRACKENFELL
ELSIES RIVER
BELLVILLE
DELFT
SALDANHA BAY
BOTHASIG
HOUT BAY
CONSTANTIA
MITCHELLS PLAIN
GRASSY PARK
CROSSROADS
HIGHBURY
BLUE DOWNS
YSTERPLAAT
STRANDFONTEIN
EDGEMead
BELHAR
TABLEVIEW
STELLENBERG
PLATTEKLOOF
SILVERSANDS

PARKLANDS
KENSINGTON
EVERSDALE
GUGULETHU
BONTEHEUWEL
GOODWOOD
VREDENBURG
WELGEMOED
MFULENI
Kalbaskraal
NYANGA
SAREPTA
CRAWFORD
MUIZENBERG
HAPPY VALLEY
RIEBEECK WES
HERMANAUS
STRAND
ATLANTIS
ST HELENA BAY
JOE SOLVO
DUNOON
NELSPRUIT
NORTHERN CAPE

SUNNINGDALE
STEL LENBOSCH
RONDEBOSCH
NORTHPIKE
PLUMSTEAD
CHATSWORTH
PAROW
MILNERTON
DURBANVILLE
KUILSRIVER
KHAYELITSHA
BROOKLYN
BLOUBERG
EERSTERIVER
LANSLOWNE
BELLVILLE SOUTH
WYNBERG
MONTE VISTA
KENWYN
TOKAI





THE PAINTED
DOOR



Japan International
Cooperation Agency



GBVF
RESPONSE FUND



British
High Commission
Pretoria

We couldn't have done it without you

In their words...



I am the mother of my 34-year-old autistic son, Cheslyn. At 27, he began having seizures, and his behavior changed so drastically that I had to make the heartbreaking decision to leave my full-time job to care for him. That period was one of the most difficult of our lives. It took over a year to find the right medication and dosage to help him, and during that time, I often felt exhausted, isolated, and unsure how to cope.

Then a friend told me about Iris House — and my life changed. From the first day, they welcomed Cheslyn with love, patience, and understanding. Every time I tell him he's going to spend the day there, his face lights up with joy.

Those moments mean the world to me.

For me, Iris House has been more than just a place for Cheslyn — it has been a safe haven for my heart. Their support groups have given me strength when I felt weak and hope when I felt overwhelmed.

I am forever grateful for the compassion, generosity, and dedication of everyone at Iris House. You have given us not just care, but dignity, joy, and peace.

With deepest thanks

In their words...



I'm Sinovuyo Talaba have two beautiful kid's live with autism a boy Endinayo and girl Lwemihla I'm so having for having Iris House in my kid's life it make things so easy for teaching them. They came back so happy when they are there telling me lot's of new things they learn and how they treat them with love so happy for having them in my life because I was so depressed and stress but for their support group I am doing fine and my kids are so happy for having them lot's of love

In their words...



My name is Zandiswa Mqokolo I have a son that is living with autism his name is Hlanga Oyintando Mqokolo, he is 10 years old. I have 3 children, he is the middle child. He was diagnosed on 2019 and that was a difficult time for because I didn't know anything about autism and I didn't know how to look after my child. I went to Google looking for help then I found Sue on Google and her cell number. I called her and immediately she responded and send a social worker to speak to me at lentegeur. After a week Nolubabalo from iris house called me. I was crying every day I lost my identity because I thought I was the only person with a child like this. Then Nolubabalo called me and tell me about the support group at Iris house. That was the day I met real friends people who understand my situation. We shared there our journeys with other parents as well. They offer us carers for free as well. I don't how my life would be if I didn't know about Iris house. I thought I was cursed, I was blaming myself and family.



Looking Ahead 2025/2028

Looking Ahead: 2025-2028 Our Vision for Iris House Children's Hospice.

Sustainability Over the Next 3 Years

- **Grow Donor Base**
 - Focus on securing more committed monthly and quarterly donors
 - Build strong relationships and showcase measurable impact
- **Engage with Insurance Companies**
 - Establish a structured base of bequeathments for long-term legacy funding
- **Develop Passive Income Channels**
 - Reduce reliance on once-off donations
 - Expand revenue through sustainable, recurring income streams
- **Grow Social Enterprises**
 - Scale The Collar Club and Carers@Home to increase profitability and reach
 - Continue combining service delivery with income generation
- **Increase Marketing & Outreach**
 - Actively promote Iris House on social media and online platforms
 - Reach new audiences while deepening engagement with current supporters
- **Invest in and Expand Events**
 - Continue supporting and enhancing current fundraising events
 - Explore new event opportunities to boost income and brand visibility
- **Balanced & Resilient Funding Model**
 - Combine donor growth, legacy funding, passive income, and events to ensure long-term sustainability



Looking Ahead 2025/2028

- **Leadership and Management Team Expansion**
- To ensure the consistency, quality, and long-term sustainability of our services, we plan to strengthen and expand our leadership team. This expansion will:
 - Bring in New Expertise and Fresh Perspectives
 - Recruit experienced professionals to fill key management positions, enhancing operational efficiency and strategic capacity.
 - Upskill Long-Serving Staff
 - Provide targeted training and mentorship to equip existing team members for leadership roles, recognising and rewarding their loyalty and institutional knowledge.
 - Increase Staff Training and Education Levels
 - Invest in accredited courses, workshops, and ongoing professional development to elevate the skills and qualifications of our workforce.
 - Ensure a Smooth Leadership Transition
 - As I gradually step back from day-to-day operations, a strengthened leadership structure will ensure our values, vision, and service quality remain at the heart of Iris House.
 - Foster a Strong, Future-Ready Team
 - By combining fresh leadership talent with the growth of our existing staff, we will create a resilient management team capable of driving innovation and maintaining excellence.



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Looking Ahead 2025/2028

Our Services

We remain committed to our core service of respite care, ensuring that children and their families continue to receive the compassionate, high-quality support they deserve. Alongside this, we will continue to fill gaps in service by:

- Expanding our training programs to empower caregivers, parents, and professionals.
- Growing our funded training by securing additional grants – for example, targeted funding for Safety and Foster Parent Training and GBVF First Responder/SAPS Training programs.
- Strengthening partnerships with other NPOs to share expertise, resources, and support.
- Launching new projects, such as our sustainable food garden in partnership with the Department of Agriculture, which will provide both therapeutic benefits and practical skills.
- Continuing to offer our existing therapies and exploring new therapeutic options that can improve the quality of life for our children and families.
- Continuing to invest in our current social enterprise projects – The Collar Club and Carers@Home – to increase their reach, profitability, and impact.
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Importantly, we will monitor our growth carefully to ensure that we do not compromise the quality of service that is at the heart of Iris House. Every expansion will be guided by our commitment to excellence, compassion, and sustainability.



Looking Ahead 2025/2028

Conclusion

- Iris House stands on the threshold of an exciting new chapter. By expanding our leadership team, upskilling our loyal staff, and investing in their education, we are building a resilient foundation that will safeguard our values and service quality for years to come.
- We will stay true to our core of respite care while continuing to fill critical service gaps through funded training, innovative partnerships, impactful new projects, and investment in our social enterprises – The Collar Club and Carers@Home. Every step forward will be measured and deliberate, ensuring growth never comes at the expense of the excellence our families rely on.
- With strong leadership, strategic service expansion, and a clear vision for sustainability, Iris House is ready to meet the future with confidence, compassion, and unwavering commitment.
- **Together, with your support, we will not just sustain Iris House – we will grow it into a lasting legacy of hope, care, and opportunity for every child and family we serve, now and in the future.**