



SARDA DURBAN BRANCH

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ANNUAL CHAIRPERSONS REPORT YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2020

I will be reading this report at our AGM in September 2020, but it pertains to our Financial Year end which ended in March 2020. The reason this is significant to mention this year is that due to the global Corona Virus pandemic South Africa has just gone into hard lockdown. What the future looks like is more uncertain now than ever but knowing our history and the people we have involved, SARDA Durban can rise to any occasion – they have proved this historically!

Mandy Sneddon has resigned as our Treasurer effective at the end of this Financial Year. My personal thanks and that of all at SARDA Durban, go to Mandy for her incredible contribution over so many years – extremely efficient, a watchdog over any spending and ensuring SARDA Durban earned as much interest as possible, where possible. Sue Warrington joined the committee from the AGM in September 2019 to ensure a seamless transition in the Treasurer role when Mandy resigned at Financial Year end. Sue brings corporate experience and a sound knowledge of Pastel Accounting, so our books are in good hands. Other changes included Tracy Moxey replacing Mary Nel in the Marketing and PRO function and Libby Durk replacing Deryn Sinclair as Secretary. We have made the transition to new committee members seamlessly as people have taken on their roles and added such value in a short time. We have gone from the early years of finding people who were willing to serve on our committee and allocating them a role/ portfolio to fill, to being able to have willing people nominated for a specific portfolio. This has been a valuable progression.

Our Committee had an opportunity to spend time away in January 2020, brainstorming and putting together the outlines of a business plan. It was valuable to have so much dedicated time to do this and an opportunity that is well worth repeating. It was amazing to review what we have done, who we are and what we want to be to our community. This will need to be reviewed and expanded on or adapted post Covid. Thank you to our dynamic, talented and motivated Management Committee for your support and for doing so much more than I can mention in this report.

We are starting to create awareness in our Community of our organization, which has been a long-term goal. The SBS Tanks Build for Better Initiative started by a good friend of SARDA Durban, Delayne Grey, have us as one of their positive stories. This has given us much coverage in Social media and even on the Airport TV's through the airing of a wonderful video they had made about us. It is wonderful to be part of this initiative that showcases so many inspiring people and stories in our country.

We are awed by the generosity we are afforded in so many ways. We were humbled to receive a full tin of coins that had been collected by a gentleman from poor circumstances and an impoverished community. He had collected and donated this to SARDA Durban, after he read about us in a local newspaper, as he loves animals and what we do for Special Needs children. We have people who donate monthly on a regular basis, this was initiated by previous committee members and is really needed to ensure our sustainability. We are so thankful for these faithful supporters. This year we have been truly fortunate to receive generous donations from individuals, which is not the case every year. We also had a local vet practice, Baker and McVeigh, offer to do a raffle for us at their stand at a big show. We continue to be supported by Gold Circle and Vodacom as a beneficiary of the Durban July, our first ever and longest standing corporate sponsor. I cannot

list every donation or donor in this report but please know how much we value every single one of you whether you have donated funds, feed for the ponies or items to sell at the charity shop.

We are extremely grateful to the National Lotteries Commission for the grant for feeding our ponies. Knowing that we have some remaining NLC funding for the feed of our ponies going into this Lockdown is so reassuring. We have to extend our gratitude to one of our Stalwart members who is an Instructor, a past Chairman for 6 years and who continues to support SARDA Durban by taking care of our NLC applications, funding use and reports in a highly professional and competent manner. Fiona Muhl, SARDA Durban appreciates you and everything that you do for our Committee and the children who benefit from our services. We are also thankful to Barbara Laubscher for access to the Social Cause Agency Charity Shop and the work that she does to raise awareness and funding for SARDA Durban.

On the topic of awareness and funding, Michelle Foonk and Mary Nel put together a first for SARDA Durban, a High Tea at our Venue. It was a spectacular morning which saw every ticket sold and many requests to repeat the event annually. We have been developing our facilities and preparing for the day when we could use our own venue and facilities to host events and create awareness. This was a great start and in Mary's words: "Whatever the outcome financially, I don't think you can put a figure on the amazing time people had on the day ..that message going into the community is priceless.."!

Tracy Moxey made her presence on our committee felt when she took on the task of having our website and social media pages updated. Please take a look at www.sardadurban.org.za to see what an awesome job she has done. Please feel free to interact with us by liking, sharing our page and posts and we welcome feedback as to what you would like to see on our website.

We have had meetings with business professionals regarding setting up an Advisory Board for SARDA Durban, something we have been working on for a long time. We have secured the commitment of two highly experienced individuals. They have provided advice already, but the formalizing of this relationship with the Management Committee needs to be finalized in the New Financial Year.

This year also saw the start of another goal realised. We had our first outing with children from a special needs school who do not ride with us on a regular basis. This is a way in which we can ensure we maximise the use of our facilities and extend our reach to our community.

In terms of our Facilities, we were donated a gate motor and had the installation donated by another company. This has helped with securing our premises. We also received funding to refurbish our arena structure. This has made such a difference in appearance as we no longer have rusty pillars and it helps to increase the longevity of our asset. Just prior to lockdown we received a donation of all the materials required to put a concrete floor in the hay barn, an item which has been on our wish list for some time and it has given us the opportunity to start the clean-up of that area.

Our ponies have continued to provide many hours of joy to the children (and volunteers) who participate in our therapeutic riding program. The photos we take show the contentment on the ponies faces – they enjoy their job and are strong and well to do it. Our real golden oldies Jolly and Arabella do a very limited number of sessions but continue to play their part.

This report would never be complete without extending our gratitude to our amazing volunteers who along with our ponies are the backbones of our organization. Julie Ponquett has done an outstanding job as our liaison in this regard, keeping volunteers informed and welcomed. We realised that this was an area where we needed to grow. In February we had a volunteer drive and training done by the Instructors of each session. These were valuable and resulted in new keen volunteers who have unfortunately not had an opportunity to interact with the children or participate in session as Covid has meant that people stay at home for now. We thank each and every volunteer for their patience and support and wish them good health until we can all be back in the arena again doing what we love and making a difference in the lives of children with challenges.

This is the last report I will be writing as Chairperson. It has been four years of partnering, learning and growing SARDA Durban alongside amazing people. I will be around to support SARDA Durban always, it is in my blood! I leave the Committee knowing it is in very capable hands and look forward to seeing what the future holds with this dynamic team at the helm. Thank you to every person for your support, advice and input in so many areas. I used to say how much I learned and still do learn from the children who come to our Centre and now I can say I how much I have learned from the Management, supporters and Instructors of this amazing Organisation.

As we all face an uncertain future let us remember the words of a man who lived what he spoke:

“What counts in life is not the mere fact that we have lived. It is the difference we have made to the lives of others that will determine the significance of the life we lead.” Nelson Mandela

Tracey Cumming