

# *ANNUAL REPORT 2009/2010*



***Cresset House***

Residential and Work  
Facilities for Adults with  
Intellectual Disabilities

Cresset House is a residential and work facility for adults with intellectual disability and is registered as:

a Public Benefit Organisation in terms of the Income Tax Act 1962 (number) as a Non Profit Organisation (Act 71 of 1997) 003-310 NPO (18/11/13/4637) As a B-BBEE status level 4 (four) compliant organisation

## **VISION**

To facilitate the highest possible degree of fulfilment achievable, on a financial sustainable basis, for every resident with intellectual disability – both as an individual and as a member of the community.

## **MISSION**

Provide care based on the extended family concept in such a way that psychological, health, safety, material and spiritual needs are provided for in a loving and caring atmosphere.

Ensure a stable, hygienic and stimulating environment.

Provide meaningful work resulting in a sense of dignity and self worth.

## **VALUES**

Honesty and integrity

Accountability

Community Service

Spiritual values based on Christianity

Manage the land organically (Green Code)

Commit to operational and environmental sustainability

Embracing cultural diversity



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*Cresset House*

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The previous Boards of Cresset House, over many years, have laid the foundation for good governance and oversight. The 2009-2010 Board has continued along this road, whilst focusing on actions that help us to achieve better results, so that our primary beneficiaries, the villagers, get the best possible benefits from life at Cresset House.

I would like to thank the Staff and Board for the sustained effort over the past 12 months. Many things have been achieved and there have been some noteworthy milestones. In particular I wish to recognize the invaluable contribution made by Board members in assisting the CEO and staff, to make sure that we comply with the many policies, rules and regulations that govern our operation. This is the responsibility of a Board. But I would like to also acknowledge the other ways in which the Board members have engaged in the day to day activities and operations of Cresset in helping to expand the farming operation; in the establishment of a shop; and in addressing unresolved infrastructure and financial challenges.

Under the very capable direction of the CEO, Elrina van Schaardenburgh, matters most important to Cresset House, have been managed with diligence and compassion. Elrina has succeeded in bringing together a team of dedicated and hardworking staff. Improvements in almost all aspects of the daily operations have been evident, from the baking of bread to the farming of lettuces; from the management of staff expectations to the daily needs of the villagers; from the effective compliance with Government requirements to the success in receiving and accounting for much needed funds from the National Lottery Board. We are all most appreciative of the funds received from the National Lottery, without which Cresset would not have been able to fulfill important aspects of our vision and mission.

Elrina and the team have been available at all times and have made the extra effort required to deal with the challenges associated with running Cresset House.

We are all very conscious of the tasks that lie ahead. The new board will need to guide the organization through times of greater economic pressure and increased expectations. They will need to look into ways of addressing a plan for Cresset to become more inclusive by providing support and linkages for previously disadvantaged members of the community. They will need to provide the oversight so as to guide the task of restructuring the financial systems and controls and the continual improvement of the quality of the workshops, the facilities and the care.

I wish the staff and new Board success in the coming year.

Steven Sack  
Chairman



*Cresset House*

## OVERVIEW

The past year has been quite an eventful one for Cresset House. We have had many challenges, achievements, disappointments and changes. The organization is about people and rendering services. All other activities are secondary and we should always remember where the focus should be. If residents and staff can experience happiness and fulfilment at Cresset House, we have done well!

New positions for Cresset House that were created and/or filled during the 2009/2010 period were that of Social worker, Rebecca Rakale; Basil Rampersad (Workmaster - wood workshop), Olivia van Schalkwyk (Office administrator), Samuel Rwodzi (Project Manager – Agriculture), PJ Vermeulen (Driver) and Charles Moyo (Baker). They have all made a substantial contribution to village life and activities at Cresset.

We also had to say goodbye to two House mothers, Pam & Elsa, who each served 9 years in these positions. They have given much to the organization and we will surely miss them. On the other hand it gives our villagers the opportunity to adapt, accept change and then grow through the experience.

In spite of many changes in many ways, staff have accepted the challenge and most have risen to the occasion to become part of a team with a goal in view. A dedicated and committed team can form the backbone of any organization and I believe that we are on our way to achieve just that.

Many systems, documents and policies had to be revisited to ensure that Cresset House stays relevant and also perscribes to good practice and governance. There is still room for improvement but the process will be an ongoing one.

Our biggest challenge is the one of visibility in the general community. This will allow for support in many ways and probably more than any other, that of financial support and investment. Corporate Social Investment towards Cresset House is almost non existent and if we want to ensure financial sustainability, this would have to change.

I believe that Cresset House is a special place offering unique services and with an immense amount of potential. If staff, parents & family, friends & donors, and the community in general, commit to take Cresset House to the next level, the results will be an astonishing one. The question is – are we up to the challenge?!?!

May we all stand and work together in achieving our goals and dreams for this “home away from home” for all our current and future villagers.

Thanks to you all for past, present and future commitment!  
May God bless you abundantly for it!

Elrina van Schaardenburgh  
Chief Executive Officer



*Cresset House*



## OUR VILLAGERS

We currently have 55 villagers at Cresset House – 51 residents and 4 day villagers. They stay in the six houses on the premises - Sunset, Berrylane, Merlyn, Orchard, Innesfree and Tanglewood. The villagers form part of the house community in helping and assisting in chores around the house, as would any family member in a day to day home setup. Meals are prepared in each of the houses and shared around “extra sized” dining room tables.

Trial visitors are coming on a continuous basis – it is usually for one day, two weeks and then three months.

The ages of our villagers range between 19 and 69 and the gender split is 32 men and 23 women. Most of our villagers have been at Cresset House for many years – some as long as 30 and even 40 years. It is therefore understood why we refer to Cresset House as “Home away from home”!

During the day all the villagers are assigned to work areas. This could be in any of the workshops, gardens or homes. They take pride in the fact that they have responsibilities and we are constantly aiming to have all of them involved in meaningful work.

Evening and weekend activities are plentiful – such as bible study, hobby group, knitting group, coffee bar, pilates, music, etc. Through the year we invite other centres for evening parties which are thoroughly enjoyed by all. We are also privileged to have many groups, service clubs and even individuals preparing special meals and celebrations. We are immensely thankful to them for that!

Life at Cresset House is definitely not boring!

*If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music he hears, however measured far away. (Henry David Thoreau)*



**Cresset House**



## SOCIAL SERVICES

Cresset House has been privileged to have had a number of social services offered to our villagers by volunteers from the community. These include psychologists from Mental Health, students from the psychology department of Midrand Graduate Institute, also two auxiliary social work students from the Department of Health and Social Development, assigned to us for the year. A group of students from the department Sport and Recreation at University of Pretoria also spent a number of sessions with our villagers.

We were fortunate in having Rachel Dreyer, a German volunteer, for 11 months at Cresset. As a qualified social worker she has contributed in an immensely valuable way – amongst others compiling feedback/questionnaire forms that she completed with all our villagers on their experience and thoughts of Cresset house.

Rebecca Rakale, our social worker who was appointed in January 2009 on a 3 day a week basis, has since July 2010 filled this position full time. Amongst her many tasks are Individual Development Programmes for every villager, community projects and facilitating interaction with the departments of social welfare, health, police, community projects and forums.



*Cresset House*



## WORKSHOPS

In January 2009 we reopened the WOODWORMS, our wood workshop, after being closed for a few years. Basil Rampersad has been running this workshop and is doing a sterling job. Carpentry related maintenance work is also done by him and his team in the houses, workshops and offices.

The bakery has increased its days of operation from a few days a month to 3 or 4 days a week. We have subsequently employed a baker and besides bread for the houses (as well as substantial orders for the neighbourhood) they also bake biscuits, birthday cakes, Chelsea buns, doughnuts, Christmas cakes, etc.

The Stimulation centre is operational as usual but has branched off into a second group called the Craft centre. Their products include bead work, fabric painting, knitting, sewing and general crafts. Many of these articles are sold in the Cresset House Shop.

Our "outdoor" workshop, the organic vegetable garden, is still flourishing. The villagers assigned to that work area enjoy growing wonderful veggies for use in the houses as well as substantial sales to the public and staff.

All in all – our workshops provide meaningful work and activities to all our villagers from 8h00 to 12h00 and 14h00 to 16h30 from Monday to Friday.



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## ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Our unique features at Cresset House include:

Planting organic vegetables and herbs for own use & for sale to clients.

Making our own organic pesticides & compost.

Worm farming.

Recycling paper, cardboard, glass, batteries, plastic & tins.

All electrical bulbs have been replaced by energy saving bulbs.

Old computer components & scrap metal are taken to designated collection points.

Only natural cleaning products are used in the houses (no chemicals!).

Instead of a municipal sewage system, we annually recycle 8 million litres of waste water through a Reed bed system that was built in 1994. This water is then used on the lands, orchards and house gardens.



Our aim is to invest not only in the lives of our residents and staff but also in the preservation of our environment – ensuring a better life for all – today and tomorrow!



*Cresset House*

## TUNNELS

10 Tunnels were erected in 2008 with funds received from the National Lotteries Distribution Trust Fund (LOTTO). Three Cresset staff members were sent for three days intensive training on tunnel farming. A further four members from the local community have been employed and trained in tunnel farming skills and together with six of our residents, they produce organic vegetables and herbs for own use as well as for selling to clients in the community. Some of our products are: selection of lettuces, parsley, leeks, spring onions, peppers, chillies, coriander, Chinese cabbage, horseradish, rocket, turnips, beetroot, etc.

No chemicals are used inside or outside the tunnels. Pesticides – when needed - are made from herbs (chillies, garlic, etc) and sprayed to eradicate any possible pests. Only organic compost is used and it is also made on the premises. With our worm farm – worm “tea” is produced, which is diluted with water and then used as a highly effective nutrient for the seedlings.

Samuel Rwodzi, a qualified agronomist, has been running the project since January 2010 and is constantly training all staff involved in agricultural departments.

A borehole was sunk in February 2009 and substantial water was found – more than enough to supply all the tunnels with an irrigation system!



*Cresset House*

# *The* *Thom Sarie* **CRESSET** *Craft Shop*

On 29 August 2009, Cresset House opened its long planned Craft Shop in what used to be the Jumble room. The name was decided on by one of our staff members in a competition run for that purpose. ThomSarie was the winning name! It is a combination of Thomas and Sarie – two of our villagers that passed away in recent years.

Whenever we have social functions our shop is stocked with crafts, veggies & herbs as well as bread, biscuits and other bakery items. We have had a number of items made and donated by parents as well to boost our sales. Villagers and staff are equally proud of this project of ours.



## **COMMUNITY GARDEN AND PROJECTS**



In taking responsibility for our community, we make a portion of land - including the supply of water, compost, advice and assistance - available to a family from the nearby informal settlement. This enables them to grow vegetables for their own use and to generate an income by selling the surplus.

We also render services, advice and support to a local Children's Home in the community. Staff and villagers from our and their project interact with each other and the principal of "Connecting Communities" is developed and nourished in this partnership.



*Cresset House*

## HOW YOU CAN HELP.....



## *Cresset House*

Volunteer – your time and skills for the benefit of our villagers using crafts, music, gardening, therapy or other skills.

Contracts – we do contracts for companies filling envelopes, presentation boxes, packaging, etc.

Casual Day – support us annually and get your stickers directly from us.  
Order products from us – Vegetables, herbs, bread, biscuits, Christmas cakes & handcraft articles.

Sponsorship – contribute towards fees for a less privileged villager.  
Bequests – do a bequest in favour of Cresset House and leave a legacy to be remembered by.

Financial contributions and donations of any amount – our Bank details are:

**Cresset House  
Standard Bank  
Midrand Branch  
Account number: 201144468**

## **THANK YOU:**

Our sincere thanks and gratitude go to the following people without whom, Cresset House would struggle to survive and function effectively:

**The Board of Directors  
Parents & Families  
Cresset House Support Group  
All our Volunteers  
Donors  
Staff  
PricewaterhouseCoopers (Auditors)  
National Lottery Distribution Trust Fund**

May you all be blessed for your continued involvement with Cresset House!

True generosity requires more of us than kindly impulse. Above all it requires imagination – the capacity to see people in all their perplexities and needs, and to know how to expend ourselves effectively for them.

I.A.R. Wylie





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