



Western Cape
Older Person's
Forum
embracing the voice of the elderly

NEWSLETTER

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WESTERN CAPE OLDER PERSONS' FORUM AGM 2012

2012 WCOPF Board of Directors with the co-ordinator



CONTENTS

| | Pg No |
|-------------------------------------------------|-------|
| WCOPF AGM 2012 | 1 |
| Matla A Tlou | 1 |
| Police Protecting Older Persons? | 2 |
| Police Inaction in the Western Cape | 2 |
| Health Issues | 3 |
| Foster grants to grannies | 3 |
| Reregistration of SASSA's New pay-out system | 4 |
| After the Golden Games | 4 |

*Mary Turok presented with a bouquet of
flowers by Ms Ethelwynne Pietersen*



The WCOPF held their 4th Annual General Meeting on 20th September 2012 at Nuwerus Tehuis in Worcester. "The AGM takes place at a time when many challenges are facing older persons. The WCOPF needs to be a loud voice and to respond more quickly to these challenges", said Mary Turok in her last address as Chairperson. The setting up of Regional Forums is an important task in the coming year. The AGM agreed that the existing management committee serve until 2013 but that the constitution be changed at the next AGM in order to make the committee representative of older persons throughout the province. Alvira Kleinhans was elected Chairperson and Soekie Smit Secretary.

We thank Mary Turok for her excellent service to the WCOPF for the past three years. What a phenomenal woman. Mary had the vision, the passion, and energy to take on this task in driving this Forum from inception. She has seen this "baby" grow and is now allowing it to run. Thank you Mary for your contribution to the Forum and still continuing to serve on the board of directors.. We also take this opportunity to wish Mary Turok a Happy 80th Birthday which she celebrated on 20th October 2012. Other board members who celebrated their birthdays in October are : Ms Kiewietz, Mrs Quadalele & Ms Du Preez

MATLA A TLOU

(one with the strength of an elephant)



George Bizos turns 84 in November. He has earned numerous awards for his life-long record as a human rights lawyer under apartheid. But he is not about to retire. He is to represent the Human Rights Commission at the Commission of Inquiry into the Marikana massacre on August 16th. He is not in perfect health but when he offered to resign from the Legal Resource Centre a few years ago he was told: "You have forgotten things that we have yet to learn so rather stay on". (Mail and Guardian 14/9/12)

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Are the Police protecting our older persons?

On August 8th, National Women's Day, the President urged women to use the Domestic Violence Act "to protect themselves." Unfortunately, those responsible for implementing this Act are not helping women. The Independent Police Investigative Directorate told Parliament's police committee on 7th August that only 39 of the 263 police stations are complying with the Act. Even where a court issues a protection order under the Act this is not enforced by the police.

Frail elderly women are particularly vulnerable to domestic violence and abuse although fear often prevents them from reporting it. In theory they are protected by the Domestic Violence Act and the Older Persons Act. In practice they get little or no protection. SAOPF Coordinator, Roedolf Kay, made presentations to the police committee on violence against older persons and police inaction.

WHAT DOES THE LAW SAY?

The 1998 Domestic Violence Act says:

- Any member of the SA Police Service must at the scene of an incident of domestic violence (or when the incident is reported) render assistance to the complainant including helping them to find a suitable shelter and obtain medical treatment (Clause 2(a)).
- A police officer may without warrant arrest any respondent at the scene whom he reasonably suspects of having committed an offence containing an element of violence against the complainant (Clause 3).

The 2006 Older Persons Act complements the Domestic Violence Act and goes further:

- Any professional who concludes that an older person is in need of care and protection must report this (Clause 25 (1)).
- Any person who suspects that an older person has been abused or suffers an abuse-related injury must immediately notify a social worker or a police official. Failure to comply is an offence. (Clause 26 (1))

As Fred Khumalo, writing about "yet another savage beating of a woman" in the Sunday Times on 2nd September, says: "We have some impressive laws designed specifically to protect our women and children...let's use these laws with appropriate vigor."

POLICE INACTION IN THE WESTERN CAPE

Pat Lindgren from Action on Elder Abuse has noted three recent cases of police neglect of older women:

- ◆ A woman suffering from dementia spent three days in and around the Grassy Park police station before she was noticed and referred to Victim Support who managed to identify and return her home.
- ◆ Police in the Southern Cape would not act in a case of neglect of an older person
- ◆ Police in Bishop Lavis do not know how to handle a complaint against an abusive daughter.



Pat's advice to older persons, their relatives and the public is: report cases where elder abuse or neglect is occurring or suspected and make a note of the name of the police officer you report to, the date and time. If nothing happens within a day or ask Action on Elder Abuse (083 274 6620) to follow it up.

HEALTH ISSUES

HEARING AWARENESS



September was Hearing Awareness month and the SA Association of Audiologists is raising awareness among the public of hearing health. This year, with the cooperation of Cape Town City Health, SAAA will be training nursing staff clinics in four under-served communities and enhancing their knowledge and skills in identifying ear pathologies. The earlier these problems are addressed the better the outcome. The public clinics involved are in Hout Bay, Ocean View, Wallacedene and Mfuleni. For more information phone Tertia on 094 514 2086 or tertiadi@gmail.com or visit www.audiologysa.co.za.

DIABETES AND FOOT CARE

Many lower limb amputations could be avoided if people received proper foot care, says the podiatrist Joye Janari of the Foot Care Foundation of South Africa. The foundation clinic opened in Rehoboth Age Exchange in Hanover Park on 2 July 2012. It is available to residents at Rehoboth and G H Starck Centre and people attending day care and has plans to make the service available to the broader community. At a cost of R50, the clinic offers basic foot care in a clean environment as well as patient and staff education about foot hygiene and the importance of good shoes. Torn socks cause constriction and diabetics' feet can get an infection very easily. Foot complications are among the most serious and costly complications of diabetes mellitus. Amputation of all or part of a lower limb is usually preceded by a foot ulcer. Treatment of foot ulcers and close monitoring could reduce amputation by up to 85%. (Athlone News 29/8/12)



Similar services can be found in Kensington day hospital and Salt River. A diabetic support group meets at 2.15 on the third Thursday of the month in the Fish Hoek Civic Centre. A guest speaker is invited. For more details call Gerald Jeftha on 021 786 4540.



FOSTER GRANTS TO GRANNIES

Foster grants may no longer be available to grandparents caring for orphaned grand-children following a High Court judgment in Gauteng that only aunts, uncles or cousins qualify. Grand-parents do not qualify because they have "a duty to support" their grand-children. Foster grants are reviewed by the courts once a year so this judgment could influence a magistrate's to terminate a grant.

Because social workers and the courts are involved, the waiting list for foster grants is very long. The Department of Social Development has said that foster grants to grand-parents will not be suddenly stopped and a "kinship grant" is being planned to replace foster grants though this will be lower than a foster grant.



Grand-parents will have to raise their voices if they are to ensure an additional burden is not placed on their shoulders.



REPORT BACK ON MEETING WITH SASSA

The Coordinator and Chairperson of WCOPF attended a meeting at the Cape Town headquarters of SASSA on 4th September and were given an update on the payment of social grants by Cash Paymaster Services (CPS). The next meeting with SASSA will be held on 23 October at 10.00 – a presentation will be made by CPS. WCOPF Board members are urged to attend.

NICE TO SWIPE: STAGE 3 OF SASSA'S NEW PAY-OUT SYSTEM



The re-registration of all grant beneficiaries started in July 2012. The permanent master cards they receive can be swiped at Shoprite or another super-market from the 1st of the month in which the pension is due and cash and/or goods obtained. Bank ATMs can also be used but here will be a service fee.

SASSA is extending this scheme district by district and notifying the public of the dates to enroll by posters, pamphlets in 3 languages, advertisements and the radio at pay-points and what documents and information to bring. Re-registration in several districts is almost complete and ongoing in others. It started in Cape Town and Beaufort West on 2nd July, in Caledon, Paarl, Worcester, and Oudtshoorn on 3rd August and in Khayelitsha, Vredendal and Vredenburg on 3rd September.

Everyone receiving their grant at the post-office must re-register but those receiving their grant in their bank accounts will be re-registered next year. Reviews and the submitting of life certificates was suspended in April 2012 but review letters will be sent out as usual from January 2013.

Pensioners over 75 can request a home visit but if they choose to report to the pay-point they will get preferential treatment. There will also be an option for older persons to choose a pin or a finger-print but the machines have not yet been adjusted for this. Meanwhile pensioners are urged to keep the pin number safe and not attached to the card. It is also important to keep the master-cards safe as they could be cloned if they got into the wrong hands.

Queues at the pay-points are gradually getting shorter and in some districts have fallen from 2000 to 300. Next year the number of pay days will be reduced from 14 to 12 a month.



AFTER THE GOLDEN GAMES



1. AGE IN ACTION

In March 2012 senior athletes from the Boland and Overberg districts took part in sports days. Following a march past of participants sporting activities started, including bag races, tug-of-war, egg and spoon, golf, 'kierieloop', candle blowing, wheelchair races, ten-pin bowling, darts and athletics. In total 1,200 older persons attended the two events.

Local businesses supported the events by donating gifts of bottled water, transport, soup and bread. The local Department of Health pro-

vided medical services. The Breede Valley and Langeberg municipalities pledged their support.

For more information phone Marcel van Dyk on 021 423 0204

2. 2012 OLYMPIATRICS

On the heels of the Olympics and Paralympics in the U.K., the Olympiatrics (olympics for geriatrics) took place at Vygieskraal Stadium in Athlone on 4th October. 30 Seniors clubs participated, 17 of them supported by Ikamva Labantu. The competition started with an opening



ceremony and march past the judges. Teams were dressed in their club gear and drum majorettes led the way with charisma and style. Track and field events included an egg-and-spoon race, sack races, duck walk. Seated events for the frail included hoop shoot and ring toss. Noncedo club from Masiphumelele was overall winner in the frail events and Nonkqubela club from Phillipi with top honours in the medals tally. (Falso Bay Echo 11 October 2012) The Olympiatrics were initiated by G.H. Starke Centre 27 years ago.

Board of Directors

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* Co-ordinator : Mr Dean John Harris