



SASOHN Western Cape celebrates Occupational Health Month

The Western Cape (WC) Branch of the South African Society of Occupational Health Nursing Practitioners (SASOHN) was privileged to host three events in the Western Cape during May 2017.

The first important event, held on 3 May 2017, recognised Occupational Health Week, of which the objectives are: to integrate health and safety into overall business goals and objectives; to create awareness and improve relationships with management to increase health and safety in the workplace for productivity and economic development; and to provide information and knowledge regarding the role of the occupational health nurse practitioner (OHNP) within the workplace.

The SASOHN WC 'Managers Breakfast', sponsored by Consol Glass at their Bellville premises, was well attended by SASOHN members and their managers. Dr Terry Berelowitz, an occupational medical practitioner, who organised the Occupational Health Week in South Africa in the early 1990s, was our guest speaker. He painted an inspiring picture of the OHNP as a company's greatest asset, in that the OHNP's diverse expertise, acquired not only through learning but also by experience on the factory floor, makes occupational health a unique specialisation in nursing. In addition, OHNPs add value, not only to the companies where they work, but also to the lives of the workers and their families, beyond the factory gates.

International Nurses Day was the next prestigious event celebrated on 12 May in Blouberg, with members overlooking beautiful Table Bay while enjoying a sumptuous breakfast. The event was generously sponsored by Pathcare who also provided the guest speaker, Dr Younus Essack, who gave a fascinating talk entitled 'Putting the "U" in Urine Analysis'. Urine analysis is one of the most basic tests nurses perform on a daily basis as a routine part of the health surveillance programme. Yet one tends to forget the valuable information that can be gleaned from this test. On humorous reflection, the topic was co-incidentally presented at the Blue 'PEE' ter Hotel. With rejuvenated enthusiasm, all members, students and honorary life members present renewed their commitment to our caring profession with the Nurses' Pledge of Service. After breakfast, the nurses working at Sivuyile Centre for people with disabilities, and Miles Bowker House for people with psychiatric conditions, were recognised for their dedication to the noble profession of nursing through gift pens and fancy biscuits, sponsored by SASOHN WC. SASOHN WC continues to support these facilities as part of the social responsibility outreach programme. The afternoon followed with a visit to the nurse residents of Clarence House, where residents were treated to decadent cupcakes. Clarence House is a home for retired nurses, and Jenny Upton, the founder of the Theatre Nurses Society, is one of the many residents.

Last, but not least, SASOHN WC also hosted the 12th Academic Day in



SASOHN WC celebrating International Nurses Day at Clarence House for retired nurses in May 2017

Photograph: supplied by SASOHN WC

Cape Town at the Town House Hotel on 19 May, with the theme, 'Norms and standards in occupational health'. Delegates from the Scientific Committee on Occupational Health Nursing provided the event with an international flavour. The activities of this day were reported in an earlier issue of the Journal. As always, SASOHN WC received the support of service providers in the occupational health sector. Our sincere thanks go to Medisa for sponsoring delegates' gift bags. Other exhibitors included Amtronix, Momentum OCSA, Onsite X-rays, Ampath, Image Makers, Lancet Laboratories, Endomed, Homemed, Prisma, SSEM Mthembu and The Paramedic Shop. To top off the experience, Hands-On-Therapy boosted delegates' moods and energy with neck and shoulder massages.

Thank you all for making these events a success.

MANDELA DAY AT THANDI HOUSE

Thandi House is a faith-based, long-term, family home administered and managed by Mark and Rene Morcom. It is situated on the north side of Pietermaritzburg and has the objective of caring for the broken and forgotten children of the town, giving them the love and family that every individual deserves. The facility cares for as many as 25 children, and includes young girls coping with unplanned pregnancies. Thandi House opened its doors in 2009 after a large number of new-born babies were found dead in trash cans, gutters, fields and public toilets. One of the interventions was the installation of a baby box (a computerised box installed in a church wall) which has created a legal and safe way to abandon an unwanted baby without harming the baby. The box has provided a safe option to desperate mothers, and has reduced the number of abandoned babies to almost nil currently. Thandi House is a non-profit, tax exempt charity in South Africa, operating under the name ASSIST, with no financial assistance from government (www.thandihouse.com).

This year, the SASOHN Executive pledged, as part of SASOHN's social responsibility initiatives, to donate all funds used for Polly-anna gifts to this charity. A total of R2 000 was collected and handed over to SASOHN KZN Inland to purchase groceries and consumables for the facility. In the photograph, Mark, Rene and their son are seen receiving the donation on behalf of Thandi House. A sincere thank you is extended to all for their generous contributions towards this worthy cause!

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Mark, Rene and Joshua Morcom unpacking the groceries at Thandi House

Photograph: by Sr Morag Roberts