



The 5th month of our 46th financial year will be remembered for its milestones. In August 2008 staff member Paulina Masoka retired after 32 years of service. Also in August I received notification, relating to our 2007 application, that the National Lottery Distribution Trust Fund would make its biggest ever allocation to ABCA, R1 501 670. Following on just days later came a phone call from a local law firm advising me that ABCA is to receive a generous bequest from The Estate Late Bate in the amount of R500 000 plus interest.

And this after the Milde McWilliams Trust had earlier in the year allocated a substantial R160 000 towards the renovation of Cuylerholme Rooms with a commitment for R160 000 to follow the next year. We had been waiting so long for this type of funding to come in that it was almost too good to believe.

I am truly thankful to the Board for their wise decisions on the utilisation of undesignated funds, to ABCA staff for sharing in the joy of the windfall and ensuring that our service recipients received maximum benefit in terms of designated funds and to our other donors for their ongoing support that is also so vital to us.

I also appreciate the Board's sanctioning of our networking role that sees me attending Welfare Forum & Advisory Board meetings monthly in Port Elizabeth and occasionally in East London. Unfortunately, there is no positive news to report yet from these deliberations as the issue of the reduced social work subsidies for 2008/09 remains unresolved. However, the negotiations are not closed and are still carrying over into the new year. The NGO sector has to remain positive in this regard and continue to fight for adequate government funding for the services rendered as partners in service delivery on behalf of the Department of Social Development.

The reality of the reduced/nil subsidy increase meant that the sum received for the year from subsidies only rose by R68 890 to be R989 061 and this due to increased claims (higher utilisation) and not increased funding. However, ABCA is still very grateful to be a service delivery partner with the Department of Social Development and we enjoy a good working relationship with our colleagues in the District Office.

ABCA's role for the future will be very much determined by the Older Persons Act No. 13 of 2006. ABCA social work staff attended a "Train the Trainer" course on the Act during the year. Since then they have devoted a lot of time to spreading information on the content of the Act as it relates to the improvement of the rights of Older Persons. We still await formalisation of the Regulations before the Act will become fully functional.

This 46th report will again highlight the services we have provided and gives the reader some small insight into how ABCA works towards achieving our vision of promoting independence and empowering people to lead meaningful and fulfilled lives. I thank the ABCA Board, staff, volunteers and donors for their constant support and sterling efforts.