



Organisation for and from People with Disabilities South Africa

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NEWSLETTER

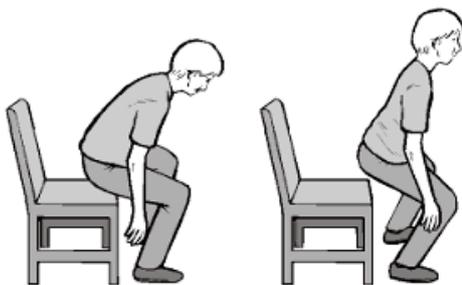
NUMBER 19 MAY 2018

IM FREE AGAIN

The following story I write on behalf of a friend. She cannot write it herself and asked me to tell her story. I have sent it to the OPD and ask them to put it in their Newsletter as encouragement to other people, that you are the only one that can change your life with the right attitude.

I have to say thank you to the people from the OPD. They helped me get my freedom back. I had given up any hope of walking again and being independent with dignity.

A few years ago, I had a bad stroke. After a long struggle in hospital, I was sent home with the message that I had to accept that I was paralysed and would never walk or talk properly again. I believed the doctors and nurses and lay in my bed, hoping that my life would end as soon as possible. I was only 32 years old and far too young for this, but for me my life was over. For everything I had to make a kind of noise and it took a long time for people to understand what I wanted. This was not a life! I don't know how it happened, but it happened. The OPD came to visit, they stood next to my bed talking and asking questions, but I could not answer. They insisted that I communicate and taught me to say yes or no by blinking my eyes. They also pushed me to try to use my hands. Sometimes I was angry with them, but there was no way to tell them.



The OPD was relentless with their help and slowly I felt something changing in my body and mind. My brain told me I had to fight and by fighting, I would be able to make them go away.

After many painful and frustrating hours of effort, I found I could move some of my fingers and then my hand and later my arm. And still they came and pushed me harder. They told me that I was the only one who could change my life. I started to believe it and my family also saw the improvements in my body. After more than half a year I could sit a little bit, could move my arms and my feet. A year later I could sit in a wheelchair and go out to friends and family. Finally a taste of freedom! With

Mission:
To create equal opportunities, through awareness and access to all kind of facilities to realise that all persons can participate in a barrier free society.

Vision:
People must function in full dignity and independently and with respect in the community.

We can only do this from own experience and knowledge and the expertise of our members.

If someone wants to receive these newsletters directly by email, please send us an email with the subject "Newsletter".

You are allowed to copy the newsletter as many times you want.

The OPD is not only for people who are in need of a wheelchair. We advise also on accessibility and other issues regarding all kind of disabilities.

In this number:

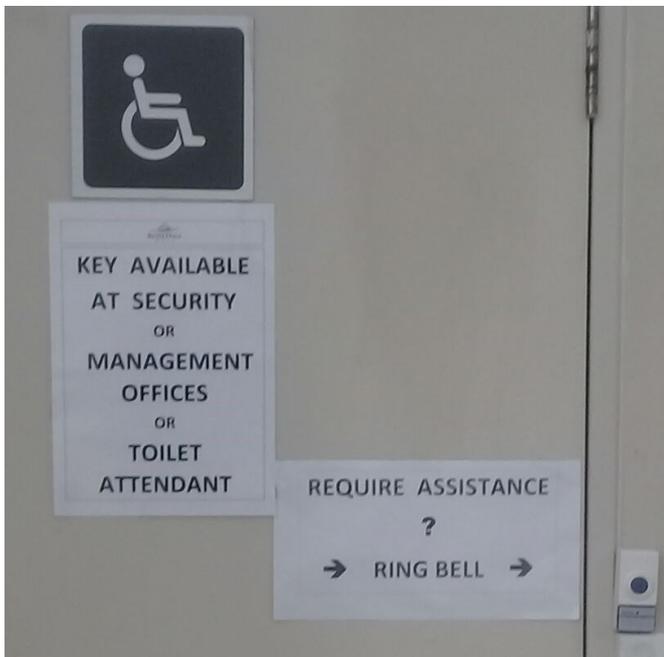
- ◆ I am free again
- ◆ Is this right or wrong?
- ◆ Wheelchair repair
- ◆ Mobility scooter
- ◆ Agenda
- ◆ Empowerment
- ◆ Accessibility

the help from the OPD I continued fighting, and now, believe it or not, I can stand and walk a few steps. I also have found a way to communicate. I believe that in the future I will walk and talk again and live as an independent person again.

IS THIS RIGHT OR WRONG???

Yesterday we were shopping in a Mall and I needed to use the toilet. Not a problem at all, there are plenty toilets in a Mall. We found one and I tried to open the door. But it was locked. Then I saw the message on the door that the key was with the cleaner. We walked around (I say this because I see my wheelchair as my legs) but we couldn't find her. There were other cleaners, but none had the key, and proceeded to look for the key holder..

In the mean time I was asking myself; "Is this right? Other people who need a toilet



could go when they want and I ????" One of the cleaners came to me and said; "Sorry lady, but she is on the toilet herself and is coming just now." "What do you say? She is on a toilet and I have to wait?" "Yes, she also needs the toilet sometimes, like you."

I was surprised and angry. "But she can go whenever she wants, and I have to wait for her? Do you think that is fair? I need a toilet. Now. Please, do

We are looking for help for:

- Visit people at home,
- Get people to the clinics/hospital,
- To do admin work,
- Money to get so the organisation get going on,
- Maintain wheelchairs etc.

something."

"But, lady, there are so many toilets, you can use one of the others."

"Why do you think I want to go to that special one? "

Other people stopped and were staring at me. One of the ladies said; "I am a nurse, I can help you to go to the normal toilet." I stared at her. Could not believe my ears. Couldn't they see I was in a wheelchair?" "No thank you for your offer, but I don't need anyone's help. The only person who may help me, is my husband. But I want to go by myself. Why is that door closed?"

"That door is closed because otherwise non wheelchair users make use of that toilet. And that is not right. So, we have to close that door." One of the cleaners said. Many people around me agreed with the cleaner. "Please people, do something, I need the toilet NOW."

After waiting more than 15 minutes the lady with the key came, looked at me and said; "Sorry, but I also had to go to the toilet and I am not allowed to use one of these toilets, we have our own toilet and yes, you must wait a little while, until I am back." She unlocked the door, opened it and said;

This is your place for an advert.

Design costs are not included.

Rates for one time:

50x90mm R100

75x90mm R150

For more information:

Phone: 0761452681

Email: info@opd-sa.co.za

"There you go. Oh, sorry, let me first take all my stuff out."

After I used the toilet I went to the manager of the Mall and lodged a complaint. The manager told me that the policy of the Mall was that only wheelchair users could use the disabled toilet. It was for my own benefit, so I didn't have to wait for non-disabled people who were using the toilet.

I tried to explain that the symbol does not say that the bathroom is only for wheelchair users etc. But no, they were only following the policy and the wish of a huge organisation of this country.

I wrote to the South African Human Rights Commission, who said that a toilet for disabled persons may only be locked, if ALL the other toilets are also locked. Locking only the disabled toilet is a discriminative action.

WHEELCHAIR REPAIR CENTRE

While we still await money to build this centre, we have made huge progress. With the sponsorship money from AMANDLA OMOYA TRUST, we bought tools that make the work much easier.

We bought a spray gun to paint the wheelchairs, so the paint lasts longer. Parts and special spanners for the replacement of seats, wheels etc. were also purchased. In this way we could help many more people with a temporary wheelchair and walking frames.

MOBILITY SCOOTER

It is most concerning as to what people are writing about the mobility scooter. For more than 32 years, I have been using a mobility scooter myself, and have come to understand the pros and cons of this mode of transport.

There are two main categories of mobility scooters e.g. The 3 wheeler and the 4 wheeler. In my opinion, the 3 wheeler is far safer than a 4 wheeler. Consider the humble office chair; why do you think an office chair on wheels has 5 wheels and not four? That is because of the safety and stability

of the chair. Buggies that use dirt roads have 3 wheels and not 4 and wheelchairs, specially made for rural areas; also have 3 wheels and not 4. So, the conclusion must be that scoot mobiles with 3 wheels are safer and much more stable.



First, we must realise being safe on a mobility scooter depends on the person using this kind of transport. It is very important that the user have a good balance and can walk a little bit. Users without legs, quadriplegics or paraplegics should be very weary of using a scoot mobile, as they need to remember that the mobility scooter can and should never replace an electrical wheelchair.

Another very important thing to understand is that riding on a mobility scooter is not easy without lessons. One needs to learn to practice how a mobility scooter stops and starts. EG. To stop the mobility scooter, you must release the accelerator. The moment there is a dangerous situation, your instinct is to grab something and not to let go. If you do this on a mobility scooter, the scoot mobile will go flying instead of stopping.

The OPD-SA is willing to held a workshop at your place, please contact us.
The subject can be for instance:
Accessibility, Diabetes, Wheelchairs, Awareness.

People must practice as much as possible to make this a habit. Remember safety first!

AGENDA 2018

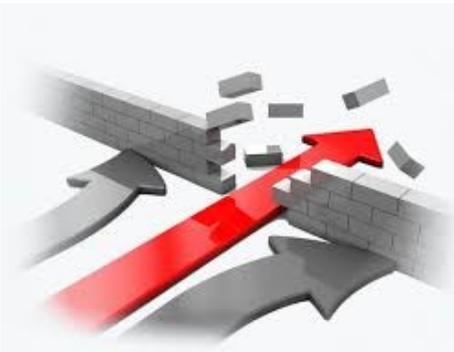
The next three dates are very important for everybody.



12th June there will be a workshop about; "Different disabilities and wheelchairs".
24th July the AGM of the OPD will be held.
11th September there will be a workshop about Diabetes

EMPOWERMENT

We can not talk about empowerment



without looking at the challenges and obstacles that people face on a daily basis. We know that many

people face difficulties and hardships at one stage or another. We also know that

people who experience disabilities, experience barriers and hardships more frequently.

And it is not always easy or possible for them to overcome these barriers. Not everyone is aware of these barriers. E.g.: To gain access to the buildings of the Kouga Municipality, or restaurants or shops etc., can severely limit a person from participating in everyday life, as they are not catered for. While the constitution of South Africa calls this illegal and discriminatory.

To empower people with a disability, the community must remove the barriers and plan correctly.

ACCESSIBILITY

In the UN-convention, which is valid in South Africa, it states that government Parties (read municipality) have to enable persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life.

Government Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure that persons with disabilities have access on an equal basis.

Translated to a practical example; The municipality decided to build new houses near Pellsrus for the elderly and disabled.

At the same time, they decided not to build paving in this area due to financial constraints. With this decision the municipality made the area inaccessible for elderly people and people with a disability.

They are not following the UN-convention at all. This is unfortunate, as they have now excluded several people, from living there.

INCOME AND TAX ACCOUNTING

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