



Quarterly Newsletter for Friends of Golden Arrow Bus Services

INTERCHANGE

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2013 in review

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Golden Arrow's Mission:
To operate safe, reliable passenger transport services designed to meet the needs of our customers and by applying sound business principles, to create a secure future for the company and its people.

Golden Arrow's Missie:
Om veilige, betroubare passasiersvervoerdienste te lewer, gerig op die behoeftes van ons klante en, deur gesonde sakebeginsels toe te pas, 'n seker toekoms vir die maatskappy en sy mense te skep.

Umnqophiso kaGolden Arrow:
Ukufaka iinkonzo zothutho luka wonkewonke ezikhuselekileyo kunye nezithembekileyo kwaye nezilungiselelwe ukukhawulelana neemfuno zabakhweli bebhasi zalenkampani oku kufezekiswa ngokusebenzisa imithetho-siseko yoshishino ephilileyo, nokwakha ikamva elikhuselekileyo lwalenkampani kunye nabantu bayo.

Nic Cronjé
CEO: Golden Arrow Bus Services

NOTE *from* NIC



Quo Vadis Taxis?

Taxis have become an integral part of the public transport system of metropolitan South Africa. Its proliferation can be traced to the Transport Deregulation Act of 1988, which made the minibus taxi legal and paved the way to the taxi industry as it exists in its current form. Today, the taxi industry carries over 60% of South Africa's commuters and recent legislative efforts have been aimed at formalising and re-regulating what has been generally perceived as an 'out-of-control' sector.

It is estimated that the formalisation of the taxi industry will require a three-fold increase in the budgetary allocation for road based public transport services. If this is considered in conjunction with the underfunding of scheduled bus services and the high costs associated with the IRT system, the question arises as to whether this is in fact the most optimal and pragmatic route to efficient road based public transport?

Unlike the commuter bus sector, the taxi industry does not have high barriers to entry, neither is it burdened by operational protocols such as maintaining holding areas, positioning for scheduled trips and dead kilometrage. In addition to this, the industry generally circumvents the costs associated with basic conditions of employment regulations, all of which, if aggregated, amounts to marginal operating costs.

This has enabled the industry to charge full economic fares and to grow organically in relation to rising urbanisation trends. Like the informal retail sector offsets the inability of the formal economy to respond to overall consumer demands and to create sufficient job opportunities for new entrants to the labour market, so the informality of the taxi industry fulfils a similar function in the public transport space.

Through accurate market analysis, taxis and expanded scheduled bus services could effectively fill gaps in the current public transport system. Contracting Authorities could further enhance these functions by improving and installing appropriate infrastructure as part of the incremental up scaling of the public transport system.

Superimposing the compliance costs that come along with formalisation will undoubtedly inhibit the industry's flexibility and responsiveness to filling the vacuum of non – mainstream public transport services. However, in the interest of commuter welfare, roadworthy vehicles, professionally qualified drivers and bona fide operating licences have to be non-negotiable prerequisites for taxi operations.

In tandem with the other modes, the industry will, through negotiated commercial partnerships and structured operating licencing, continue to play a vital role in the integrated public transport networks envisaged in the National Land Transport Act. This will have to be done in a manner that optimally utilises the public funding that the transport portfolio is able to exact from the fiscus amidst other growing social priorities. ☞

Chairman's Message

On the eve of the 10th anniversary of HCI's acquisition of Golden Arrow Bus Services (GABS), we continue to be optimistic about the prospects in the commuter bus industry, despite the rapidly changing operating environment of the public transport sector.

GABS, in various guises over the past 150 years, has had to contend with countless changing operating conditions and what is currently unfolding is but yet another that the company will have to navigate. We recognise that developments during the coming year will in many ways define the contours of our long term future and we are strategically geared to re-engineer ourselves to effectively deal with these new operational imperatives.

It is a proven fact that successful public transport delivery can only be achieved through a proper public – private partnership model which GABS and respective spheres of government have successfully managed in Cape Town over the years. We therefore look forward to sharing our extensive experience as a vehicle operating company to contribute to achieving the vision of sustainable public transport in the new dispensation.

As shareholders, we view GABS as a key asset in the HCI portfolio and our investment of nearly R1 billion in the renewal of the bus fleet bears testimony to the confidence we have in the company. This confidence is buoyed by the venerable institutional profile and seasoned operational expertise of a committed and loyal workforce. The GABS team has proven its resilience



over the years and we are assured that they will harness their collective knowledge to add value and entrench the company's iconic reputation as a reliable provider of scheduled bus services in the City of Cape Town. 

GABS launches new internal complaints handling system

Golden Arrow Bus Services (GABS) values customer complaints and believes that complaints present the company with an opportunity to retain passengers and improve services. To this end the company began the process of reviewing its complaints system earlier this year to gauge efficacy and resource utilisation. It was found that the system was cumbersome and did not take advantage of the multitude of technological advancements that have emerged in the last decade.

The Information Technology (IT) department, senior operations staff and the public relations department therefore came together to identify areas for improvement and to design a complaints system that would significantly increase turnaround time and reduce the time spent administering the system as well as making the audit trail far simpler. The new system also meets key requirements in the Consumer Protection Act (CPA) as well as Transport for Cape Town's IRT contracts.

The system is web based with complaints automatically downloaded from the Transport Information Centre's (TIC) server and uploaded directly to the GABS web database for immediate action by the relevant GABS operations staff.

The system allows for all complaint forms (telephonic, email, Facebook, Hello Peter etc.) to be uploaded into the same system and has various levels of authority built into it so that key users are able to monitor the entire system and to ensure that all complaints are being handled in a timely and professional manner.

The primary mode of communication is sms-based making it simple for complainants to track the progress of their complaint via a series of sms's which they receive throughout the complaint investigation and resolution process. E-mail responses and phone calls are also used where necessary.

According to IT Manager, Nigel Solomons, the updated complaint system has already proved successful; although tweaking is ongoing to ensure that it is perfectly suited to the needs of those administering it. "The input that the IT department received from the TIC and fellow Golden Arrow staff members has allowed us to create a system which meets Golden Arrow's unique needs and it is certainly going to take complaint administration to the next level," he says. 



CEO's Review of 2013

The year heralded many changes in the public transport landscape of the City of Cape Town. The first phase of the City's integrated rapid transit (IRT) system was formalised with the signing of 12-year operating contracts for services along the west coast corridor on the Atlantic seaboard. In addition to this, a Heads of Agreement (HoA), which will pave the way for the introduction of the N2 Express Service, was concluded amongst GABS, Taxi Associations and the City. It is the City's expectation to start operating a top-up service with 40 buses between Mitchell's Plain/Khayelitsha to the centre of Cape Town as from July 2014.

Some of the Phase one services will be operated by a GABS subsidiary, Table Bay Area Rapid Transit (TBRT), which was formed as a joint venture between GABS, Abahlobo

Transport Services and Siyakhula Bus Services to exclusively function as a vehicle operating company in the City's MyCiti bus service. Based at the Tollgate depot, TBRT will initially operate with a staff complement of 245 employees and a fleet of 54 vehicles.

The month-long strike in April was a major disruption to the company's operations. The financial losses and inconveniences suffered by the company, employees, passengers, suppliers and the local economy were of immense proportions and certainly far in excess of the wage settlement that was eventually concluded.

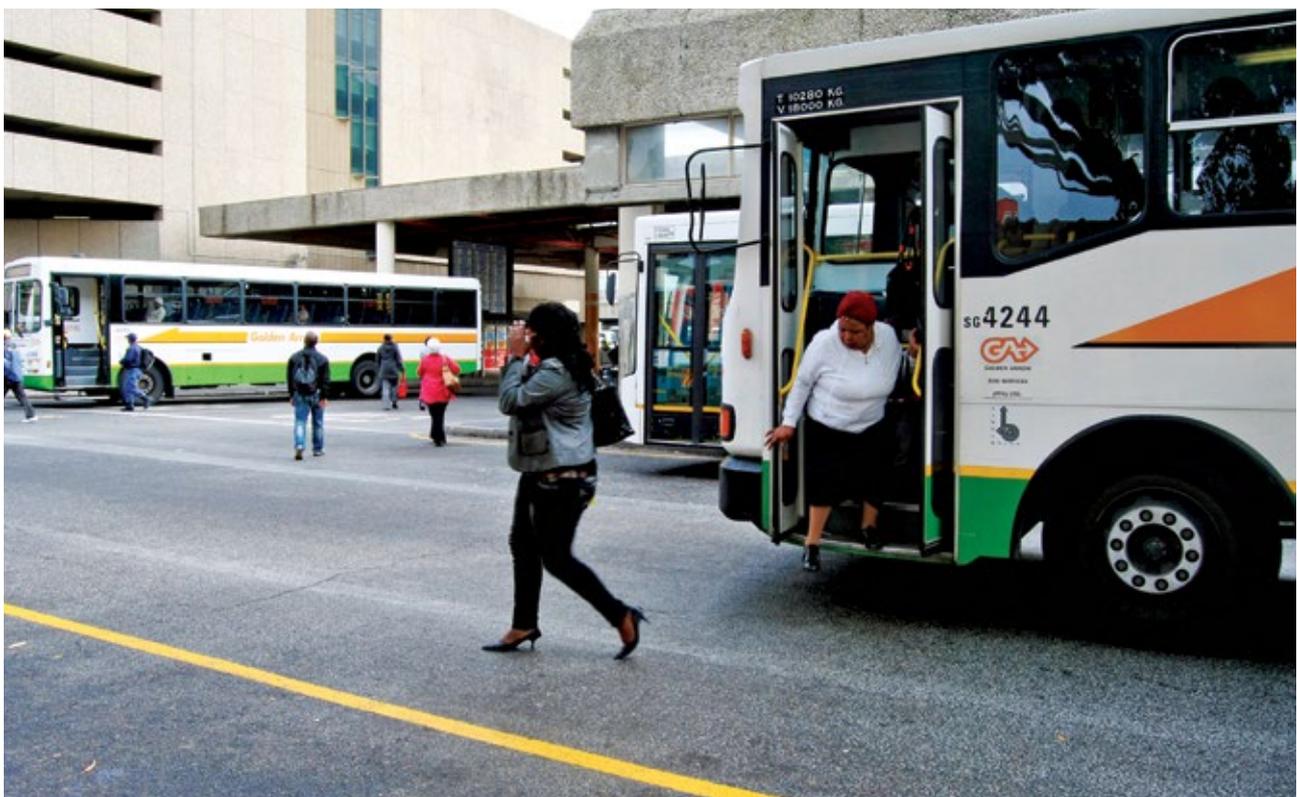
Despite the inconveniences caused by the strike, which forced the migration of passengers to other modes, GABS continued to maintain its loyal passenger base with daily passenger numbers for the

equivalent periods after the strike showing a marginal increase.

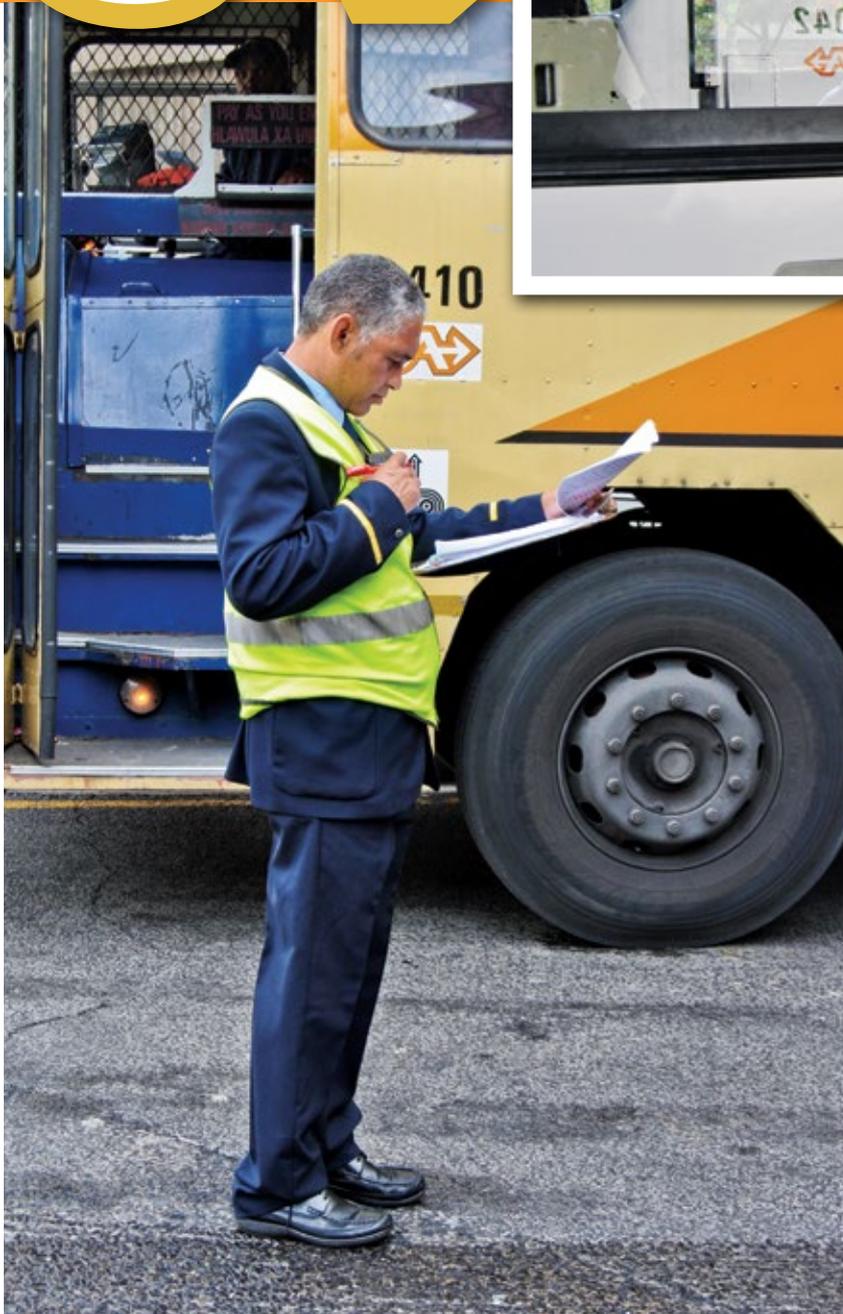
The recapitalisation of the bus fleet continued during the year and together with a strategic approach to the overall improvement of maintenance, the number of breakdowns was significantly reduced. This is indeed a commendable achievement by our technical team as it provides a sound platform for instilling commuter confidence in our services.

A major milestone achieved during the year was the finalisation of the Systems Applications and Products (SAP) IT system. SAP will improve operational efficiencies in the company as there is now full integration between Finance, HR and Stores.

Road safety remains an on-going



STILL LOYAL: Despite the strike GABS' passengers still prefer to travel by bus



techniques or to enforce improved driving behaviour. The system has found general acceptance within our operations and we are satisfied that it makes a valuable input to our goal of promoting safe and responsible driving.

Our company's employment equity profile continues to make steady strides to reflect the diverse demographics of the metropole. Both gender and ethnic representation amongst our workforce has been broadened through the oversight of the GABS Employment Equity (EE) Consultative Committee, which ensured that appointments in the company comply with the letter and spirit of the EE legislation. This has been further supported by training and development programmes that provide for the advancement of internal staff through career paths within the company. There is still a lot that needs to be done to incorporate physically challenged persons in our employee profile, but initiatives in this regard have already commenced in earnest.

COMMITTED TO SAFETY: (above and right) All the company's operations are geared towards offering a safe and reliable service

preoccupation in public transport operations and as a means to increase our objective of entrenching a culture of responsible driving amongst our driver corps; a two-day professional driver safety refresher course was instituted. This course has become compulsory for all drivers to attend every two years and with its focus on driver behaviour and attitudes, has been a positive

reinforcement of improved driving skills and conduct on the road.

Since its commencement in 2008, on-board drive-cam monitoring units have now been installed on 75% of our fleet. Apart from providing accurate visual and audio recordings on a continuous basis, the drive-cam has also proven to be useful in eradicating bad driving

The year ahead will be filled with more challenges as the new public transport dispensation is pursued. As our operating environment changes, we will have to show flexibility to adapt to the new rules of engagement. I am confident that GABS will rise to the occasion, and on behalf of the board and management team, I wish to thank you for your continued support and co-operation during the year and wish you all the best for 2014. 



GABS prioritises inclusivity

Golden Arrow Bus Services (GABS) has always recognised that its major strength lies in its people. The thousands of individuals who have made up the GABS workforce over the years have all made an invaluable contribution to the continuing success of the company and as such the Human Resources department is constantly reformulating and updating its strategies to comply not only with legislation but also to best cater to the diverse range of individuals that make up its staff complement.

Last year the major focus was the company-wide "Know your Status" HIV/Aids campaign, which yielded many positive results and served to affirm the company's caring approach to health and wellness. This year it

was felt that a review of the level of inclusion for disabled staff across the company and its premises would provide an essential comprehensive understanding of the challenges which disabled staff face in order to ensure that reasonable accommodation is achieved at all levels.

To this end GABS sought out the expertise of the mB2 Institute for Development in the conduction of a company-wide disability declaration survey. In order to provide staff who may have been concerned about making declarations with some comfort, the initial survey was confidential. Follow-up interviews were held with trained professionals in order to gain a more personalised understanding of individual needs and experiences.

According to Meko Magida, Human Resources Executive, GABS wants to set the industry benchmark when it comes to disabilities. "The GABS Human Resource Strategy has the development and implementation of a framework that promotes equality, including people with disabilities as a priority. It is within this context that people with disabilities are viewed as being equally able to undertake normal economic activities just as any person without disabilities would be," says Magida. He adds that: "Through the raising of awareness of disability issues, management is able to positively influence behaviour and attitudes towards persons with disabilities and by highlighting disability and linking it to development we ensure that the issue becomes mainstreamed within the GABS transformation agenda".

New Online maintenance system on the cards

The days of paper driven job cards are numbered as the IT department has been working closely with the Engineering division to develop a real-time, online bus management system which will revolutionise how information is stored and accessed. The new system has a number of benefits which include reduced scanning and archival costs, full access to all the information relating to a specific bus and user-friendly touch screen technology.

The online program is Windows based and users are able to use touch screens to access the system. Any artisan allocated to work on a bus can, with the touch of a couple of screen options, see the full history of the bus. The system will allow access to all incidents of breakdowns, unit replacements, outstanding work and service history. This will allow the supervisors and artisans to make better decisions in bus management.

Supervisors will now be required to assign and check up on work progress continually and all the steps in the process

are then recorded in the system. As sign-on and sign-off of jobs are electronic, accurate time management is now possible. A supervisor can also see which jobs are going to run over their allocated time and effectively manage his area better. Finance management will also be improved as the system captures exact hours worked on a job as well as recording all spares and units allocated to a bus.



AT HIS FINGERTIPS: Electronic job cards are revolutionising job storage



UPWARDS AND ONWARDS: GABS' passenger forums gather together to celebrate a year of working together with GABS to improve service delivery

Passenger forums reflect on 2013

This year's annual Golden Arrow passenger forum function was held at the Ikwehezi Community Hall in Gugulethu. The function represents the last meeting of the year and it gives forum members and Golden Arrow officials a chance to contemplate the year that was, while looking forward to the year ahead.

Golden Arrow's passenger forums date back (in their formalised state) to 2000 and over the last 13 years the relationship between the company and the passenger forum members has become an essential feedback mechanism. The forums are grouped according to five areas; Khayelitsha, Nyanga, Blue Downs, Delft and Philippi although passengers travel to various locations along the metropole from these points.

Membership is voluntary and forum members receive a badge

that they wear which identifies them to fellow bus passengers as passenger forum members. The forums are considered an absolutely key stakeholder participation mechanism. At each meeting they set the agenda and all discussion points are formally minuted and further deliberated upon at high level operational meetings if solutions cannot be found at the particular forum discussion.

The end of the year function is not just about enjoying a delicious meal though. Operations Manager, Anwar Ally was on hand to discuss the cost-saving initiatives that Golden Arrow has in place as well as the newly launched complaints system. Provincial Department of Transport representative, Luthando Mlonzi gave a presentation explaining the contract system and how the Division of Revenue Act (DORA)

impacts Golden Arrow's government subsidy allocation. He also gave passenger forum members insight into how the relationship between provincial government and Golden Arrow works and the impact which the devolution of subsidy allocation from provincial to municipal level will have on this relationship.

Once all the serious business had been taken care of it was time to relax and enjoy each other's company and this is always particularly enjoyable as the relationship with the forums has matured to the stage where the forum members know and trust the GABS operational staff with whom they deal. It is always incredibly heartening to see how proud the forum members are of the contribution that they make and Golden Arrow appreciates how dynamic a communication tool these interactions have become. 

Woodside Special Care Centre: Caring for those who can't care for themselves

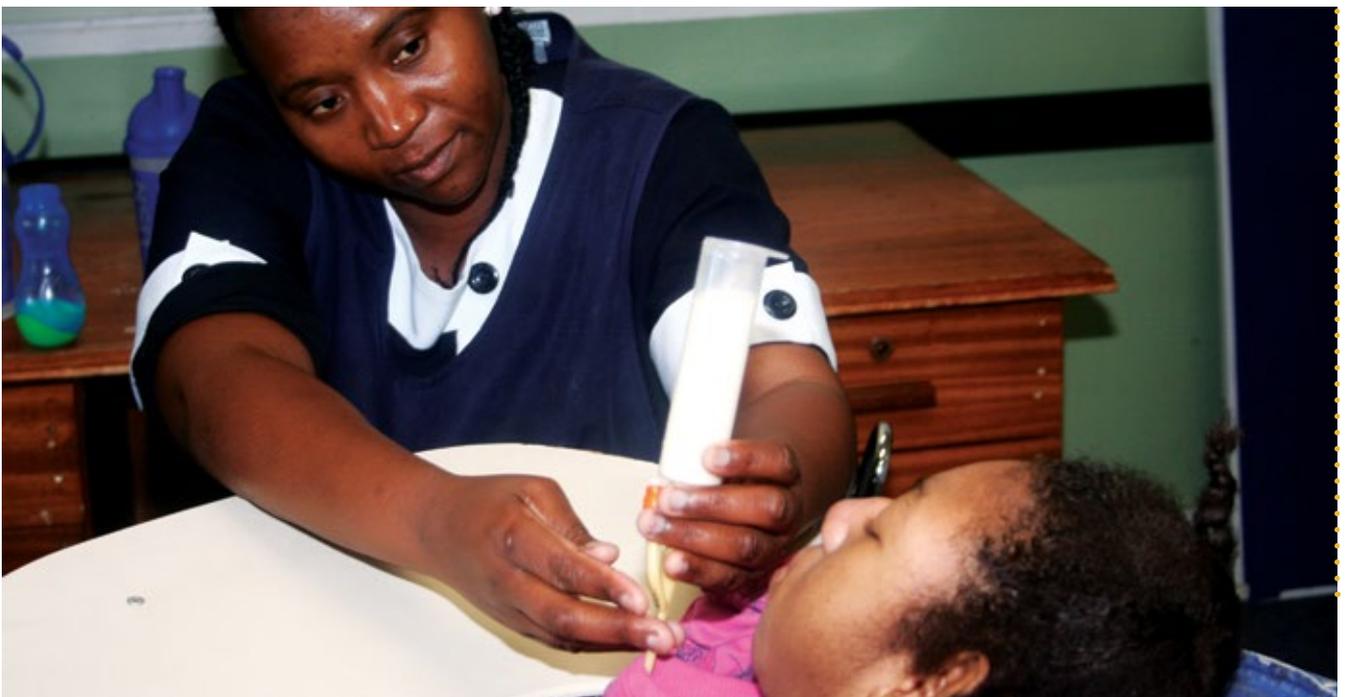
Golden Arrow Bus Services (GABS) recognises the sterling work being done by the Woodside Special Care Centre and has provided much needed funding since 1994. The Centre cares for the needs of profoundly mentally and intellectually disabled residents. The Centre is home to ninety mentally and physically disabled children and adults. Residents receive twenty-four hour nursing care, occupational therapy to stimulate and enhance development, physiotherapy to prevent further contracture of limbs damaged by cerebral palsy, and speech, language and feeding therapy to encourage communication and improve feeding techniques.

The funding received from GABS (via the HCI Foundation) is multi-purpose in that it goes towards all the activities at Woodside as well as operational costs to ensure that residents receive the attention that they require to ensure their happiness and health. Funding has also been used for the purchase of a new industrial strength washing machine. The funding received from GABS as well as other institutions is vital to their continued operation as 20 of the 90 residents were placed at Woodside as Wards of Court or as orphans and pay no fees at all, while 79 percent of families pay less than R3 000 per month towards each resident's R8 000 to R9 000 monthly expenses.

According to funding co-ordinator Cheryl Beaton, the money received from Golden Arrow is desperately needed given the resource- intensive needs of the Centre's residents. "Take a moment and just imagine the extent of the resources needed in order to support 90 severely disabled residents. The nursing care, the day to day care: hygiene; grooming; dressing; bathing and the therapy are just the tip of the iceberg," she explains.

Woodside has also amended previous policy and now makes provision for residents to stay into adulthood provided that they were placed during childhood. This ensures that residents have stability and that Woodside becomes a real home where staff and residents are family. The Centre also offers training courses for their own staff and staff at other care centres to share the specialised skills associated with this type of full-time care environment. The Centre also offers long-term rehabilitation services to non-residents through its occupational therapy and physiotherapy departments.

The organisation is now focused on building on spare land next to the current building which has been earmarked to accommodate two more wards and in turn 40 to 45 more children. Golden Arrow wishes them the best of luck with this endeavour and is honoured to be associated with an organisation of such calibre. 



TENDER LOVING CARE: Staff at Woodside provide care to residents who cannot care for themselves

Golden Arrow Bus Services' board, executive management and staff members wish to extend their most sincere condolences to Nelson Mandela's family and the South African people who together mourn the loss of South Africa's most beloved son.