

### A DOCTOR'S SELFLESS ACT AND LEGACY FOR LESS PRIVILEGED CHILDREN

18 April 2017

Johannesburg

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CGF Research Institute (Pty) Ltd ('CGF') strives to regularly showcase registered small non-profit organisations (NPOs) who are involved in the care-giving of less privileged children in South Africa. In this way, we aim to promote these smaller NPOs to our extensive corporate and government client database, in the hope that our clients will consider these NPO's when planning and implementing their own corporate social investment ('CSI') programmes.

Most of the larger and more recognised NPOs have been in operation for many years, and often receive the lion's share of large organisations' CSI spend. The smaller and less publicised registered NPOs tend to be overlooked by corporate CSI committees. The work, time and effort required to sustain any charitable organisation is often underestimated, and there is hardly any difference in the proportional workload between a large or small organisation operating in this critical sector. On the contrary, it is often far more stressful for the smaller charitable organisations to survive, mainly due to the fact that their donor income is stretched well beyond their daily operational costs.

This month, with the support of Wot-If? Trust who provided CGF decorative cushions for children's beds, I set out to meet another needy children's home. These decorative cushions are donated by Big Five Duty Free who encourage travelers at all major South African Airports to buy the cushions and leave them behind in large bins for those children in South Africa who are less fortunate.

In this article, CGF would like to showcase a small children's home that specialises in caring for impoverished children waiting for kidney transplants. This NPO was established in 1998, when its original founder -- the late Dr Pieter Theo Ernst -- took action to provide care for children from disadvantaged backgrounds with chronic renal problems. The stress of witnessing many children lying on cold hospital floors in government hospitals, prior to and post their kidney surgeries, compelled him to open Marang House at his own expense. At the time, Dr. Ernst thought that the South African government would support him by funding some of the monthly costs through some form of grant to the home. Unfortunately, this was not the case, and notwithstanding his initiative to relieve the hospital's congested floors of scattered kidney transplant patients, the grants were withheld by the government because the children's health conditions were not considered chronic enough.



*Marang House provides long-term care for impoverished children awaiting kidney transplants, amongst other chronic illnesses*

Sadly, whilst Dr Ernst's dream to provide these children with quality care and post-surgery recovery in a stable home environment at Marang House was in the process of being realized, he was murdered on 29 July 2005 at the age of 48, outside his farm in Magaliesburg.

Almost two decades later, Marang House still operates in Northcliff, Johannesburg. The home continues to share the late doctor's vision and passion; it is filled with children who dream of a brighter future for themselves. The home currently has eleven children in their care, eight girls and three boys. Four of the children have Chronic Renal Failure, and are still awaiting transplants, while one child received a kidney transplant in July last year and is going from strength to strength. The home also has one cardiac and five chronic diabetic patients. I was deeply moved by this extraordinary home, and the children (whose ages varied between 7 to 14 years of age) were warm and happy, notwithstanding their social, physical and financial hardships.

Considering all the challenges we face as a country, none can be any worse than being an impoverished child with the odds stacked against you; even worse so, if you are awaiting a kidney transplant. The prayers and miracles of medically qualifying for this precious and rare gift to sustain a quality of life, and life itself, is remote.

Our appeal to potential donors is to visit Marang House to fully understand the plight of these children in desperate conditions. Like with so many worthy causes of this nature, Marang House has monthly financial requirements to meet their overheads which include rent, electricity, transport, petrol and salaries. But where Marang House is very unique, is that they cannot simply accept food donations because their children are all on special diets as a result of their medical conditions. Accordingly, if it is not possible to donate money to the home to enable it to buy the appropriate food, they would appreciate vouchers which they would use to purchase the special foods required to boost the children's diet and immune systems. Another challenge facing Marang is transport; due to the nature of the children's volatile medical conditions, many of them are transported daily to and from the Charlotte Maxeke Academic hospital for treatment. In addition to transporting the children to the hospital, Marang also needs to transport the children to and from school, as well as to their extramural activities.

Toward the end of my visit, as I walked through this home, my eyes were drawn to their wall of photos of the many children who have previously lived at the home and now lead fulfilled lives; sadly, the wall also contained photos of those who had passed. Marang House relies totally on donations and sponsors, and as such, they will not be able to continue their critical work without support from the business community at large. I sincerely hope that this brief account of my visit, will act as a catalyst to inspire the business community, and indeed society, to allow Dr. Ernst's dream and legacy to continue.

## **ENDS**

Words: 931

### ***About Wot-If? Trust***

Wot-If? Trust operates primarily in Diepsloot, working on Socio-Economic and Enterprise Development Initiatives. Their focus is on helping emerging and small enterprises to grow and become sustainable and giving the youth hope and opportunities for the future. Agriculture, business, technology, innovation and media are key drivers, specifically on how these impact on improving lives and the Diepsloot community in general.

For further information, please contact: Gail Styger (Wot-If? Trust: Founder & Trustee) 083 625 3929 or email [gail@wot-if.co.za](mailto:gail@wot-if.co.za)

**About Marang House (NPO Nr: 006 182 / PBO Nr: 930 003 724)**

As a registered Non-profit organisation, Marang House relies entirely upon external funding to supply these life-sustaining services. As such, fundraising, corporate sponsorships and volunteer efforts are the lifeblood for maintaining the hope and sunshine currently brought forth by the staff and friends of Marang House. In turn, supporting Marang House also provides a tax-deductible means, as well as BEE scorecard points, for sponsors to make a significant impact on the lives of South Africa's seriously ill children.

You can support Marang House in many ways. Unless your donation is anonymous, please always advise Marang House of your donation to ensure they received it. Marang House will be able to issue you with a Section 18A certificate for tax purposes once the donation has been received. You can make a financial contribution towards the work of Marang House in the following ways:

### Bank Account

**Bank:** Nedbank  
**Branch:** Business Northrand  
**Branch No:** 146-905  
**Account Name:** Marang House  
**Account No:** 1469095769 (cheque)  
**Swift No:** NEDSZAJJ



### Debit Order / Monthly Donation

Marang House accepts both debit and stop orders.

### Donations in Kind

- Second Hand Goods / White Elephant
- Wish List

### CSI / Corporate Donations

Please contact us to request an appointment or proposal.

For further information, please contact:  
Melanie Tennant on (011) 476 6698 or  
email [melanie@maranghouse.org](mailto:melanie@maranghouse.org)  
Website: [www.maranghouse.org](http://www.maranghouse.org)

### Further Media Information:

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