

A close-up photograph of several pink peony flowers in various stages of bloom, set against a dark, blurred background of green leaves. The lighting is soft, highlighting the delicate texture of the petals.

*The year to*  
EMPOWER. EQUIP. ENABLE.

ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19



# MANY INFLUENTIAL TRAILBLAZERS HAVE HIGHLIGHTED THE IMPORTANCE OF EMPOWERING AND EDUCATING WOMEN

Here's Michelle Obama: "As women we must stand up for ourselves.  
As women we must stand up for each other.  
As women we must stand up for justice for all."

I'm proud and delighted to be able to say that several of our branches have proactively taken the initiative by hosting breast health education and awareness events to EMPOWER underserved communities.

By sharing information on the warning signs of breast cancer, and on how early detection through self-examination can save lives, such programmes help EQUIP women to take control of their own health, even with limited access to medical facilities. Empowerment strategies include dispelling myths and misconceptions, and clearing the stigma surrounding breast cancer in many communities. Women need to be encouraged to find their voices, and use them to tell the stories of their breast cancer journeys.

To ENABLE women to regain their pre-mastectomy appearance, along with their confidence and self-esteem, our Ditto Project, sponsored by The Power of Pink campaign, Playing for Pink, as well as other initiatives, continues to play a vital role in empowering women, by providing and fitting breast prostheses for state patients who are unable to afford a silicone prosthesis.

Practical and emotional care for newly diagnosed patients remains our core service, and for this we are endlessly grateful for the energy, passion and commitment of our volunteers. More than 5000 patients receive our support annually. Each and every volunteer is a "Phenomenal Woman". To find out what this means, do read the poem by Maya Angelou.

As always, my heartfelt thanks to all our dedicated Reach volunteers.

*Stephne Jacobs*

CHAIRPERSON | BOARD OF MANAGEMENT



EMPOWER. EQUIP. ENABLE.

# PEER SUPPORT BY PHENOMENAL WOMEN

Phenomenal women - that is who our volunteers are!

They are all survivors of breast cancer who have chosen to work to help other women facing breast cancer. They want to support them because they have been on the journey and know what the patients' needs are. They are passionate people who offer to give without being asked or obliged. As volunteers, they are the lifeblood and backbone of our organisation and we simply could not deliver the services to our patients and their families without them.

Reach for Recovery (RFR) volunteers have been providing this support service for 52 years (since 1967). Our volunteers travel to hospitals and Breast Care units at their own cost to visit patients to provide the vital emotional support they need.



A role play of patient support during a training session.

During the reporting year our 210 Peer Support volunteers provided support services to a total of 5932 breast cancer patients in public and private health care facilities. Each patient is supplied with a booklet and pamphlets dealing with various topics relevant to breast cancer patients. They receive a soft prosthesis (temporary breast form), a cushion for under arm comfort and a bag to contain the port-au-vac drain.

666 state patients who had a mastectomy and no medical aid were fitted with a silicone prosthesis at no cost. Continued support is provided at any later stage. Volunteers also act as patient navigators to assist patients with information on how and where to access breast clinics for early detection and treatment.

During the year under review we were joined by more phenomenal women who completed their training as Peer Support Volunteer training sessions held in Johannesburg, Cape Town, Kimberley and Pretoria. Here you could probably use the Kimberley or Durban volunteer training photos.

# Reach for Recovery | 2018 in numbers

April 2018 – March 2019



**3,103**

number of newly diagnosed breast cancer patients visited in hospital



**1,232**

number of patients supported through pre-ops visits, home visits and telephone calls



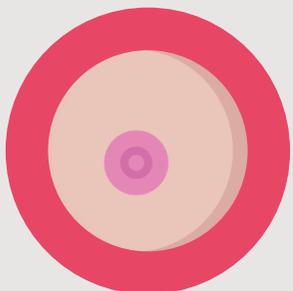
**2,538**

number of temporary prostheses ("softies") handed out to new breast cancer patients



**3,013**

number of care bags with support items & information handed out to post-operative breast cancer patients in hospital



**666**

number of subsidised silicone prostheses given to indigent women



**1,597**

number of breast cancer patients supported during breast clinics at state hospitals



**5,932**

total number of patients supported by Reach for Recovery



**210**

total number of active volunteers who support patients

IT'S IN THE REACH OF MY ARMS,  
THE SPAN OF MY HIPS,  
THE STRIDE OF MY STEP,  
THE CURL OF MY LIPS.

I'M A WOMAN

*phenomenally*

PHENOMENAL WOMAN,  
THAT'S ME.

Phenomenal Woman | Maya Angelou

# EMPOWERING AND EQUIPPING WOMEN THROUGH BREAST HEALTH AWARENESS

Breast cancer is the leading cancer diagnosed in women in South Africa.

Breast cancer awareness is crucial and it begins with education. Finding breast cancer early means there are more treatment options and the chances of survival are greatest. Reach for Recovery volunteers use every opportunity to educate and inform women (and men) on the importance of early detection of breast cancer.

Our groups enjoyed a very successful year reaching women in communities across South Africa - at workplaces, community groups, libraries, churches, hospitals, clinics, sporting events and even across borders to women in Swaziland. We are thankful for the opportunities created at each awareness event for members of the audience to engage with our volunteers for more information, guidance and support.



# ENABLING BREAST CANCER PATIENTS TO REGAIN THEIR SELF-ESTEEM

The treatment of breast cancer very often involves removal of the breast through a mastectomy. In our public sector, approximately 8000 women are diagnosed with breast cancer annually. Of these, about 80% will have a mastectomy. As state patients these women do not have the financial means to have a breast reconstructed or buy a silicon prosthesis after a mastectomy and external breast prostheses may therefore be their only option.

Reach for Recovery's Ditto Project helps breast cancer survivors from lower income groups to feel confident again by providing them with a silicon breast prosthesis, an artificial breast which can be worn in the bra to simulate the natural breast and body shape. They are all specifically fitted to each individual to suit their size and body shape in order to simulate the natural breast, down to matching the firmness of their remaining breast if needed.

Stephné Jacobs, Chairperson of the Reach for Recovery Board of Management, truly believes that there is an emerging correlation showing the improvement of quality of life in patients who have received the prostheses and finds it encouraging that, in their experience, not only do the physical symptoms and emotional distress abate over time but more often than not the simulation of a breast leads to the resumption of the normal ability to enjoy life. After having breast cancer and enduring the trauma of a mastectomy, a woman is often worried about her appearance and whether she may feel less feminine or even stigmatised by her community.

*always reaching!*

SINCE JANUARY 2019, OUR OFFER INCLUDES **PROSTHESES IN THREE DIFFERENT SKIN TONES AND SHAPES** TO ENSURE THAT EVERY WOMAN FEELS PERFECTLY COMOFORTABLE WITH HER NEW PROSTHESIS.



When women turn up for an appointment with our fitters without a bra, we face another reality: - she did not forget it, she does not have one! A mastectomy bra is a very expensive piece of underwear and Reach for Recovery simply does not have the financial means to provide these women with a new mastectomy bra. We rely mostly on the goodwill of breast cancer survivors and other members of the public to donate bras in a good condition so that we can send of the patient off happy and smiling after her fitting session. Some donors drop off bras at our fitting rooms or creatively invite members to donate bras to this great project. A well-fitted prosthesis and bra helps her to feel confident again and good about herself.



ditto<sup>project</sup>

SINCE THE DITTO PROJECT WAS ESTABLISHED IN 2011, MORE THAN 6000 WOMEN HAVE BENEFITTED FROM THIS PROJECT AT A COST OF R4.6 MILLION.

REACH FOR RECOVERY IS SO GRATEFUL TOWARDS OUR TWO MAIN SPONSORS OF THE PROJECT: THE POWER OF PINK AND THE PLAYING FOR PINK CAMPAIGNS.

IT'S THE FIRE IN MY EYES,  
AND THE FLASH OF MY TEETH,  
THE SWING IN MY WAIST,  
AND THE JOY IN MY FEET.

I'M A WOMAN  
PHENOMENALLY.

*phenomenal woman.*

THAT'S ME.

Phenomenal Woman | Maya Angelou

# FUNDRAISING FOR THE FUTURE

Reach for Recovery is a volunteer-driven organisation that works with dedicated volunteers to have a significant impact on the women we serve. As fundraising has become more challenging in general, we have streamlined our expenses in order to meet our service delivery goals. Our sources of income are derived from private donations, online donations via our website, special events that volunteers organise, sponsorships and corporate giving. Individual donors support RFR programmes through online donations.

The two biggest fundraising campaigns, Power of Pink and Playing for Pink, have already been highlighted in this report.

Reach for Recovery is very grateful to have been granted an amount of R338,268 from the National Lotteries Commission. The funds will be used to continue delivering practical and emotional support services to breast cancer patients and their families. Reach for Recovery's volunteers support more than 5000 breast cancer patients per year. Although this service is delivered free of charge to the patient, it does come as a cost to our organisation. We are therefore very pleased to have received this grant to help cover the cost of our service.



# REACH TO RECOVERY 2019 IN PRAGUE

RRI Conference: Reach for Recovery is so proud to have had our own Board Chairperson, Stephné Jacobs representing us at the Reach to Recovery International Conference held in Prague from 12-15 June 2019!

Stephné did two presentations on *How storytelling saves the lives of women with breast cancer* and *The Ditto Project: A unique story of Ubuntu in action*. Ann Steyn, Reach for Recovery Board Member and Board Member of the Reach to Recovery International also did an oral presentation at the RRI Conference.

*Building bridges toward recovery!*

These two ladies shared the stage with other speakers from countries like Australia, India, USA, Switzerland, China, Portugal, Malaysia, Germany, Czech Republic, Netherlands, New Zealand and Scotland. We are extremely proud of our Board Members who represented Reach for Recovery South Africa!

We are very thankful to The South African Mushroom Farmers Association (SAMFA) for a very generous donation of R25,000 towards covering some of the costs of Stephné's attendance of the RRI Conference.

We are so grateful for the continued support from SAMFA and share their excitement for being part of this great opportunity to showcase what partnerships like ours can achieve.



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THE SUN OF MY SMILE,  
THE RIDE OF MY BREASTS,  
THE GRACE OF MY STYLE.  
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PHENOMENALLY.  
PHENOMENAL WOMAN,

*That's me.*

Phenomenal Woman | Maya Angelou

# EMPOWER. EQUIP. ENABLE ON SOCIAL MEDIA.

What a beautiful year we have had on our Reach for Recovery social media page which we run via Facebook.

We have seen an amazing growth in engagement as people reach out and talk to us on our posts through questions, answers and even just encouragement - which we love and appreciate the most! So thank you!

We have also grown in our community as you'll see below how many new people we welcome to our online community. Thank you for clicking our follow button and staying up to date with all the news and fun campaigns.

We ran multiple campaigns this year - the biggest one being our Volunteer Recruitment Campaign, which ran for a few months earlier this year. Our volunteer base grew all around the country and I personally experienced this through Facebook requests through our posts to reach new people with skills and value in different areas of our volunteers.

Thank you to every like, share, comment and those who go the extra mile to participate through sharing your story.



THE WORLD IS HUGGED BY  
THE FAITHFUL ARMS OF A

*volunteer*

- terri guillemets

NOVEMBER 2018  
1,100 FOLLOWERS

NOVEMBER 2019  
1,629 FOLLOWERS

*Thank you!*

KELLY LUBBEE | CREATIVE & SOCIAL MEDIA