

CHE Chairman's report 2019/20

Greetings fellow Home Educators,

This past year we unexpectedly had to say our fair wells to our former Chairman, Victor Sabbe, when he relocated to Ireland. We are very grateful for his contributions to home education in the Western Cape. He left a big vacancy in the home education community.

The CHE Constitution states that the Secretary shall deputise for the chairperson until the following General Meeting, should the chairperson resign from office. In that capacity I now give a full account of the activities of the Association and of the Executive Committee.

The battles regarding the Bella Bill and the Home Education Policy is ongoing.

On the 9th January 2020, our spokesperson Anelle Burger responded to the Amended Bela Bill. The letter to the Minister of Education, Angie Motshekga, is available on our website.

On the 28th February 2020, the DBE held the **Home Education Roundtable Discussion** in Pretoria. Home Educating Associations were not informed of the Home Education Roundtable Discussions and had to request to be invited to attend it. Our requests to alter the agenda to make more provision for discussion were ignored. The agenda was moulded to fit the ethos of the DBE and certain CAPS curriculum providers. Home Educators only had a voice if it fitted into that mould and were indeed instructed to fit into it despite attempts to convey the irreconcilability to comply.

That mould ignores the very nature and foundation of Home Education as it contradicts the Sovereign authority of parents over their children and at its heart desires to usurp parents by inserting the State and even CAPS-curriculum providers.

Marietjie attended the Roundtable discussion. The Comments on the Home Education Roundtable discussion, the Draft Policy on Home Education and the Amended Bela Bill is available on our website.

Concluding the Roundtable discussion, the DBE suggested the establishment of Task Teams on which delegates might serve. The DBE also stated its willingness to consider platforms and vehicles that could be used to facilitate engagements between the DBE and stakeholders.

From this was born **the Home Education Coalition Liberty in Learning**. Marietjie, Nicky, Tess, Debbie and Anelle have attended these meetings. Bouwe van der Eems will give more information on this. Thank you to every member who have been participating in these meetings – we have had 10 so far.

Membership

Our Membership is steadily growing. We grew from 511 members in 2018 to 720 to date. This consists of 595 subscribers who confirmed their membership and 125 who selected to become members but have not confirmed it. This equates to an increase of 41% . Our Facebook grew from 1718 followers in 2018 and now stands at 2 522 followers. This equates to an increase of 47%. A big thank you to our Facebook admins, Benita and Lizelle & Adam for the website.

We receive a steady income from **My School Card** as is reflected in the Treasurer's report. The CHE encourages families to use the My school card system to support the work the CHE does on behalf of Home Education. Thank you to Marijke for managing My School Card.

Events

The SACSSA provincial **Athletics** took place on the 17th of April 2019. CHE again was the largest "school" that took part with 97 athletes who entered for the event after qualifying at the regional event.

Although many athletes qualified for SACSSA's National Athletics (in Sasolburg) only 11 athletes entered this event. At Nationals the CHE brought home three silver medals, three bronze medals and another eleven athletes placed within the top 10 of their events.

At this meet Lenka Bronn also qualified to be included in SACSSA's team for the Sub Youth Inter-Provincial Championships which took place on 23 November 2019 in Sasolburg. Thank you Lizelle for the huge task of administrating these events and to Nicky for demonstrating your superpowers on these days.

The Expo was once again a great success. We had 1066 visitors. Visitor numbers doubled from just over 500 in 2018. This shows that Home Education is growing in the Western Cape and really underlines our urgent need to find a bigger yet cost effective venue. Thank you to everyone involved in the expo where the whole committee really shows its strength. This is always a huge team effort, but an extra big thank you goes out to Debbie, Nicky and Chirani.

CHE donated R20 000 to the **African Homeschool Indaba** which was held on 17 – 19 October 2019 in Pretoria. Adam, Nicky and Debbie represented us there.

Anelle Burger launched **The Homeschool Lounge** YouTube channel in April 2019 with the assistance of Chirani Meyer and her twin sons. It developed out of a need to educate Joe Public about home education and to assist families in their home education journey. In July 2019, the Homeschool Lounge episodes became available as **podcasts** which can be accessed from CHE's website.

Anelle runs The Homeschool Lounge independently from the CHE. The CHE is only responsible for sponsoring and hosting the podcasts.

To date the Homeschool Lounge has published 47 episodes. 2 648 Podcasts were accessed. The YouTube channel has 996 subscribers and had 17 100 views since its start. The Homeschool Lounge has as a library of interviews with experienced home educators and support services to which families new to home education can be directed. Feedback on the choice of topics has been positive and families have reported that they have been encouraged and empowered by the information being shared.

With the lockdown, downloads of the episodes on How to Start with Home Education, Home Education and the Law and Self-directed Education increased markedly. Thank you to Anelle, job very well done.

Media liaison

As spokesperson for CHE, Anelle wrote letters to the media which were published in the following newspapers: Sunday Independent, The Big Debate in June 2019 – Is Home Education the Panacea? Beeld, Cape Argus, Voices360, Cape Times and Daily News in January 2020 – Comments on BELA bill.

She had the opportunity to represent CHE during an interview with Aden Thomas on Heart FM on the topic What is Home Education. The interview lasted for about 15 minutes and she was impressed by the honest interest in home education.

Marietjie was interviewed by KUIER magazine. Various committee members also answered questions for YOU magazine. To each person who wrote letters and were interviewed, I really want to extend my heartfelt gratitude, as this really takes up a lot of time and effort.

Supportive chat groups per area.

Tess have been creating and putting together regional contacts for support group chats in each area for new homeschool parents to connect. We will investigate how this may be added to CHE's webpage and on other homeschool platforms that we admin. Thank you for taking this upon yourself, Tess.

CHE receives daily **emails** requesting guidance, to be put in contact with support groups and general enquiries. A big thank you to Suzanne, who always helped me to find that support group in the most remote regions like Prins Albert!

Suzanne is currently streamlining our **database** of Home Educator groups on social media in the Western Cape. CHE would like to network with all groups on the various platforms of social media. The stronger our network, the quicker we can communicate important information to all families who are home educating their children.

Suzanne regularly hosts Home Education **Seminars** and also gave me permission to provide her email address and private number to families who requests **personal assistance**. Thank you Suzanne, your gentle approach and patience to answer questions has blessed many families.

Conclusion and Thanks

Due to the Covid-19 lockdown, we had to postpone our meeting. This marks the first virtual AGM to be held by us. Thank you for your patience and commitment in this new and challenging era. It will be interesting to look back a year later and see the full effect it has had on the education environment.

It has been a privilege to be surrounded by this committee. To see how our efforts have touched so many families. We receive emails on a daily base, and through everyone's commitment have thus far always been able to answer each request and refer families to support groups to assist them on this wonderful journey called home education. Thank you Rian, for your quick response to all financial request for bank statements and payments.

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to each one who served on the committee this year and sacrificed their free time and resources for the homeschooling community.