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Dementia and Dementia Care

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Innovation in Dementia awareness and education in rural South Africa

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Dementia South Africa (DementiaSA) embarked on a large epidemiological study in 2015 in collaboration with University of Cape Town and The Donald Woods Foundation in rural Eastern Cape. The Eastern Cape is one of the poorest provinces in South Africa but also an area with a large elderly community. The study was funded by the National Lottery Commission in South Africa. Through Books of Hope's innovative Speaking Book, DementiaSA commissioned a book called Making Memories Matter. Through this initiative, we were able to address the understanding of dementia amongst indigenous, rural communities in South Africa. Amongst these communities dementia is thought to be witchcraft and possession by the ancestors. Dementia understanding is almost non-existent, notwithstanding the poor levels of literacy as well as other critical socio-economic challenges. Besides the gathering of study results, it was important for DementiaSA to educate the community and community health outreach workers about different forms of dementia. As a result of memory and cognitive impairments, various forms of elder abuse exist. The Making Memories Matter Speaking Book has been very successful and helped to spread dementia education and awareness in many rural villages and schools around South Africa. DementiaSA is proud to share this innovative and successful project with you!

Biography

Karen Borochowitz background is in the corporate world where she worked as a Production Manager for a large pharmaceutical company and then moved to advertising and marketing. Her mother Joyce, was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease at the age of 62 and passed away in 2011, 21 years after her diagnosis. Karen was actively involved in her mother's care. She has two adult children, a daughter and a son. In 2006, she was one of the founder members of DEMENTIA SA, an organisation which has grown enormously in the past years and which is affiliated to a number of international organisations. She is the recipient of many awards for her contribution to the rights of people with dementia, the most recent of which is the Lions Club International Hero of the Year. She believes that the wounds of this insidious disease have actually become her gift where she and the work of Dementia SA, have been able to make a tangible difference in the lives of people with dementia, their families and carers.

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