



# ChevrahKadisha

27 April 2020

Dear Community Members

## COMMUNITY UPDATE

It is my pleasure to offer you an update on the situation within the Chev. We are sincerely grateful for the tremendous support we have received from so many of you during this challenging time. We acknowledge the difficulties facing everyone and truly appreciate that we are all in this together.

**Conflicted:** In many ways the Chev's position is unusual in that we have a conflicted interest in both wanting the lockdown to be sustained, and wanting to see it lifted. On the one hand we have witnessed, up-close, its value in protecting the nearly 1,000 residents in our care throughout Chev facilities. Many of them are in their 80's, frail and suffering with multiple co-morbidities not uncommon in people of advanced age. They are vulnerable and we see the importance of flattening the curve and slowing the spread. On the other hand, the Chev supports thousands of people in the community both emotionally and financially. Our social workers are seeing the psycho-social pain of isolation and restriction and the fear generated by loss of income due to unemployment and the closing of businesses. On all sides of this equation the Chev will be called upon to assist with the devastation left in the wake of this pandemic.

**Corona Case:** Many in the community are aware that we had our first Coronavirus case over two weeks ago in Sandringham Gardens. Our medical and care staff responded swiftly by isolating the resident off-site in hospital for monitoring. We immediately implemented additional restrictions which included the testing of all people (staff and residents) suspected of being in contact with the resident. Those exposed were isolated in our pre-prepared and stocked isolation units at Sandringham Gardens. In all, 78 tests were conducted and thank G-d every one of them came back negative. Even our one Covid-19 positive case in hospital isolation has always been, and remains, completely asymptomatic. We are most grateful that his quarantine period is over and he is completely healthy and no longer infectious.

**Blessed:** We were blessed that there was no spread and that the residents remain Covid-free. We walk a fine line in our facilities between the clinical and psycho-social needs of every resident. While it may be clinical best practice to isolate every resident and confine them all to their rooms, we realise that psychologically this could have devastating effects on them and one cannot sustain this for extended periods. Many suffer from age-related dementia and other psychiatrically challenged conditions. Our Programming team work closely with social workers engaging daily with residents as they continue to participate in activities at various levels. Once again, we walk a fine line in balancing these different realities whilst always doing our best to ensure our residents safety and well-being.

**Staff:** We continue to enforce the most stringent protocols: intensive, extensive and continuous cleaning and strict access control. The campus is on complete lockdown and



Registered as Johannesburg Jewish Helping Hand & Burial Society



# ChevrahKadisha

even staff who have access wear colour-coded lanyards and are limited to the areas in which they work. All staff are screened every day upon entering the facilities – their temperatures are taken, they are checked for symptoms and they are questioned. Flu vaccinations have been provided for every one of them (in addition to all residents and welfare recipients) and staff are reminded to stay at home if they are feeling unwell.

While every precaution is being taken to protect the health of our staff, this remains our primary area of vulnerability as it is possible a staff member who is entirely asymptomatic may be contagious. We cannot, however, manage without our dedicated care, medical and catering staff. We have many residents who are unable to do anything for themselves and who need 24-hour nursing for basic functioning. Our staff wear PPE (Personal Protection Equipment) and face masks at all times. Hand sanitisers and washing protocols are enforced, training is ongoing and the Chev has spent an inordinate amount of money making sure that every possible care is taken to protect everyone on our premises.

**Faith:** We cannot do more than our best. For the rest we must rely upon Hashem. It is fundamental to Jewish belief that we accept that once we have done all that we can, we must hand over to our higher power and have faith.

Often, I remind myself and our dedicated professional team of this well-known adage:

*May G-d grant me the courage and strength to change the things I can,  
the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,  
And the wisdom to know the difference.*

Please keep well, stay safe and may we all come through this pandemic stronger and closer than ever.

*Saul*

### **Saul Tomson**

Chief Executive Officer  
Chevrah Kadisha Group

Should you have any concerns or questions please contact the relevant facility:

Selwyn Segal: Belinda Bersiks 011 532 9709  
Arcadia: Elana Banner 011 483 7507  
Lodge and Square: Vanessa Chesno 011 532 9635  
Our Parents Home: Denise Bloom 011 489 7195  
Sandringham Gardens: Cheftzi-vah Kruger 011 483 7425

Or, after hours, our emergency Helpline - 082 499 1010

Arcadia

Selwyn  
Segal

Our  
Parents  
Home

Sandringham  
Gardens