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Additional Evaluation criteria for suitability of The Lords Abode.

The Author

Finton Cassidy has been involved in The Lords Abode for about 30 years. He has worked extensively in the IT industry ending up working for Liberty Life in their IT Consultancy department. He is presently managing the Tzaneen farm and overseeing the school project.



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1. Introduction.

Understandably any Foundation or Funding group that supports and funds NPO's needs to understand the targets organizations ability and suitability. The Lords Abode therefore registered as an NPO and ensured that compliance with all the necessary government departments. This compliance also applies to the school. This document walks the reader through our organization, people, premises, projects and certification.

2. Additional Evaluation Criterea.

1) Current Programs

Over the years the reputation of The Lords Abode has spread and most local authorities in the areas in which we operate are aware of us and make referrals on that basis. Our focus has been to help the homeless, destitute, drug addicts, alcoholics as well as helping unemployable breadwinners. The way in which we operate is to provide a "home" for such people and this is achieved is by the small intimate and caring environment that we maintain. This forces the individuals who participate to face issues which they have avoided and have brought them to this place of neglect and isolation. We have shown this compassion on all who have come to us or been referred, regardless of race, creed or gender.

Both our farms provide everything that the people need, for those who stay on the farms. We have a number of women who come and do daily work. These people are usually handicapped and not employable elsewhere. They work in return for food, clothing and when available furniture, toys and other items that we receive as donations. For the short hours they work (3 hrs) and for what they receive there is no shortage of people that come. Many times we have to turn people away. Many people have worked with us for years and we have become friends and watched their children grow up.

The Garden project in Johannesburg was started 4 years back to provide for the people and it is an extremely successful venture. It covers an area of 90m x 90m. A tractor is used to till and rotivate the ground before planting. A neighboring farmer is giving us cow manure very cheaply. This is ensuring a very high quality of crop which is given to the workers. Some have been allowed to set up businesses and sell the produce. The workers, who are all women and breadwinners, and their families are ensured a good selection of high quality vegetables the year round.

On the Tzaneen farm we have a smaller garden (30m x 15m) and it is not practical to use a tractor in this area. We also have a 1000 mango trees which are managed through the year and harvested from Sept to December. We truck up clothes and other supplies from our Johannesburg farm to maintain this farm.

There have been several other construction programs that have taken place and we have successfully used these to skill up the local youth in many aspects of building like steelwork, brickwork, plastering, woodwork etc. They have also being shown how to use a wide range of power tools. These projects have been really enthusiastically received and participants have enjoyed themselves during their holidays.

We have always had animals, cows, goats, sheep, pigs, dogs, and hens that have cared for by the people. This, we have found is very therapeutic for people as well as providing meat for the household.

The Lords Abode also ran a computer school which was free to the public, who had basic mathematics literacy and could speak English. This was extremely successful and many of the students have gone on to hold responsible jobs and are still in touch with our members to the day.

These projects allow us to interact intimately with the people and assist them with many of their problems. It has made us realize the importance of a close engagement with the people. The opportunity of the school is going to present us with greater access to the people and really allow us to affect their lives in a more positive way. It is really an extension of the existing work that we have been doing for years.

2) Affiliation with other organizations.

Many of our members are involved with other churches or organizations. Our referrals are from all sorts of government organizations and this has been purely based on our reputation who feel that we are a shelter that can be trusted with the care of vulnerable people that they bring. Such people would be battered wives, single mothers, runaway children and the like. Many individuals also feel comfortable in leaving their children, elderly, sickly even drug addicted members of their family knowing that we have a suitable environment.

There are many people that over the years have come across our path and have maintained contact with us and supported our organization. During the holidays a number of these people make use of the spare houses that we have on the property and spend time assisting with our work as well as holidaying in the area. Typically these are professional, business and church people as well as those who have stayed with us over the years and have managed to make contact again.

3) Evaluation.

In terms of the law we are compliant with all the requirements of the relevant government bodies, Dept. of health and Social Development, NGO Section 21 (US equivalent is 503(c)(3)), CIPC, SARS (Tax Exempt and Status 18A). Our accounts are audited annually and minutes of the annual meetings, and a narrative report as well as audits are sent in to Dept of Health and Soc Dev.

4) Sustainability

Our approach over the years has been cautious and with our limited resources we have always been able to meet the basic needs of those who came to us for help. On the farms that we worked we ensured that people worked and this has both helped them to be a contributing member of the community and at the same time we ensured sustainability of our work and organization. We have found that we may not necessarily have luxuries but at the same time we have lacked nothing.

With the school we have adopted the same approach and have ensured that the same care and consideration of the community and with this conservative start to the school have prevented any over extension on our part and have eliminated risks.