

WCAPD NEWS

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Affiliated to



The National Council for Persons
with Physical Disabilities in SA

Hambisela

Towards Excellence in Therapy for Cerebral Palsy



The mission of Hambisela is to improve the level and intensity of therapeutically-correct ongoing care received by individuals affected by cerebral palsy in the broad community, to enable them to realize their maximum life potential.

Hambisela is a Xhosa word which means "make progress", and is used in the context of progressing towards a goal.

In pursuit of its mission, Hambisela transfers basic therapeutically-correct skills to parents and primary caregivers, and also trains suitable individuals from rural communities as Hambisela Facilitators, to transfer these basic skills to parents and caregivers in their communities.

The need

Parents and caregivers are in the front-line of caring for individuals affected by cerebral palsy and assisting with their treatment. Historically, individuals in rural or under-developed areas had no or limited access to skills and training to assist them with skills development. This very often compromised the level of primary care that individuals affected by cerebral palsy could obtain in these areas. Most children with cerebral palsy cannot receive regular therapy. Many of them visit a clinic once in 1-3 months. There are also very few trained therapist who can provide therapy for these children, especially in rural areas. A 1-hour session a month is unlikely to benefit a child's development, unless there is very good carry-over to the home environment. The other 700 hours a month are spent with the caregiver(s). If the child can be handled and positioned on a daily basis in a beneficial and therapeutic way, it will make a much bigger difference in the development of that child than a monthly therapy session can.

Objective

The primary objective of the project is to improve the exposure of individuals affected by cerebral palsy to the key treatment necessary to maximise their potential for development.

This is achieved by enabling families and caregivers to provide a basic level of beneficial therapeutically-correct ongoing care.

Functions

Key functions of the Hambisela project are therefore:

- formulation and development or adoption of appropriate training courses;
- presentation of these training courses to parents or caregivers of individuals affected by cerebral palsy;
- presentation of "train-the-trainer" courses to transfer skills into the communities of the Eastern Cape;
- further development of the pool of specialised therapeutic skills relevant to the treatment of individuals affected by cerebral palsy.

Programme Conceptualization

The caregiver / parent training program is conceptualized as follows:

- Increase the understanding of cerebral palsy as a condition, and how it affects a person;



- Increase the level of basic skills in handling, feeding, communication, play, and everyday activities – these skills are based on sound therapeutic principles;
- Aimed at individuals who are directly involved in caring for persons with cerebral palsy on a daily basis – i.e. parents and caregivers;
- Content must be understandable to individuals at all levels of education / literacy;
- Facilitated by a person who is based in the community.

Content

Drawing on a number of open-source and other publications (with permission), the Programme content has been developed as a core of 7 modules, each dealing with specific elements (see Modules)

Each module comprises a Facilitator Manual,

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an Activity Pack, course display material, and a Trainee Handout. The draft modules were circulated to a review panel of therapists to ensure the integrity of the content.

The Facilitator Manual, Activity Pack and display material are used by the Facilitator for the presentation of the Programme, and include detail addressed to the Facilitator on how to present the Module. The Trainee Handout contains only the subject material, and can be distributed to trainees at the end of the Module as a take-home reference.

Although all the materials and the presentation of the modules will ultimately be in the trainee's home language, the materials have been developed in English. Translation into other languages, initially Xhosa and Afrikaans, will be undertaken in the next stage of the project.

To maximize the reach and impact of the Programme, and encourage communities to develop a community-based enablement model towards cerebral palsy, the modules will be facilitated in the community by suitable members of that community, trained by Hambisela using a "train-the-trainer" course. The facilitators will then be provided with the materials required to present the modules in their community, and Hambisela will thereafter monitor the progress and quality of the training to ensure effective and accurate training of caregivers.

Feedback Received on the Project

Substantial positive feedback on the overall project has been received during the development process.

Many of the professional therapists involved in the review panel have indicated their interest in using the Hambisela training modules in their community programmes. Word has also spread to community members that the project is in the trial stage, and they have made contact to enquire when they can become involved.

Overall, the positive feedback and discussions held with a wide range of interested and affected parties confirms both the need for the training programme, and the appropriateness of the Hambisela program to meet that need.

Contact Us

If you are interested in getting involved with Hambisela, or would like to offer or attend the Hambisela Programme in your area, please contact us.

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WESTERN CAPE APD PILOTS HAMBISELA

Recognising the tremendous need for Hambisela training in the rural areas of the Western Cape, Western Cape APD has secured partial funding from the National Association for Persons with Cerebral Palsy for a pilot project to be launched and run at Paarl Stimulation Centre. It is envisaged that future funding will allow 2 persons at each Branch to be trained through the programme, thereby assisting Hambisela to reach their objective of exposing individuals to key treatment, in order to maximize their potential for development.

Lara presents the Hambisela training

Comings and goings....

Leigh-Ann Richards joined the WCAPD team in January as the OT responsible for Work & Employment.

Elize Koopman resigned as social worker at Witzenberg APD.

Marika Loubser is the new social worker at Drakenstein APD, while **Heinmir Jack** resigned as M&P Officer from the same branch.

Catherine Hart began employment as a social worker at West Coast APD.

Zanlie Botha was appointed in an admin position at Olifantsrivier APD.

Annetjie Craford has joined the social work team at George APD.

NCPDOSA and QASA tackle access issues

The implementation of The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has a long way to go and most South Africans with disabilities are not able to move freely from their homes, are not able to use public transport and are not able to enter public buildings. The South African situation is that the physical environment hinders persons with disabilities from gaining access to public transport and most buildings.

By a mandate from the South African Disability Alliance (SADA) to deal with access issues in South Africa, QASA and the National Council for Persons with Disabilities (NCPDOSA) have formed the National Access Authority (NAA). NAA's mandate is to be a coordinating body on access issues and an information portal for accessibility information.

NAA have employed an Access Officer to carry out the core functions of NAA. The Access Officer is available to solicit and investigate queries on access problems, inspect transgressions of the National Building Regulations and resolve any other problems experienced by persons with disabilities in the physical environment. The Access Officer will also source and library information on access for distribution and on request from any person.

It is aimed that the Access Officer will also formulate a national parking disc policy, collect and manage a database of accessible tourism destinations and stimulate public awareness of access issues.

Jeremy Deysel, was appointed as the QASA / NPCDOSA Access Officer and commenced his duties on the 1st of February 2010. Jeremy has been actively involved in the disability sector for 2 years and is excited about his role as Access Officer as it combines his passion for both the disability sector and accessibility.

Jeremy aspires to coordinate access standards



Jeremy Deysel, equipped with tape measure and spirit level, eager to assist with access issues.

in South Africa, create database of access auditors and respond to individuals access issues on a daily basis. Jeremy envisages working hand in hand with government, businesses, professional associations and NGOs creating partnerships, awareness and acceptance of the rights of persons with disabilities. Jeremy dreams of an accessible South Africa and plans to be actively involved in the preparation of new buildings and re-structuring of existing buildings for accessibility for all. Lobbying for the rights of persons with disabilities is also part of his agenda.

For more information or assistance, contact Jeremy Deysel on 073 345 3805 or jeremy.deysel@ncppdsa.org.za

NAA's mandate is to be a coordinating body on access issues and an information portal For accessibility information.

OUDE LIBERTAS AMPHITHEATRE PUTS PEOPLE FIRST WITH OTICON LOOP SYSTEM

The Oude Libertas Amphitheatre in Stellenbosch has since its inception 32 years ago, become a beacon within the South African Arts and Culture scene. Every Summer Season the theatre presents outstanding productions to a varied audience. A generous sponsorship by Oticon has enabled the Oude Libertas Amphitheatre to offer, for the first time, a facility that'll make the wonderful world of theatre accessible to the hearing impaired community. The Oude Libertas Amphitheatre is looking forward, with great excitement; to welcome the hearing impaired community and their families to the theatre.

Bookings can be made at Computicket or by phoning the theatre on 021 809 7473 or 021 809 7380. www.oudelibertas.co.za.



ROAD SAFETY "BUCKLE UP CAMPAIGN" SECURES MORE COMMITMENT

Once again, 3 Branches of Western Cape APD, Cape Town, Olifantsrivier and Oudtshoorn, participated in the road safety project entitled the Buckle Up Campaign established and run by the QuadPara Association of South Africa. The object of the Campaign is to secure commitment from the public to always wear a safety belt when travelling, so as to minimize the incidence of spinal cord injury and other disabilities resulting from motor vehicle accidents.

Persons with disabilities who themselves became injured in this way are proponents of the Campaign, and serve as a warning to the public of the consequences of not wearing a seatbelt. Clients also benefit from the project as they find their self-confidence boosted by their interaction with the public in a meaningful way.

Feedback received from Branches includes-

Baie van sommige motoriste se siening van gestremdes het verander, want sodra hulle stop wou hulle "ag shame" en dan geld aanbied. Die feit dat ons gestremde persone dan vir hulle sê ons wil nie geld hê nie, maar vra vir hulle om vas te gordel het heeltemal hulle 'n ander persepsie van gestremdheid gegee. Ons gestremde persone, veral die 2 wat deelgeneem het wat self in motorongelukke was, het die boodskap baie duidelik na vore gebring. Ook die feit dat al was die veldtog net vir 'n paar dae, dat al 3 gestremde persone uit daardie eensame atmosfeer kon kom en tussen ander mense kon wees. Ons gestremdes het baie meer selfvertroue en het die veldtog verskriklik geniet. Ons plaaslike Maatskaplike Departement het almal kom pledge om vas te gordel.

*Eshida May
Oudtshoorn APD*

My mense was nogal spyt dat hulle nie in Januarie ook kon gaan handtekening kry nie—hulle is heel ywerig!

*Carin Conradie
Olifantsrivier APD*



A campaigner gives a licence sticker to someone who has pledged to buckle up



The group in Oudtshoorn who assisted with the campaign

"Baie van sommige motorist se siening van gestremdes het verander, ..."

COMBINED STAFF DEVELOPMENT

During the last week of November 2009, a combined staff development training was held at Goudini Spa, Rawsonville for social workers, social auxiliary worker, community development workers, fundraisers and marketing & promotion officers.

The training was funded by HWSETA (Health & Welfare Sector Education and Training Authority), received via application by NCPPDSA, and followed on from the national training workshops held in Bloemfontein during the first half of the year.

There was a tremendous amount of work to cover and with only 4 days at our disposal, the programme was extremely full. Topics covered included -

- personal stories on disability by Anthony Ghillino (SCI), cerebral palsy (Hilary Lane), deafness (Neil Laufs) and muscular dystro-

- phy (Thys Blom)
- Developing a sensitisation training programme (Sandra Goosen, Free State APD)
- Principles of universal design (Guy Davies, Disability Solutions)
- Principles of community development (Neva Smith, WCAPD)
- Fundraising (Ray Blecher, WCAPD)
- Independent living (Russell Vollmer, CapeAble)
- Criteria for public speaking (Erica Laspé, WCAPD)

Staff were also given the opportunity to network, as well as spend time together in a relaxed setting. This proved invaluable as one Branch staff member was heard to point out that they are so busy during the day, they rarely get an opportunity to get to know each other properly.

We trust that Branches will put their new-found knowledge to good use, and assure them that Western Cape APD will continue to prioritise investment in our human resources.



Ray explains the fundamentals of fundraising



Working in groups

A group assesses the accessibility of the venue



Neil discusses deafness



Sandra presents on sensitisation

A good-hearted person

"Hey Brian," Tsukudu's voice booms. A hand appears from the driver's side and waves. Inside Arbor Village, an old man spots Tsukudu and calls out "Pick 'n Pay!" "We've got lots of your paw-paws in the store," comes the friendly reply.

And so it goes for the man who, overnight, transformed from being a long-time friend to a mini-celebrity inside the Bedfordview retirement village. The fame came after a stranger photographed Tsukudu walking down a busy road and carrying a frail 75-year-old resident on his back. The man Tsukudu rescued, Danie Britz, had missed his bus home and collapsed at a petrol station near the Bedford Centre.

But, in truth, anyone who has known Tsukudu in the 24 years he has worked at the centre's Pick n Pay would know that the act of kindness was not extraordinary. It was just Sam.

The photograph, taken by a shopper, was also sent to Pick n Pay boss Raymond Ackerman. On Monday, Ackerman sent a signed letter that read: "This is really going beyond the call of duty, Sam, and I would like to congratulate you and thank you for what you are doing."

Tsukudu is a tall, burly, 42-year-old who has five children and loves to spend his time gardening or watching birds with a glass of Coke. He joined Pick n Pay in 1986 as a shelf packer and today works in the vegetable department.



He delivers groceries to those too old to fetch them. He walks a blind man - John Chandler - home from the store and helps him unpack his groceries. Over a 10-year friendship, Tsukudu learnt to decode what groceries Chandler needs, because his wife has a habit of tearing off bits of the washing powder box, a lid from the pilchards tin or the top of a pasta container. Once, when it was pouring with rain, Tsukudu used his own car to drive John to the shop.

For the man himself, it's just another day of doing what he loves. "I'm a person with a good heart. If I see someone struggling, I'll help. I grew up going to church... I love doing good things."

Edited—This article was originally published on page 6 of The Star on January 22, 2010

DATES TO DIARISE

26 February

Launch of the car competition

12–14 April

Staff Development

9–11 March

Orientation at WCAPD

23 April

WCAPD team building

a home away from home

Lentha's Lodge offers a very private and modern accommodation for the business person, traveler and tourist. We guarantee a warm atmosphere where you'll feel at home! The rooms are elegantly and individually decorated. All rooms are equipped with TV, including DSTV (guesthouse package), heaters, fans, hair-dryers and luxurious blankets.

Guests can relax in the beautiful garden and braai in the indoor lapa. We are situated in a peaceful, up market suburb of Langenhoven Park within 3–15km from the Windmill Casino, University of the Free State, the main shopping malls and hospitals in Bloemfontein. We cater for the needs of persons with disabilities. Easy access to the N1 is an advantage to travelers. We also offer venue for small & intimate functions.

DIRECTIONS TO LENTHA'S LODGE

- Take the Nelson Mandela off ramp from the N1
- From Colesberg turn left at robot; From Johannesburg turn right at robot
- Drive till Total Garage on left and turn left in **Du Plessis Road**
- Drive short distance and turn left again at **Karl Kielblock Street**
- Pass Steers on the left
- Pass 3 short streets on the right (Andre P Brink, Breyten and Hennie Aucamp)
- Turn right in Eugene Marais Street
- We are the 3rd house on the left, Eugene Marais Street 32

WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE

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 E-mail: lenthaslodge@live.com

KERSVADER DEEL GESKENKE UIT AAN MIRACLES WERKSWINKEL

Me Colleen Huga van Wimpy N1 Stad het die Miracles Werkswinkel gekies as die begunstigdes van die jaarlikse "Tree of Joy" -projek. Lede van die publiek het die geleentheid gehad om aan elkeen van die kliënte in die werkswinkel 'n geskenk te koop.

Die geskenke is deur Kersvader en sy elfie aan die werkswinkel kliënte oorhandig tydens 'n spesiale ete op 22 Desember 2009 by Wimpy N1 Stad. Dit was vir die kliënte 'n besondere geleentheid en hul opregte dank en waardering word teenoor me Hugo en haar personeel en vrywilligers wat die geleentheid moontlik gemaak het.



Ronel Smit
Werkswinkel Bestuurder
Tygerberg APD

Kliënte van die Miracles
Werkswinkel geniet hul kers-
funksie by Wimpy.

KAREL GOES TO BUMBLE BEE PLAYGROUP



Karel and his friends explain that children with disabilities must be treated with respect

On 17 February, Karel the puppet made his debut at Bumble Bee playgroup in Vierlanden, Durbanville.

Karel and his friends, Ouma Let, Cassie and Thula, presented a show to youngsters telling them about treating children with disabilities with respect.

Thula played the part of the bully calling Karel names and making fun of his disability, and Cassie and Ouma Let explained to the children that everyone must be treated with respect and dignity.



Karel and Celista receive a donation from Pauline Bekker of the Bumble Bee playgroup

The youngsters engaged with the stars of the show and sang them a song in appreciation. The playgroup had a fundraising concert and donated the money to Tygerberg APD towards a project for children with disabilities.

A heartfelt thanks to the volunteers and Mrs Pauline Bekker, her staff and the children of Bumble Bee playgroup for making this a memorable event.

Celista Gerber
CEO, Tygerberg APD

Western Cape activities

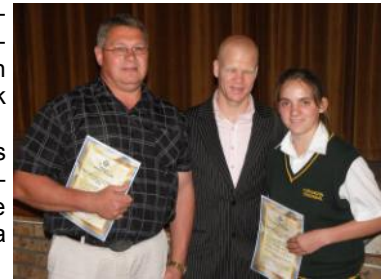
Somerset West — The first Senecio fun run was held last year in May at the Lourensford Wine Estate. There were over 200 participants who had the choice of walking the 4/8 km route, jogging the route or doing it in a wheelchair. This year Senecio APD aim to double the amount of participants at the event on 17 April who may choose to run, walk or wheel the 4 / 8 km route.



Athlone—Cape Town APD took delivery of a 15-seater Toyota Quantum Sesfikile bus on 2 February 2010, thanks to their 2008 National Lottery Board allocation.

Vredendal—Na baie jare se stoei om 'n sportpersoonlikheid met 'n gestremdheid by Vredendal Sportklub se prysuitdeling te kry, het ons Vir Hilton Langenhoven (albinisme en visually impaired - 20% sig) as gasspreker gehad wat dan ook pryse oorhandig het aan sportsterre.

Ons sportvrou van die jaar met gestremdheid is Ida Carstens en die sportman van die jaar met gestremdheid is Andre Esterhuizen. Die nominasies is net so voorgelees tydens die Sportbanket en beide word genomineer vir die Matzikama Sport forum wat op 20 November 2009 sal geskied.



Ceres—Witzenberg APD het op 31 Oktober 2009 hul eerste golfdag in Ceres aangebied, in samewerking met Jumbo Liquor Deli. Aangesien Jumbo Liquor Deli se golfdag reeds 'n instelling in die gemeenskap is, was dié 4 bal golfdag baie gou stamp vol. Daar was baie pryse te wen, en ten spyte van die vreeslike hitte het elke golfspeler sy beste gelewer. Daar was nietemin 'n hele paar rooigesig oomblike, tot groot vermaak van die toeskouers. Die groot prystrekking, ter waarde van R16 000-00, het die aand plaasgevind. Die aand het op 'n hoë noot afgesluit met 'n spitbraai en die vrolike luim van die dag het tot laat die aand nog voortgeduur.

Oudtshoorn— As deel van die 16 dae teen geweld teen vroue en kinders en HIV/AIDS het ons 'n inligtingsessie gehou op 8 Desember by ons werkwinkel te Dysselsdorp. Geweld is een van die oorsake hoekom baie vrouens gestremd is. Op hierdie dag het een van ons kliënte wie self die slagoffer van geweld is, ander vrouens aangemoedig om die stilte te verbreek. Geweld het veroorsaak dat sy vandag 'n gestremde persoon is, en sy voel deur die inligting sessie dat sy ander persone van hulp kan wees.



Oudtshoorn—Op 3 Desember 2009 is Internasionale Dag vir Persone met Gestremdhede op Oudtshoorn gevier. APD Oudtshoorn, insamewerking met Departement Maatskaplike Dienste, Oudtshoorn Munisipaliteit, Eden Munisipaliteit en Sport en Rekreasie het hierdie dag moontlik gemaak. Die doel van die dag was om veral die gestremde persone op ons landelike gebiede te betrek omdat hul baie kere vergeet word. Ook is erkenning gegee aan gestremde persone wat goed vaar op sportgebied deurdat hulle hierdie dag medalje' ontvang het. Daar was ook rolstoelreises waaraan meer ervare gestremde persone kon deelneem en die roete was 5km en 10 km. Daar was 'n "fun event" waar aan elkeen kon deelneem. Die dag is afgesluit met binnehuisse speletjies en gevolg deur 'n heerlike ete.

Broadcasts from Stellenbosch

The Train-the-Trainer programme has been broadcast each month for the past 2 years to various venues in the country in an effort to empower persons with disabilities to learn more about their own disability, and to speak out within their community. These broadcasts are now complete and available on DVD for future training.

The University of Stellenbosch has indicated that they are willing to continue sponsoring studio space and broadcast time. Consequently, NCPPDSA has decided to use these hour long monthly broadcasts to discuss disability matters.

Unfortunately, the only sponsored venues in the Western Cape are in Stellenbosch and Worcester, and Branches in these areas are encouraged to make use of the opportunity to attend the broadcasts, and in so doing, not only increase their knowledge of disability issues, but interact with other staff and volunteers of APD provinces across the country. Broadcasts begin promptly at 10H30 on scheduled days.

Date	Topic	Guest
24 Mar	Unit Standard – The Human Rights Perspective	Therina Wentzel Fanie du Toit Daan
7 Apr	Integration – UN Convention	Fanie du Toit Mark Webber PWD
6 May	Labour Market	Fanie du Toit Versha Rowjee Vodacom DVD
3 Jun	Youth	Fanie du Toit Petra Burger's contact
14 Jul	Assistive Devices	Fanie du Toit Brian Robertson, Oticon
11 Aug	Women	Fanie du Toit Women's Forum
8 Sept	Arts & Culture	Fanie du Toit TBA
6 Oct	Transport	Fanie du Toit Deon Rademeyer
17 Nov	Prevention	Fanie du Toit WCAPD Puppets PWD



DIS DIE EEN

The following topics will be dealt with during March and April on Leefwêreld van die Gestremde on Radio RSG on Sundays at 14H15 -

Date	Topic	Guest
7 Mar	Volunteersim	Justice Pat Tebbutt
14 Mar	Wheels 4 Wheels	Cindy Wiggett-Barnard Erica Laspé
21 Mar	Western Cape Rehabilitation Centre	Jenny Hendry
28 Mar	Depression	Riana Nieuwoudt
4 Apr	Correct seating	Elsje Scheffler
11 Apr	Reinhardt's Place	Elize Botha
18 Apr	Peer Group Training	Jenny Hendry
25 Apr	Carpe Diem School	Karools Hauptfleisch

DISABILITY SMS INFO SERVICE

Disabled people, especially those living in rural parts of South Africa, often find it difficult to get information about the rehabilitation services that are available to them from government departments and NGOs in their area.

This new SMS information service is available to anyone with access to a cellphone who sends an SMS with their name, town and the information they need to—072-172 2623

An SMS will be sent back to the caller with contact info for the nearest service provider to them. An email will be sent to the service provide to ask them to make direct contact with the caller. After a week or so, a follow-up email will be sent to the service provider to monitor what service has been provided.

Please note that 072-172 2623 is NOT a call centre and will only respond to a standard SMS. There are no extra SMS charges. The service is NOT designed to provide detailed information to the caller— that should be done by the service provider.

Government departments and NGOs are asked to please use their networks to notify disabled people throughout South Africa of this service and to share this media release with their medical staff, therapists, social workers, teachers and all staff who come into contact with disabled people.

We would like to thank AXXESS DSL for sponsoring the SMS to PC system and providing us with technical back-up.

Tony and Tim Webb
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apd

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ShareCall : 0861 APD INFO
0861 273 4636

More information

South African
Depression & Anxiety
Group (SADAG)
0800 70 80 90
zane1@hargray.com

Suicide Helpline
0800 567 567
SMS : 31393

Mental Health Line
(011) 262-6396

Substance Abuse
0800 12 13 14
SMS : 32313

Views and opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the writer, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Association, it's staff, volunteers, donors or members.

Focus on

Achondroplasia (Dwarfism)

What is Dwarfism?

There are many conditions and diseases that can cause short stature. Some of these conditions involve a primary bone disorder -- the bones do not grow and develop normally. These conditions are called *skeletal dysplasias* or *chondrodystrophies*. People with disproportionate short stature often refer to themselves as dwarfs or short-statured persons. More than 100 specific skeletal dysplasias have been identified. Of these, achondroplasia is the most common. It occurs in all races and with equal frequency in males and females, and affects about one in every 25,000 children. Achondroplasia is recognizable at birth and after the 24th week of gestation using ultrasound. It is estimated that there are about 10,000 individuals with achondroplasia in the United States.

Characteristics

- Moderately enlarged head
- Average height and size trunk
- Short limbs
- Underdevelopment of the mid-third of the face so that the nasal bridge is relatively low or flat
- Short fingers with excessive separation of the fingertips, especially the third and fourth fingers

Challenges of disability

Children with achondroplasia may **reach motor milestones of development slowly**. For instance, good head control may not occur until the infant is three or four months old, because it takes longer to develop the muscular strength necessary to control the large head. Though there are exceptions, many children do not walk until relatively late, often between 24 and 36 months. Ultimately, overall development is usually normal.

Weight control is a frequent and lifelong problem for many people with this disorder. Both children and adults must be careful of their nutrition because they are prone to add excess weight.

Children with achondroplasia have a tendency toward **chronic ear, nose and throat infections** in the first five or six years of life, probably due to abnormal drainage of the tube from the middle ear to the throat. The basic cause is faulty development of the bone structure. If these infections are not recognised and treated, or are resistant to

treatment, the child may sustain significant hearing loss. Each infection should be treated promptly and the child's hearing tested regularly. Many children with achondroplasia require ear "tubes" for treatment of recurrent ear infections.

Orthodontic problems caused by overcrowding of teeth (especially those of the upper jaw) may occur. Malocclusion (poor bite) often results and makes good oral hygiene difficult. In addition to ordinary dental care, orthodontic treatment may be necessary.

Young children with achondroplasia are at increased risk for specific **neurologic and respiratory problems** in some cases. These result from smaller openings in the skull, particularly at the foramen magnum (or "large window") at the base of the skull. In some cases, surgery is required to enlarge this opening and relieve pressure on the base of the brain and spinal cord.

Common **orthopaedic problems** in childhood include a reverse curvature (kyphosis) of the lower spine in infancy, and bowed legs, which may develop any time after children begin to walk. The spinal kyphosis usually resolves without treatment, but may require bracing or surgery if it persists. Bowed legs may be treated by bracing or orthopaedic surgery.

Older children and adults frequently experience fatigue, numbness, or pain in the lower back and thighs. Often these complaints are simple **muscular problems** that do not require special care. If they are persistent or severe, the person should be evaluated by a physician, perhaps a neurologist. Nerve or spinal-cord problems are common because of the narrow spinal canal, particularly in the lower back.

