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UPDATE

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January 2022

Chance to nominate for the Barry Wood Award
Work-ready training
Botanic Gardens steps in to help
African Jesuits have an experience as interns



Preparing homeless people for work



Greenery emerging in the mud



Two Jesuits assisting at the DHC

NOMINATE A STAFF MEMBER OR VOLUNTEER FOR AN AWARD

If you are reading this mailing, you are a supporter of the DHC and so entitled to send nominations for our annual Awards for Outstanding Service, given each year to a staff member and a volunteer.

They are named after Bishop Barry Wood, a great friend of the DHC and, like Archbishop Hurley, a member of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI). Right up until his death almost five years ago, +Barry's life was committed to service; so we set up an award in his honour to recognise people who, like him, set an outstanding example.

Attached is a nomination form and more details about the award criteria. You can nominate a staff member, or a volunteer, or both. Please have a think about the people you know who work at the DHC (paid or unpaid), and complete the form and submit by Monday 7 February.

The award winners will be announced at our AGM which takes place IN PERSON at the DHC at 3pm on Sat 12 February. The AGM will also include a review of the year, a discussion on what the legacy of Archbishops Hurley and Tutu means to young people, the announcement of new Patrons, live music (from 2pm) and a chance for people to connect. If you are in or near Durban,

do come and join us - we have missed seeing you! If you are further away, we will not be able to livestream the event but extracts of it will be available on-line afterwards.

This is the start of our annual Hurley Weekend; it will be followed by Memorial Masses for Archbishop Hurley on his death anniversary (13 February) led by the new Archbishop of Durban, +Mandla Jwara.

The picture below shows our Director with two of the 2019 award winners, Nonhlanhla Ndlovu (left) and Reshma Singh.



PREPARING HOMELESS PEOPLE FOR WORK

Most people who are homeless in Durban find themselves in this situation because they came to the city looking for work and were not able to find it. In the HSRC survey of the homeless, we found that 72% of people said that what would be most effective in stopping them being homeless was 'Work'!

We are thus pleased to be part of an initiative from the President's Employment Stimulus Package which is being used to fund a Public Employment Programme (PEP) in eThekweni and other municipalities around the country.

Money has been allocated to be spent by end of June to pay unemployed people to carry out projects that will make a direct impact in their own wards. Reassuringly, eThekweni is delegating the task of running the projects to community organisations like the DHC so that they make a real difference in each area.

We wanted to make sure that homeless people were not excluded from this programme, so we have special permission to recruit workers from among the homeless. Thus, for the past two weeks, we have been running a job-readiness course, each three-day session with 15 candidates.

The course was led by our economic empowerment officer Stuart Talbot, social auxiliary worker Mbali Dumakude, and Bongani Madida, a formerly homeless man who previously worked with us to run one of the lockdown shelters. Each day included elements of personal reflection as well as group exercises in which the participants were able to show their skills and abilities. They also heard inspiring testimony from Stephen Malatji who has gone from homeless man to waste-preneur with the assistance of the Denis Hurley Centre.

In one fun exercise, the candidates had to find objects on the streets that they could build into a 'tower of wealth'. For another exercise they went out on the streets to identify specific projects that they could imagine improving the local environment. At the end, the participants were assessed for punctuality, workplace discipline, communication, goal-setting, giving and

receiving feedback and working in teams.

Speaking at the weekly staff prayers, one participant commented on how much he felt he had grown so he could now learn from the mistakes he had made in the past. Another said: "I have learnt that being homeless is not the end of the road - this storm will pass."

All being well, the deployment of workers will start in February and we look forward to reporting back in future months. We are pleased that other precinct stakeholders - institutions like the Grey Street Mosque, Hindu Surat Building and the Victoria Street market, as well as local landlords - have been working closely with us to identify possible activities.

One of the training teams seeing if their 'tower of wealth', made from items that had been discarded, will stand upright.



GREENING OUR DALTON COMPOUND

We are deeply indebted to staff from Durban Botanic Gardens for taking the initiative to 'green' our usually very muddy compound at Dalton. This is an area, 2km from the Denis Hurley Centre, where about 500 are people living, either in shacks inside a run-down beer hall or outside in the mud, beside a busy taxi rank and animal skin trading site.

In this poor and chaotic place, we run a clinic and a pre-school (for up to 20 four- and five-year-olds). Our two containers and the ground around are fenced off from the wider area but that does not stop rubbish blowing in. We initially asked Botanic Gardens to assist us with plants to grow a hedge that would keep the rubbish out. They sensibly suggested a hedge that would not have thorns that could harm the children.

But they then went further. They added plants around the compound to soften other areas, a tree to add more shade, and soft bark pieces under the jungle gym to make it safer for the children should they fall. When they saw the vegetable patch that our Community Healthcare Worker Mpume Fuze had started, they offered to help replant that as well. So we are especially grateful to Ken and Annabelle Burgess from Burgess Landscapes who donated a generous quantity of seedlings to kickstart the new vegetable garden.

Jennifer Rampersad and Martin Clement from Botanic Gardens have also offered training to our teacher, Charity Motaung, so that she can help the learners to understand more about growing food and caring for the environment.

These are definitely points of lights amid the squalor of Dalton. Despite years of complaining, endless meetings with city officials, and reporting in the media, the area is still shockingly dirty with overflowing sewage, uncollected rubbish and stagnant rainwater. It has now been taken over by the iTrump department: they have always assisted us in the Warwick area so we look forward to working with them (and the Umbilo Business Forum) to uplift this otherwise neglected community.

Just some of the many plants added by the Botanic Gardens team to green the Dalton compound - but you cannot see or smell the sewer overflow on the other side of the fence!



TWO JESUITS FROM AFRICA WORKING AT THE DHC

The training of Jesuit priests is renowned for how long and thorough it is. Now almost two decades after they started their formation, two Jesuit priests are completing their 'Tertiaship' in KZN under Fr Mike Lewis SJ and Fr Isaac Kiyaka; and a work placement at the DHC is part of their programme.

Gregory Mulobela is from Zambia (and so part of the new Southern Africa Province of the Society of Jesus which includes South Africa and eight other countries). He has been a Jesuit for 20 years and a priest for 9 years. He trained in Project Management before joining the Jesuits, and has since worked in a high school, a mission parish and rural development projects. Désiré Yamuremye is from Burundi where he was the founder of *Service Yezu Mwiza* ('compassionate Jesus'), a socio-medical centre at the service of the poor dealing with HIV and AIDS, TB, leprosy and reproductive health. He was also the representative of the Catholic Church in the Burundi Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

During their month with us, Greg will be focused on working with Sr Cathy's team in the Nkosinathi project; Désiré will be with the clinic team where his various languages from the Great Lakes region will be invaluable in assisting our refugee patients. As well as offering counselling and spiritual support, they will also turn their hands to whatever is asked of them, remembering that being 'at the service of the Church' is a watchword of the Jesuit's mission.

The two priests will also help out in the Cathedral parish, saying Masses on Sundays and during the week. And in their very first few days, they worked with our Director on leading three morning retreats to groups of learners (aged 14 to 18) at Fatima Dominican Convent School.

Greg is pleased to have this time engaged in the concrete care of marginalised people. He feels that it will give him a chance to reflect on his life and commitment as a Jesuit, away from systems-level thinking, and immersed instead in what he calls the Denis Hurley Centre's "sacred space".

It is good, for the first time, to have Jesuits involved hands-on in the work of the DHC. Archbishop Hurley and Paddy Kearney were both very fond of the Jesuits. Jesuits in the UK and South Africa assisted us with substantial donations when our building was being constructed and again during our COVID appeal in 2020 (for which we are very grateful). Pope Francis - the first ever Jesuit Pope - constantly reminds us of the importance of being 'the Church of the poor'. And our own Director spent six years as a trainee Jesuit and five years running the Jesuit Institute in Johannesburg. We share with them the view that all we do is: 'For the Greater Glory of God!'

Fr Greg (left) and Fr Désiré (right) assist nurse Clovis Dusabe in unpacking medicines in our pharmacy. This includes the quarterly donation of medicines that we receive from City Health, our only regular financial support from the SA Government.



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