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DENIS HURLEY CENTRE
Care • Education • Community
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UPDATE

ETHEKWINI Living Legends
Ukunakekela • Imfundo • Umphakathi
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July 2022

A range of donors and volunteers for Madiba
DHC team visit the DHGC
Volunteers from around the world
A variety of Cultural Activities on offer



People inspired by books!



Hand-made cards for sale



Remembering those we mourn

MANDELA DAY, OR WEEK, OR MONTH

Once a year, the United Nations-sanctioned 'Mandela Day' comes round on 18 July and like most NGOs we have mixed reactions: it is great that people notice the work of community organisations and want to 'do their bit'. It is not always helpful that they all want to do it on the same day, or that they try to do things without asking first! After all, for the DHC and organisations like us, helping the poor and marginalised is something we need help with for the other 364 days of the year as well.

A number of our established partners were especially active during our Mandela Month - most of them people who are already helping us for the rest of the year. Two of our usual supporter schools helped out: St Henry's by making sandwiches and a-meal-in-a-jar; Holy Family College by sending volunteers (with volunteers also coming from a new school connection, St James).

There were also sandwiches from Thusa (our wonderful IT support firm), the Jewish community and Musgrave Methodist Church. The SA College of Applied Psychology (SACAP) has sent students to volunteer earlier this year; in July, some of their staff came too. SACAP have also been assisting the wider NGO network through the SA Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG) who have set up a free helpline for NGO staff and volunteers who need support for their own mental wellness. SPAR's new superstore on West Street also arrived with a huge donation of food.

A new group who came in were Netcare Parklands Hospital who provided 100 free 'flu vaccines and toiletry packs as well as health education for staff and beneficiaries. And the Westville-based eThekweni Caterers took over the

preparation and serving of the hot meal on two days, giving some respite for our hard-working cooks. Another new connection was with the SA Institution of Civil Engineering who also donated blankets and food.

We especially treasure our link with Aspen Pharmacare – after all their CEO, Stephen Saad is one of our Patrons. Some of their staff came (as they have before) to volunteer while others made and sent in sandwiches; they also organised the making and distribution of 330 blankets for the residents of the Safe Opening Sleeping Space at North Beach which has been somewhat neglected of late.

So many thanks to all who helped on Mandela Day, through Mandela Month and indeed all the year round!

Photo: Nurses from Netcare Parklands teach simple but life-saving CPR to staff members and homeless guests. Many more photos on Facebook.



"WHEN I WRITE, I CAN SHAKE OFF ALL MY CARES"

The title is a quotation from the world-famous diary of Anne Frank. The Denis Hurley Centre team recently spent a day being inspired by her story.

We were guests of the [Durban Holocaust & Genocide Centre \(DHGC\)](#), who run an excellent educational programme to teach people about the Holocaust and also about genocides since then. It was interesting to see how little some of our team knew about World War Two and how absorbed they were by the stories of an innocent group who were marginalised, targeted, abused and then violently destroyed. People immediately saw echoes in our own work: of the way in which the homeless are sometimes treated as non-people or the easy political gains from stoking xenophobia. The exhibition's references to what happened in Rwanda and Burundi only 30 years ago also sparked some personal memories for a few of our staff.

We were welcomed by Mary Kluk, the founder of the centre and the Deputy President of the World Jewish Congress. As one of our Patrons, she shared stories of her own memories of +Hurley (when she was a student at Maris Stella Convent School) and also the way in which the Jewish community worked with Paddy Kearney to help set up the DHC. She was delighted to receive, as a gift for their library, some books that our Street Lit vendors had especially selected, as well as two new copies of 'The Betrayal of Anne Frank', donated by Bargain Books Musgrave to Street Lit to pass on to the DHGC (see photo above).

The group was also moved to watch the film 'Freedom Writers', the true story of a group of American high school students who, inspired by the example of Anne Frank, started writing their own stories too. When their hero, Miep Gies,

the woman who sheltered Anne Frank, flies from Europe to meet them, she says to the young people: "You are all heroes - for the lives you lead and the way you stand up for those in trouble." Those same words could be used of our team as well.

We have given notebooks to members of our team who wish to journal so they can discover for themselves how (in Anne Frank's own words) "writing allows me to record everything, all my thoughts, ideals and fantasies".

The DHGC welcomes individual visitors and groups especially from schools, churches and mosques. Please [contact them](#) for more information.

Photo: The DHC visitors were able to experience for themselves how small the room was in which Anne Frank lived with her family for over 2 years.



INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEERS ARE BACK!

The ending of COVID travel restrictions means that we have finally been able to welcome back overseas volunteers who have added so much to the rich tapestry of the DHC over the years.

Husband and wife doctors from the UK recently came and spent five weeks helping us. Dr Thea Rogers, who actually works in a clinic with homeless people in Leeds, was in the thick of our healthcare activities seeing patients in the centre, on the mobile and in our satellite clinic. "I had an absolutely amazing time working with such a kind and welcoming team and was inspired by all the incredible work being done in very tough circumstances. I would highly recommend volunteering at the DHC for anyone interested in inclusion healthcare as the experience I gained there was invaluable."

Dr Andy Irvine greatly assisted us by observing some of our practices and making recommendations about how we collect and use data. "As a public health specialist, it was a real privilege to see first-hand the impact that the DHC has on the lives of some of the most vulnerable people in Durban. The care and compassion they show, and the agency this gives their patients, is a great example of how to work with excluded populations."

For almost two months, we have also had the blessing of Sr Saroja and Sr Sahayanie from Sri Lanka who, like Sr Cathy, are 'Holy Family Sisters'. They were assisting in the kitchen and accompanying our homeless clients, listening to their stories and interacting with them. They also taught craft skills to some of our homeless women: an example of the beautiful cards and key rings they made are shown above.

The sisters commented: "We find that the DHC is a place where the homeless people are placed at the centre. Many of their basic needs are met. When they enter the gate, they are welcomed and treated like human beings, with respect. By listening to the life experiences of the homeless people, we were able to help respond to their deepest longing: to be accepted."

We also recently welcomed Jesuit priests from six different countries (across Africa and India); their visit coincided with a group of young Israelis from the TEN programme who have been living in Durban. IPCI has hosted many groups at the mosque for us but the combination of Jesuits and young Jews was certainly a first! TEN have been great partners of the DHC in the past and we look forward to welcoming future cohorts of their volunteers.

Photo: One of the Sri Lankan sisters teaching a homeless woman how to make beautiful cards out of rolled paper. We are looking for people to sell on the cards at churches: please contact Sr Cathy.



RE-IGNITING A CULTURAL HUB

The foundation stone of the DHC has the Scripture quotation (Jn 10:10) that promises "life to the full". That is why, alongside welfare, healthcare and training, culture has always played an important role in the activities of the DHC.

We were honoured to play host recently to an event called 'Mo(u)rning'. This was organised by Durban cultural producers, Tegan Peacock, Ash-Leigh La Foy, Niamh Walsh-Vorster and Thobile Ximba and took the form of a public vigil and art installation outside our building.

Between COVID, riots, floods and the impact on the local economy, many people in Durban have suffered loss in different ways. Artists have been

among those who are most vulnerable: but they also are in a position to help us grieve and move on. So the group invited artists and members of the public - people of all faiths and none - to come together to mourn our collective and individual losses.

Messages from around the country allowed for a shared space of reflection, while the creation and destruction of mandalas reminded those present of the fleeting nature of time and existence. (Readers might recall the wonderful experience, four years ago, when we hosted the creation of a Buddhist sand mandala: you can still see the 3 minute timelapse video here).

Together, the assembled group found a collective release that led to a celebration of hope, new beginnings and the heralding of a new dawn. The vigil was recorded and showcased at a gallery in Johannesburg. [Click here to see the trailer.](#)

After a few years of having been virtual because of COVID, festivals are back in person. The National Arts Festival in Makhanda featured three award-winning artists who are closely associated with us: the choreographer Musa Hlatshwayo and theatre-makers Neil Coppen and Mpume Mthombeni. Right now, the prestigious Durban International Film Festival (DIFF) is taking place. Once again, the DHC has been selected as a community venue, this year to show the wonderful film 'Sarafina' starring Whoopi Goldberg, on its 30th anniversary. Screenings are being held in our hall on Sunday 31 July to enable a new generation - homeless people and young Cathedral parishioners - to enjoy the film and learn more about the Soweto uprising.

Meantime, UKUSA (based at the School of Music at UKZN) continue to offer free music classes to all comers on a Saturday morning. And of course our Street Lit project, as well as providing a living for homeless people, is also ensuring that books with good literature and educational content are accessible at low, low prices.

Photo: One of the artists performing at the Mo(u)rning event



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Account: Denis Hurley Centre Trust A/C No. 622 0426 1002

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