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UPDATE

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August 2022

Pravin Gordhan delivers Paddy Kearney lecture

DHC team inspired by other NGOs

Exploring the issue of 'Spatial Justice'

Our Street Lit Co-ordinator receives an award



Reunited in the Valley of 1000 Hills



Re-imagining the role of the Church



A beautiful medal sent by the Queen

MARKING THE 80TH BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF OUR FOUNDER

August 28 would have been the 80th birthday of Paddy Kearney, had he not been taken from us so unexpectedly 4 years ago. The occasion was marked with the mix of social justice, spiritual upliftment and human connection for which he is warmly remembered.

The DHC hosted a lecture organised by the Gandhi Development Trust (of which Paddy was also Chair) and the Phoenix Settlement Trust. The welcome was given by Paddy's old friend Crispin Hemson: the two of them had worked with Ela Gandhi to set up ICON - the International Centre for Non-Violence at Durban University of Technology. Maggie Govender, a member of the KZN Provincial Legislature, then introduced the guest lecturer, Hon. Pravin Gordhan, who joined via video.

The current Minister of Public Enterprises and former Finance Minister, when a young pharmacist, had worked in this area and used to teach adult education classes in the old parish centre. He recalled fondly his time working with Paddy and +Hurley in the days of the Struggle, describing Paddy as 'An Activist for All Seasons': "His unique ability to combine spiritual transformation and beliefs with a remarkable activism and 'non-conformism' enabled him to embrace inter-faith, non-racial, inclusivity."

The full text of his speech and a video of the proceedings can be viewed online.

After the formalities, and a vote of thanks from Paddy's niece, Ursula de Haas, there was a time to celebrate our Founder over tea and cake and share stories about him.

The guests then moved into Emmanuel Cathedral – where Paddy had been a member of the Parish Pastoral Council for many years – for a Memorial Mass. In his homily, Fr Stephen Tully pointed out how the reading prescribed for the day was so fitting for Paddy: “My son, conduct your affairs with humility, and you will be loved more than a giver of gifts. The more you humble yourself, the greater you are, and you will find mercy in the sight of God.” (Sir 3: 17-18).

Music for the Mass was led by the Durban Chamber Choir who gave a searing rendition of Victoria's 'Missa O Magnum Mysterium' (you can hear their singing via this [YouTube link](#)). Fr Stephen pointed out that even in the messiness of our own lives, and the dirt and chaos of the city, this angelic music reminds us that when we turn to God our hearts can be lifted up.

In saying this, he was echoing some words of Minister Gordhan: “Like Paddy, we will know that our individual lives will wade through endless waves of struggle but not in vain. New milestones will be achieved. There will also be setbacks – such is the nature of history. But our progressive values, our conscience, and our resolve to constantly improve the world around us; will help us to deal with new contingences and realities.”

We are sure that, from a better place, Archbishop Hurley and Paddy are saying 'Amen' to that!

Our Gandhi-Luthuli Hall welcomed many guests and a Government Minister who joined us with the grace of technology. More photos available on our Facebook page.



STAFF TEAM INSPIRED BY VISITING OTHER NGOS

The area where we are based feels 1,000 miles away from the picturesque Valley of 1,000 Hills; but that is where the DHC team went as part of our Paddy celebrations. Each year we use 'Founder's Day' to reflect on what inspired Paddy to set up the DHC and also what continues to inspire our work today. About 20 of us visited three NGOs in the Valley, all with links to the DHC, to hear other stories of inspiration.

HOLAH provides a 'House of Love and Hope' (hence the name) to 14 children aged between one and ten years. The baby recently rescued by our clinic team from the streets of central Durban (see [March 2022 newsletter](#)) spent some time at HOLAH; they have now arranged for him to be taken by a family for longer-term temporary safe care, with a view to him one day being adopted.

Our staff met some of residents, many of whom have been abandoned by their families and also the pigs, donkeys, rabbits, cats and dogs that make up their menagerie of warmth and fun. We were also invited to visit one of the 'Gogo kitchens' in Molweni where members of the community serve food to 120 children every day after school.

We also visited Philakade, an extraordinary residential care centre set up by Pastor Leonard Gcabashe and Mary Ann Carpenter (who founded our clinic 7

years ago). They provide a safe and loving environment for 66 adults and children who cannot live at home, most of them with physical and intellectual disabilities. Several of the disabled homeless men we hosted during lockdown are now living permanently at Philakade (which in fact is the Zulu word for 'forever'). So it was a moment of joyful reunion for us to see 'our people' so happy and settled (*see photo above: our cook, Tracy Bolt with Kevin Leonard who had stayed with us during lockdown*).

The third visit was to the world-famous Hillcrest Aids Centre to see the 24-bed respite unit that supports people with severe AIDS symptoms and also stage-four cancer. Dr Stephen Carpenter, who is our volunteer doctor, also works there and he has, over the years, referred a number of homeless people to HAC for respite and end-of-life care. The team also had the pleasure of shopping at the second-hand craft shop, the nursery and the Woza Moya craft centre and then enjoyed a wonderful lunch at the new Ubuntu Ground Café.

The DHC team members were so inspired at all three locations to see the compassion and care shown by staff and volunteers. It helped them to recognise that they too are an inspiration to the people who see them at work in our centre.

As part of the day, we announced the introduction of a 'Paddy Grant': a sum of money for every staff member to enable them to pursue some area of personal development. Paddy was always committed to developing the individuals with whom he worked and we want to continue that tradition.

Check out [this video](#) on the full range of NGOs operating in the Valley of 1000 Hills.

Almost the whole of the DHC staff team, with Candace Davidson from the Hillcrest AIDS Centre. More photos available on our Facebook page.



RE-IMAGINING THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH AFTER THE FLOODS

In early August, we hosted an invigorating discussion looking at issues of 'spatial justice'. The event - entitled "Homes, buildings, land & space: Re-imagining what churches & Christians have done and can do in the wake of the Easter floods" - was convened by the Diakonia Council of Churches with our own Stuart Talbot leading the discussion alongside Caroline Powell who is based with The Warehouse Trust in Cape Town. (Caroline recently worked with our Director and others on a book called 'Facing Homelessness' which you can access [here](#)).

The horrific flooding in the KZN Province in April 2022, which left many in the metro and beyond traumatised, was the context for the event. Four months on and we are still living with a massive housing crisis. Too many people are still stuck in community halls or living in unsafe premises after their homes were destroyed. And, as in many instances, it is the poorest and most

economically and socially marginalised who were the hardest hit; shacks built on steep hills, settlements with no running water built on riverbanks for ease of access and so on.

We have seen, before our eyes, how poverty, injustice and inequality have led to real disparities in how the floods impacted different people – and in turn whether they have been able to rebuild. And all this when we are already facing challenges of spatial justice: homelessness is a situation faced by more and more people in our city; land (and who does or does not have access to it) is a fraught debate in South Africa; and shack-dwellers are regularly marginalised and victimised through forced removals and harsh treatment by officials.

Given this situation, the day was spent considering: “What is the call to the Church in this context? As we partner with God in the work of redemption and ‘making all things new’, how could we reimagine our role? And how could we reimagine what we can do in the wake of the floods and our on-going need for safe and decent housing?”

In the morning session, we took a deep dive into scripture and looked at how it can help to shape, inform and expand our understanding of spatial justice – and in turn how this can inform our action and direction of travel as a church. We did this using the Contextual Bible Study methodology pioneered by the Ujamaa Centre at UKZN (*see photo above*). For the afternoon session, we held a discussion where we shared stories from around the country around space, housing, homelessness and land. This session was a chance to locate the ideal of spatial justice in the South African story and to look at how the Church is and could be addressing spatial injustice.

All in all, a challenging and “imagination stretching” day! Do get in touch with Sarah Montgomery (who is be thanked for this report) if you would like to hear about future events like this.

Stuart also recently attended the 14th Biennial Consultation on Urban Ministry in Pretoria which ends – spectacularly – with the annual Feast of the Clowns a protest march that in the court jester tradition, draws attention to serious issues by poking fun! (*Photo below*)



ILLA RECOGNISED BY THE QUEEN OF ENGLAND!

We have reported before on the invaluable partnership that we have with St John – famous for their ambulances and eyecare – in helping our Street Lit project. They provide space for our bookstore with over 3,000 books ready for our vendors to make their selections before heading off to markets and venues to sell.

The key link for this is Illa Thompson, who has been our pro bono publicist for over 10 years and has been running the Street Lit project for the last three years. She was recently honoured at a prestigious ceremony where she was sworn in as a Member of the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem. The investiture was led by the Prior, the Most Revd Thabo Makgoba, Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town, at St George’s Church in Parktown, Johannesburg.

As well as being an NGO, St John is also a global chivalric order of the British Crown of which Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II is the Sovereign Head. Those candidates who are selected to receive awards are ones who promote

humanitarian and charitable work, and personify the ethos of St John which is all about the spiritual and moral strengthening of humankind.

St John, effectively one of the oldest NGOs in the world, stems from roots that began in the 11th Century. It is a global movement delivering first aid, healthcare and similar services, through a dedicated team of over 250,000 volunteers and staff in over 40 countries and territories. It is open to those of any faith, and no faith, who are prepared to share in its mission. Unlike other Crown Orders of Chivalry, the Order of St John is very much a working Order and this places special obligations and responsibilities on its Members.

Also honoured from the St John Durban office were Chris Martin (Special Projects Manager) and Fatima Hoosen. She is the director of their Eyecare services and we would strongly recommend them to anyone who is looking for affordable spectacles.

Our booksellers were thrilled for Illa's award as she stressed that it was very much a recognition of the way in which they had all worked so hard to transform their own lives. David van der Westhuizen who sells at KZNSA Gallery commented: "This gives me such hope for the future, for myself and the program. To know that our coordinator got recognised for her hard work and dedication warms my heart and encourages me to never give up. Thanks for everything Illa!"

The group of booksellers continues to grow as we return to venues that have not been available such as the Durban Exhibition Centre and events at schools. Please contact us if you have a venue or event in Durban where we can deploy a bookseller. The book vendors are also now working with OT students from UKZN to develop technical skills to enable on-line sales and the creation of tik-tok videos. Please 'Follow' their new Instagram page and wait to see what pops up in the next few weeks....

Illla with four of our booksellers, (left to right) Eric Badise, David Sithole, Alvin Dube and David van der Westhuizen (photo: Independent on Saturday)



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