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**UPDATE**

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**June 2023**

**'Round Table' at DUT to honour Paddy Kearney**

**Street Store returns for the 5th time**

**Two overseas cooks raising funds for us**

**A host of engagements with partners**

*Thank you to those who have expressed concern following the recent dramatic weather in Durban. We have been left relatively unscathed, but there are many in other parts of the city who have been badly affected and we ask you to remember them in your prayers.*



**Lisa Bobbert helps out at Street Store**



**St Henry's Marist volunteers**



**First Response training at St John**

**REMEMBERING PADDY KEARNEY THE PEACEMAKER**

One of the many organisations that our late founder Paddy Kearney helped create was ICON – the International Centre of Non-Violence at the Durban University of Technology (DUT). It was fitting that their new director, Alain Tschudin, recently organised a 'round table' in Paddy's honour under the title of 'Prophets and Promoters of Practical Peace'. The speakers included Crispin Hemson (former director of ICON) and also representatives from other organisations in which Paddy had been involved: Coral Vinsen (from Amnesty International), Ela Gandhi (Gandhi Development Trust), Sibisiwe Mlambo

(Diakonia) and Raymond Perrier (from the DHC).

About 30 people were in attendance, including graduate students from ICON, some of whom were able to travel there in person thanks to a grant left by Paddy. The speakers immediately were drawn to the word 'practical' as being of great importance to Paddy and how he worked with Archbishop Hurley to "speak truth to power" (a phrase Paddy used as the title of one of his books). Recognising how the gap between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots' has actually increased since the advent of democracy, it was felt that this need to be a "voice for the voiceless" was just as pressing as ever.

All the speakers commented on how we can learn from Paddy's commitment to bringing people together to work on common goals; both the DHC and his involvement in the Active Citizens Movement in his final years were seen as later examples of this.

It was pointed out that Paddy performed the role of the prophet by saying what others did not want to hear. In that regard, it was felt that he would have been disappointed to see the decline or even the capture of so many NGOs, including the near-collapse of Diakonia. And that he would also lament the absence of any strong voice from among the Christian denominations in Durban. Whilst Paddy knew that the impact of the Church came from its ability to act as a collective, without the leadership role of key individuals that impact was much less. Moreover, there are churches who have exploited their communities and who need to reflect on how they have become part of the problem.

One speaker, pointing out that most members of the audience were over a certain age, stressed the need to hear from young people and 'to work with them and not for them'. It was felt that there was a lot of anger among young people, and that that was why some school principals were blocking organisations from working with their learners. But there was an opportunity to help create hope from out of their anger.

One of the few young people present, Siziphiwe Ncama a Grade 12 learner from Holy Family College, asked "What can youth do that's practical?". She was urged to start with the community and the situations they she knew best, and then adopt the approach of the Young Christian Workers movement: "See; Judge; Act."

Ela Gandhi encouraged her: "Never be afraid to speak the truth even when people do not want to hear it. However, do not speak in anger but always respectfully." There could be no better way of summarising Paddy's own strategy.

*Photo (left to right): Siziphiwe Ncama, Alain Tschudin, Crispin Hemson and Ela Gandhi.*



## **STREET STORE SERVES 960 PEOPLE**

It is the sheer scale of the Street Store event that makes it so overwhelming but also such a blessing to our city. Since 2017 we have been hosting this with Grace Family Church; having lost a few years to COVID restrictions, 2023 was thus our 5th Street Store.

The aim is to create a 'department store' environment for poor people to be able to shop with dignity and ease - and completely for free. To make this

possible, Grace work for weeks in advance to collect clothes at all their campuses across Durban. A whole day is then spent sorting and packing the clothes in advance to ensure that only clean, good quality products are offered. Grace also co-ordinate the security, the fencing, the logistics, the hundreds of volunteers and (with the assistance of Container World) the arrival of a container full of pre-sorted clothes the night before at the DHC.

Street Store day on 3 June started before dawn as the fencing was put up to manage the hundreds of people who had started queuing overnight and who, thanks to Emmanuel Cathedral, were able to line up peacefully to await their turn. The feeding programme at the DHC usually attracts street homeless and so 90% of our regular visitors are young men; this event is for anyone in the area who is in need and so sees a lot more women and children. With this in mind, the guided play area that is offered is a great bonus not only for the dozens of children but also for their mothers who do not have to struggle to keep them quiet in the queue!

Every person who comes through the gate is greeted by a personal shopper who assists them as they walk round looking at the clothes and shoes - neatly sorted by gender and size, folded or on hangars. Having done their 'shopping', they can then take advantage of foot washing or haircuts; in addition the DHC clinic team provided some simple health tests and examinations for patients we do not usually see. Once up in our Gandhi-Luthuli Peace Hall, the shoppers and the volunteers enjoyed an excellent vegetarian breyani from the Food for Life team at Newlands. They could also access advice desks and we were especially pleased that the IEC was present to help people to register to vote in preparation for next year's general election.

In the noise and busy-ness of serving almost 1,000 people it is the impact on individuals which is most poignant: the young mother beaming because she has an almost-new outfit for her baby; the volunteer still smiling after spending hours washing the feet of homeless people because this has helped her reconnect with her faith; the duty police officer commenting on how powerful it is for him to see such diverse people sharing the space in joy and peace; the homeless man who walks back later in the day because he did not feel he had said 'thank you' enough times before he left.

We are immensely grateful to all who made the Street Store possible once again and hope and pray that this sets a standard of how we, as a city, can bring people together to help each other.

*Photo (Liam Bartels): The Grace Church volunteers with DHC staff before the start of Street Store 2023.*



### **COOKING MEALS TO HELP RAISE MONEY TO SERVE MEALS**

Whilst many talented people stay in Durban (and a few move to Durban), there has unfortunately been a tendency for skilled and entrepreneurial Durbanites to leave our city and seek their fortune in other parts of the country or even other parts of the world. We know that is true of some of you who are reading this. Nonetheless, the fact that you take an interest in the DHC (and support us financially) shows that links to Durban do not fade away easily.

One such example is Alan Kolling. He was born in Durban to one of the first

Chinese families in the city – there is a Kolling Street named after them in Greyville – and attended St Henry’s Marist College even though ‘Chinese people’ were not supposed to attend ‘white schools’ back in the days of Apartheid. You can read more about his life in this extensive interview in the ‘Sunday Tribune’.

Alan left South Africa and moved to California where he gained a number of degrees and built a successful career in sports administration and community development. His frequent visits back to Durban kept him connected with St Henry’s and, through them, he encountered the DHC – recalling that he had been an altar server for +Hurley when a child. He has helped raise money for our Nkosinathi feeding scheme and also encouraged St Henry’s to bring young people throughout the year to volunteer.

What is striking is that one of his main ways of raising funds is by cooking for his wide circle of friends in the San Francisco area, having trained later in life as a chef. While enjoying his excellent meals, Californians learn about the work of the DHC and so sign up as supporters. Alan’s culinary talents were then applied even more directly when he recently visited in person and prepared an excellent meal for the homeless including lamb as a special treat. Our regular guests thoroughly enjoyed the food and were also delighted to hear that people many thousands of miles away knew about them and cared about them.

By coincidence, during his visit to the DHC, Alan met Phil Perrier another of our biggest fundraisers who also raises money for us by cooking meals. Her Indian food is famous in the Catholic community of Chelmsford (about 50km east of London). Each year (even during COVID) she takes orders from families who then collect a full Indian meal that she has prepared: starters, three dishes and a dessert. At 84 Phil has a few years on Alan who is 71 but her energy is undimmed and in May/ June she prepared 85 meals (six dishes each) and raised R44,000 to add to the hundreds of thousands she has raised in the past.

You do not have to be in your 70s or 80s – or even live on the other side of the world – to raise money for the DHC. If you have a good idea for a fundraiser, or have a skill that could be put to good use, get in touch and we can help you develop your idea and help you help us.

*Photo: Ace fundraisers, Phil Perrier (left) and Alan Kolling sharing cooking tips in the Nkosinathi kitchen.*



## **SUPPORT FROM MANY PARTNER ORGANISATIONS**

It was a key insight of +Hurley and of Paddy that they realised that we can



achieve much more by working with others than by working alone. And that is also a key principle of the DHC – as demonstrated in the Street Store event above. This past month we have had lots of opportunities to work with various of our partners, to learn together and to offer services jointly to those in need.

The children who attend our crèche at Dalton benefited once more from our links with the team at the Durban Botanic Gardens. They already helped by planting a vegetable garden at the crèche and providing horticultural training for some of our team. This past week they also welcomed the children for a wonderful guided tour of the Gardens, answering all the questions that we are encouraging these curious young minds to ask. The children also benefited from our links with the arts community when they had a chance to attend a performance of 'Winnie the Pooh' at the Sneddon Theatre. This was the first time any of them had ever seen live theatre and Charity Motaung, the crèche teacher, described the experience as truly magical. We are grateful to KickstArt Productions and Publicity Matters for making this possible. The show runs at the Sneddon until 16 July.

Our staff members have been learning from some of our partners: ICON (mentioned above) provided training on managing conflict in a non-violent way and St John (who house our book store) provided simple training on First Response interventions. St John also run the best good value optometry clinic in Durban and gave advice on good eye care and offered a special discount to all our staff. ([Click here to contact St John](#) to book an eye test or to send someone to attend the official certified First Aid course that all organisations need). The St John's visit was part of our staff development day which also included an historical exploration of the Old Fort site with the links to the earliest encounters between Europeans and Zulus in what is now Durban.

Our various faith partners are also key to what we can achieve as an organisation. This past month we had a number of groups of American students visiting who, thanks to IPCI, were able to tour the mosque and learn more about Islam and Durban's great tradition of interfaith collaboration. And we were honoured to be mentioned at the AGM of the Union of Jewish Women who have been supporters in many ways over the years. Their guest speaker was the world-renowned Muslim doctor, Imtiaz Sooliman. The organisation that he founded, Gift of the Givers, has developed an international reputation for humanitarian work. He made some comments which reflect what we have seen, albeit on a much smaller scale.

"In a strange way we have had the greatest three years in our history because of COVID, civil unrest and floods. Something has changed in corporate South Africa. It is no longer about gaining BBEEE points or tax breaks or photo ops. It is about ordinary people wanting to save lives and a shared spirit of helping each other. I get more calls from people offering help than from people asking for help."

Our experience at the DHC resonates with his experience at the Gift of the Givers and, we suspect, the experience of all those who work in faith-based organisations. For those who constantly fear about what is happening to South Africa, Imtiaz had a word of warning and of hope: "This country won't collapse because of the exchange rate or because of Eskom. But it will collapse if we lose our shared belief in human dignity."

*Photo (left to right): Raymond Perrier, Imtiaz Sooliman and Sue Jacobson (Chair of UJW).*



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