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June 2024

Three New Faces in our Clinic Team
Receiving the Coventry Cross of Nails
Street Store 2024
Book shops, book drive, and a book launch!



**The Durban part
of a 2-city
service**



**1,040 happy
customers
again**



**One book shop
in La Lucia
Mall...**

THREE NEW FACES IN OUR CLINIC TEAM

Whilst we benefit hugely from volunteers, our clinic does require a paid professional team – and that means that, at R9,500 (£420) per working day, it is by far the most costly part of what we do. Three new members have joined the team recently.

Thobile Mthembu came to us earlier this year as a registered nurse. But when Maighlin moved with her husband, rugby player Hyron Andrew, to the UK, Thobile was ready to step in as Clinic Co-ordinator. After more than 20 years in public and private healthcare, as well as working recently with NGOs, Thobile brings a lot of talent and experience to the team. As well as being a Primary Healthcare specialist, she also has extra qualifications in midwifery and initiating patients on ARVs (NIMART).

Thobile commented that a clinic focused on the homeless and foreign nationals with no discrimination is, in her entire experience, the first of its kind. "I really enjoy being able to interact with both my clients and staff in harmony. We aim to reach a level of understanding with our patients concerning the importance of health care. That

sometimes means meeting them in the most desperate situations such as our outreach to various hotspots. However, the challenge is when they fail to adhere to treatment due to drug use. It can be very dispiriting if they come back to us with the same untreated problem.”

She loves animals and in her spare time is raising Boerboel dogs and has also just started a Tilapia fish farm.

Siya our clinic driver is no longer the only man in the team. He has been joined by Bongani Chonco and Simon Kabisayi. Bongani has been helping us manage the queue for the last few months to avoid any problems and also acts as a ‘runner’ between clinic rooms on different floors. Like so many young men, he came to Durban from rural KZN and, when he did not find work, ended up on the streets and in and out of shelters. He heard about the DHC and proved himself as a volunteer before a paid post emerged for him.

Simon is a trained healthcare worker who helps with HIV counselling and wound dressing. He spends most of his time on reception since he can speak English, French, Swahili and Lingala – plus his Zulu is improving all the time. He came to South Africa from DR Congo 24 years ago and most recently was working with Refugee Social Services providing health education.

He commented: “The Christian part of the DHC is very special for me. I enjoy serving our patients and the warm environment with all staff and the way we interact with each other. My challenge every day is being able to make every patient happy.”

Finding and investing in trained professionals is essential if we are to provide a quality healthcare service. And most of the 2,000 patients we see every month – homeless people and refugees – rely on us since they cannot access Government services and cannot afford private ones. We are grateful to those who work hard in our team and also grateful to donors like you who provide the money to allow us to offer this life-changing service.

Photo (left to right): Bongani Chonco, Thobile Mthembu and Simon Kabisayi.



INTER-CONTINENTAL LITURGY: GRACED BY TECHNOLOGY

When people, who are not used to our area of the city, hear where the Denis Hurley Centre is located, they sometimes recoil as if we are in a war zone. Our very smart modern building is, to be fair, in an area which is increasingly looking run-down and neglected. But we are not quite a phoenix rising from the ashes. That, however, is a fair description of the smart modern building that is Coventry Cathedral in the UK, built after

the original building was almost completely destroyed in the Second World War.

But it was not just a stunning church that arose from those ashes but also a commitment by religious leaders to work together to find reconciliation after the war. This led to an international movement called 'The Community of the Cross of Nails' (CCN). From the outset this was an ecumenical initiative, as the Anglicans of Coventry reached out to the Lutherans of Dresden whose hospital had also been destroyed by Allied bombing.

CCN now comprises a worldwide network of some 260 churches, charities, chaplaincies, peace-building and retreat centres, schools and other educational and training organisations, all inspired by the Coventry Cathedral story of destruction, rebuilding and renewal - and all active in reconciliation in different ways. There are already a number of members in South Africa, including, close to us, the Anglican Cathedral in Pietermaritzburg and the combined URCSA / NGK church in KwaMakutha. The original ecumenical impetus has now expanded to draw in interfaith organisations and so we were delighted when our application to join was accepted: and you will their logo has been added to the banner at the top.

Membership is marked by the handing over of a beautiful and poignant cross, inspired by the original one made from nails that survived the destruction of the burnt-out mediaeval cathedral. For Christians, they are a reminder of the nails in Jesus' hands and feet and his words from the cross "Father Forge".

Given the distance, the handing over of our cross took on an interesting inter-continental model. In Coventry, the Dean John Witcombe (who had visited the DHC in 2016) led an on-line service and handed the cross to Archbishop Bernard Longley from nearby Birmingham (and who had seen the DHC being built when he was in Durban in 2014).

This was watched by people around the world, including a small group at St Martin's Church in Durban North. We then continued the on-line service with readings in Zulu (using the same texts that had just been read in English), a Hindu prayer and a sermon by Bishop Nkosinathi Ndwanwe (who was Archbishop Longley's host here in 2014). Music was provided by the stunning choir of St Anne's Diocesan School for Girls in Hilton.

There is a wonderful symmetry about a British Anglican dean presenting a cross to a British Catholic Archbishop, who then passed it on virtually to a South African Anglican bishop, all in honour of a South African Catholic Archbishop. In time, when the cross makes it to Durban, we plan to have another service with both Bishop Nkosinathi and Archbishop Jwara present – so watch this space.

Technology made it possible to link the two services and also makes it possible for you to view them now. The Coventry service [can be watched here](#); and the Durban service [on here](#). And the text of the services is attached.

Photo (left to right): Dean John Witcombe, Michael Perrier and Helen Coleman (both Trustees of the UK Denis Hurley Association), Archbishop Bernard Longley, Canon Mary Gregory and Canon Nitano Mueller (recently arrived in Coventry from Cape Town!).



STREET STORE 2024 – ANOTHER 1,000+ HAPPY CUSTOMERS!

The rhythm of our year means that certain events come around every 12 months and we can almost take them for granted. It is only when they are seen through new eyes that we remember quite how extraordinary they are.

One such example is our Street Store appearing for the sixth time since 2017 (with a two-year break because of COVID). This is only possible because of the amazing partnership with Grace Family Church. In the weeks leading up to the event, they run a big drive at all four of their campuses for people to donate clothes and shoes. Volunteers then plough through the donations, sorting them into types and sizes, matching shoes into pairs, checking for necessary repairs, and discarding anything which is not up to scratch. So, by the time the container arrives at the DHC the night before (courtesy of Container World) we have a department-store-in-a-hundred-boxes ready to unload.

The chill air at 6am on Saturday 8 June did not dampen the spirits of the almost 150 volunteers from Grace who came down to set up the Street Store. Some were old hands, but some with us (and indeed in our part of town) for the first time. Though the volunteers were early, the “shoppers” were even earlier, some of them having got wind of the event and queuing all night to make sure they were in line for the best bargains.

As is the usual practice, every customer was met by a personal shopper to help them select what they wanted with dignity. Grace volunteers also provided a play area for the children while their parents were queuing, haircuts and footwashing, and a prayer ministry. Established partners were also back with us again: St John providing emergency support, Food for Life feeding everyone with delicious vegetable breyani, and ClearMe and UKZN Law Clinic advising on legal issues, while our own clinic team were offering health checks.

A new partner who came in force was the DUT Somatology Department. 30 keen students arrived with necessary equipment to give manicures, pedicures and shoulder massages to dozens of men and women. Although ours were not their usual clientele, the students were exemplary in treating people with respect and care.

One abiding image of the day was a woman from the streets who sat with four different Somatology students working on different parts of her. She smiled broadly: “It’s my birthday today; I could not have imagined a better birthday present!” At the end of an exhausting seven hours, it was good to know that the clothes, the food, the services but most of all the care that people received made it as good as a birthday for every one of the 1,040 people we saw that day.

Below: one of the many beautiful photos of the day taken by Gavin du Plessis. More pictures and video available on our Facebook page.



...AND ANOTHER BOOK SHOP IN BALLITO

Our Street Lit project of homeless men and women selling second-hand books has been running now for over 5 years – including the struggle of continuing to sell books during lockdown. We have had books being sold on the streets, at taxi ranks, on the beachfront, in the botanic gardens, in theatres, at concerts, pop-up markets, conference centres, schools and churches. We have also had a number of venues in malls – usually on tables in the open walkways. In fact, our book stalls at Umlazi Mega City and at Bridge City, Kwa Mashu are the ONLY places to buy books in those two townships despite them having a combined population of over ½ million people.

Now, for the first time, we have two proper bookshops, thanks to the generosity of the managers of two malls. One is in La Lucia Mall in Durban North (part of Growthpoint Properties) where we share a site with the excellent Magic Bean Foundation, who make décor items out of recycled plastic. The other is in the highly prestigious Lifestyle Centre in Ballito where we are located opposite a busy coffee shop and next door to 'The Gallery' who have supported us in various ways in the past. Marketing Manager, Loren Taljard, arranged for our store to be fitted out and have our own signage installed; they have even included us on their website! Both stores are open 7 days a week – a significant commitment by our vendors – so if you are in the area please drop in and buy some books.

With so many vendors selling books – and with new apprentice vendors joining the team - we need to keep them supplied in quality books. So we have launched a Durban-wide book drive for July: Mandela Month. The challenge is to collect 10,052 books – one for every day he spent in prison! After all, books must have been one of the things that kept Madiba sane for 27 long years. We are delighted that a number of churches across the city have agreed to be drop off points to make it easier for people to donate. The list is on our [Facebook page](#) and [website](#) and will be updated regularly; and Caxton's local titles will be partnering with us to promote the initiative.

So if you are in Durban – or have friends in Durban – now is the time to pass on those quality books that you really loved, so someone else can enjoy them too.

Finally, on the subject of books, an abbreviated form of our Director's PhD about Paddy Kearney will be launched in book form in 2 months' time. We are delighted that we are working on this with Anivesh Singh, who was one of the inspirations for the Street Lit programme and is a local publisher. The 320-page paperback will recount Paddy's life through the lens of the main theological issues that influenced him and will also contain some historic photographs. If you pre-order the book now, you can get it at a discounted price: [contact Made in Durban](#) for more details. Orders from overseas can also be managed – just email Anivesh so that he can estimate numbers.

Photo: Sibusiso Mguni standing proudly in his new bookstore at the Ballito Lifestyle Centre where all the shop fittings and signage were kindly provided by the mall.



Director: Raymond Perrier (raymond@denishurleycentre.org)
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If you wish to support our work, you can donate by EFT:
First National Bank Durban Main branch 221426
Account: Denis Hurley Centre Trust A/C No. 622 0426 1002

For more information, and to donate from outside South Africa, see:
www.denishurleycentre.org

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