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June 2025

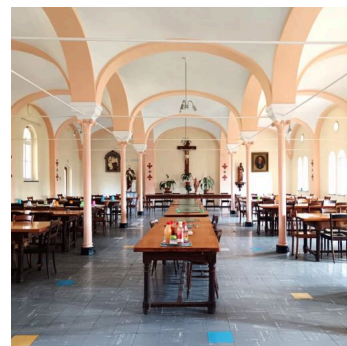
Street Store serves another 1,000 people
Changes within our social work team
Tributes following three untimely deaths
Staff outing to try new skills



**Sr Cathy says
farewell**



**Sarah Kearney:
rest in peace**



**One of our
winning photos**

OVER 1000 PEOPLE FILLED WITH JOY AT THE ANNUAL STREET STORE

On the last day of May, the annual Street Store was held at the DHC in partnership with **Grace Family Church**. From the moment the volunteers arrived at sunrise, until the departure of the last customer six hours later, there were countless moments of joy, fun and deep emotions.

Almost 1,000 poor or homeless men and women from the city centre were served by over 120 volunteers from Grace Family Church. We shared last month about the mammoth exercise conducted by Grace, with support from other churches and schools around the city, to collect and sort thousands of items of clothing.

As a result of this, all those who came to Street Store had the opportunity to select clothes for free, assisted by a personal shopper so they could calmly find what they needed. Florence Attwell, a CBD resident, was delighted by the help that she was given to find just the right garments: “These people are so cute and so kind. They are doing such a good job!”

The ‘shoppers’ then had the chance of a shoulder massage or nail treatment delivered by 50 very enthusiastic and friendly Somatology students from **Durban University of Technology**. The services continued with haircuts and foot washing given by the very caring volunteers from Grace Family Church. Nkosinathi Dlamini, one the homeless men getting his feet washed said: “Ever since I was born, I’ve never had this feeling”.

People then progressed upstairs to the Gandhi-Luthuli Hall where they were served delicious vegetable breyani sponsored by Sealand Transport. Smiso Ngubane, one of the people being served joked: “The treatment we are getting is good, but the food is even better. Can I have another plate?”

Other organisations were there to provide advice to our visitors including UKZN’s Street Law, SADAG (the SA Depression and Anxiety Group), Be Cleared (who assist people to expunge criminal records) and the DUT Chiropractice department (who run a regular free clinic at the DHC). We are also grateful for the co-operation of Fr David Sithole at Emmanuel Cathedral since their car park provided an invaluable, safe queueing area.

The event was a huge success: every homeless person who was at the street store was served with respect, kindness and fairness. All of this was only possible because of the willingness of volunteers from all across Durban. DHC Director, Dr Raymond Perrier, commented: “So many Municipal officials treat homeless people and poor people with disdain and violence; by contrast, it is great to see residents from across the city come together to spend time serving the marginalised and building bridges.”

Photo (Gavin du Plessis): After Adelle Naidoo, Grace Church member had finished washing the feet of Kobus Cloete he exclaimed: “I am so happy – this is the first time I have ever had anything like this.”

For more photos of the event see [the DHC Facebook page](#).



SEAMLESS HANDOVER AS SOCIAL WORKERS CHANGE ROLES

We are used to coping with surprises, but the election of Sr Cathy Murugan to become 'Provincial' of the Holy Family Sisters was one that we did not expect. When Sr Cathy came to the DHC in 2016 she brought extensive years of experience as a social worker across Africa. We are immensely grateful to her religious order for deploying her to the DHC, and now wish her well as she is called up to serve in regional leadership.

Whilst we will miss Cathy greatly, her departure at the end of June has in fact created excellent opportunities for internal promotions. After five years as senior social worker in our clinic, Nonhlanhla Nhlangulela now fills Cathy's shoes as co-ordinator of the Nkosinathi project and also joins the management team. Her role, in turn, is taken by Zama Mthimkulu who for 4½ years has been working with Cathy; and Wendy Tomo, who has been a part-time social worker for Nkosinathi, now increases to full time.

We are very proud of the progress that these three very committed women have made and are delighted that they are now willing to take on more responsibility. Interestingly, each of them started as an intern at the DHC, who then came back to volunteer when they could not find work – and in time joined our staff team. These promotions mean there will be maximum continuity in our work and a seamless handover, retaining links with our partners and our clients.

During a very emotional farewell, Cathy tried to put into words the multiple experiences of the last nine years:

"We had the best of times: working together to keep homeless people safe and protected during lockdown especially the 100 sick and disabled men who lived in the DHC for 4 months. I marvel at how miracles happened every day: bakkie- loads of food arriving just when we needed it; institutions opening up their spaces to provide assistance; the transformation of Thula (someone with a mental disability) getting medication and being able to return home to his family. We have continued to enjoy so many good times because of individuals, companies and organisations who have partnered with us to serve those on the margins of society.

"We have also had the worst of times: after Paddy's sudden death and wondering how would we go forward from there: but we did and we grew stronger as a team. My experience of us is that each time we face a challenge – whether it be the Municipality's treatment of homeless people, or the roller coaster of supporting people with addictions – our creativity and resilience as a team has enabled us to come up with solutions. We make a real difference for the people we serve, and ensure that those whose voices are ignored can still be heard!

"Durban is seemingly the only city where people of different faith groups (and those with universal hearts) work side-by-side to serve those on the margins of society; and the DHC in the heart of the city draws people together. The resilience, tenacity and creativity of the people who work here is what makes the DHC what it is.

"I am humbled and privileged for having had the opportunity to serve and minister over these 9 years with a team of committed and dedicated people. I am sure you will continue to shine brightly, as beacons of hope, within the frequent times of darkness faced by the people we are called to serve. All of the DHC family will forever remain a part of my life – my own 'holy family' – in my heart and my prayers."

The photo at the top shows Sr Cathy at the annual Mass honouring Archbishop Hurley; immediately behind are her biological sister (Lisa Pillay) and her religious sister (Tshidi Matsha), both regular volunteers at the DHC.

The photo below shows the team preparing for handover (left to right):

Zama, Wendy, Sr Cathy and Nonhlanhla.

Video tributes to Cathy can be [viewed via this link](#).



SAD PASSING OF THREE EXTRAORDINARY PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN PART OF THE DHC FAMILY

In the past month, we have been saddened to lose three people who died at relatively young ages and who have, in different ways, contributed to the diversity of the DHC.

Sarah Kearney died at the age of 55 after a protracted illness. She was the niece of our founder, Paddy Kearney, one of the three children of his late brother Jack. Sarah was an invaluable source of insights for the PhD written about Paddy and in fact she is referenced twenty times in the final work. She reminisces about the ways in which Paddy opened her eyes as a child to a world beyond the white ghetto of Apartheid South Africa – she fondly remembered the black doll that he had brought back for her from Swaziland

The full PhD can be [accessed on line](#); the shorter book version [is available for sale](#). The photo at the top shows Sarah's delight at the naming of Paddy Kearney Way outside the DHC. We offer our condolences to her mother Mary and her three daughters, Kamania, Kitty and Grace.

Saffura Khan died of a heart attack aged 67 after undergoing surgery. Through her role as head of skills development at SANZAF, Saffura has been one of our most committed and versatile Muslim partners. The fact that she was blind from birth, and a passionate activist for the rights of the disabled, meant that she also brought new insights into our own work. It was in part through her inspiration and gentle cajoling that over the years we could engage a blind tour guide, set up an empowerment project for deaf

young adults, and ensure that wheelchair users could be staff members and volunteers.

Saffura was frequently seen at DHC events and her presence was an inspiration to many. Our director recalls sharing many platforms with her including one year addressing social work graduates from UNISA. “Saffura knew that many of them were quick to complain that life was tough. So Saffura explained how, when she was training in social work, she had to take on a part-time job so she could earn money to pay someone else to read text books for her since they were not available in Braille. She definitely helped them put their own problems into context.”

The DHC promoted the Blind Navigators’ Rally, one of a number of creative disability empowerment projects that Saffura championed. She also identified some specific projects with the DHC including the creation of a booklet of ‘budget busting’ recipes to help people to stretch their money and still eat healthily. We were recently pleased to support her at the launch of a book about her own life ‘A Mosaic of Memories’ written by Siva Moodley. [Click here to watch a video](#) she contributed to the DHC’s on-line AGM from 2021. A full obituary to Saffura was published [in the Sunday Tribune](#).

Saffura had been a Patron of our sister organisation, the Napier Centre for Healing, as was **Bishop Dino Gabriel** who has died at the age of 69. Sadly, a few months ago, +Dino discovered that he had cancer and, after that, his decline was swift. +Dino came to South Africa from Italy in 1987 as a Catholic priest and a Consolata missionary; then later in life he became an Anglican, an Anglican priest and then an Anglican bishop.

During the four years that he was our local Anglican bishop, +Dino was a regular visitor to the DHC and encouraged his clergy to share actively in our ministry. Then in his retirement, he approached us to ‘ask’ if he could be a volunteer. It was deeply moving to see him come in as humble ‘Fr Dino’ and happily spend hours attentively in conversation, in fluent Zulu, with our homeless guests.

In his life, +Dino embodied the commitment to ecumenism which is at the heart of the DHC, focusing always on what unites us not what divides us. We echo the words of his friend Cardinal Napier who – very fittingly – extended his condolences to +Dino’s three families: his religious family of Consolata missionaries, his episcopal family in the Anglican dioceses of Zululand and Natal, and his biological family comprising maDlamini his wife of 33 years, their four children and six grandchildren.

We give thanks to God for the breadth and richness of the ministries of these three special people and commend their souls to our Creator. May they rest in peace and rise in glory!

*Photos both courtesy of IOL: (left) Saffura Khan participating in a DHC-led photo shoot for 16 days of Activism against GBV;
(right) Bishop Dino taking part in the Diakonia Good Friday procession with the late Archbishop Abel Gabaiza behind him.*



DHC STAFF DEVELOPMENT – INSPIRATION AND CREATION

At the DHC, we are driven by a deep commitment to serving those in need. But to do that our staff members need to be remain inspired and creative. We take pride in encouraging their passion and dedication and believe that when our team feels valued and supported, they are better equipped to make a meaningful difference in the lives of others.

With this in mind, we invest in initiatives that foster growth, teamwork, and joy; each year our June staff outing is particularly focused on getting to know like-minded organisations. This year the outing was to Mariannhill. It not only provided a break and an opportunity to bond as a team but also equipped our staff with new skills.

We started by conducting a training with staff members and interns on how to take good pictures. As well as being a useful skill in the age of social media, we also felt that this training would help the DHC by widening the circle of people who can provide good photographic records of our many activities. The training was led by our PR expert, Illa Thompson, and Thuli Dlamini, a professional photographer currently working in the office of the Mayor.

Armed with the 'tips and tricks' from the training, the following day the whole team took a trip to Mariannhill. Even though it is only a few km up the road, it was interesting how few of our team had ever really seen the rich history of this important part of KZN. We were welcomed by Bishop Neil Frank: he is an Oblate as Archbishop Hurley was; the link is even stronger because +Hurley's successor, Archbishop Jwara, is in fact a Mariannhill missionary.

During the course of the morning, team members had a chance to visit some of the different ministries based at Mariannhill – the cathedral, the monastery, the retreat house, the printing press and the high school.

Working in teams of three, they were challenged to take 'photos that tell a story' which made them much more attentive to what they were looking at and how to capture it. Afterwards, the 10 teams were each able to submit their two preferred photos. Displayed on the walls, the whole staff had a

chance to comment on and critique the photos. Then Thuli Dlamini, without knowing who was in each team, chose four winning photos and the members of those teams won modest cash prizes for their efforts.

Our staff really took this challenge seriously, and they came back with some well considered pictures. The staff training and trip to Mariannhill were truly an uplifting experience that brought our team closer together. The photography training was a wonderful opportunity for our staff to learn new skills and capture the wonderful activities around them. The trip itself was a well-deserved break, allowing our dedicated team members to recharge and refocus on their vital work. We are proud of our team's commitment to serving those in need, and grateful for moments like these that bring us closer together.

Photos (1 - at the top, taken by Wendy, Makhosi and Thembeke): the refectory at the monastery; (2 - below left taken by Dudu, Afikile and Zovuyo): a candid moment at the printing press; (3 - below right taken by Cathy, Vusi and Siya): a bug's eye view of the cathedral. (4 - the final winning photo, of students at St Francis College, was taken by Paul, Cebo and Nonhlanhla). Congratulations to all winners.



Director: Raymond Perrier (raymond@denishurleycentre.org)

Bookings: Leanne Banks (leanne@denishurleycentre.org)

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