

Report Back on COVID Appeal hosted by the Denis Hurley Centre

This report provides more detail on the R1.66M that was donated through the Denis Hurley Centre and has now been distributed to 10 different NGOs providing services for the homeless in Durban in early 2020. It is hoped that this provides accountability to donors, NGOs and other stakeholders. For more information, contact the Denis Hurley Centre Treasurer, Siphophakati (siphophakati@global.co.za).

The unprecedented crisis created by the COVID pandemic led President Ramaphosa to announce that South Africa would be put under a hard lockdown from 27 March 2020. Municipalities were to make special provision to provide emergency shelters for the homeless. In Durban, the office of the Deputy Mayor worked with the Director of the Denis Hurley Centre (who was then Chair of the eThekweni Task Team on Homelessness) and other members of the Task Team to create a system of emergency shelters. At its peak, this comprised 11 venues hosting 1,700 homeless people during levels 5 and 4 of the lockdown (until June 2020).

Since there were substantial offers of donations from corporates and individuals, it was decided that it would be sensible to focus these by having one appeal and it was agreed that the Denis Hurley Centre would play the co-ordinating role. A Public Appeal was launched on 30 March 2020 through websites, social media, e-mail marketing and in the press, giving the Denis Hurley Centre's bank account details and the use of the reference 'COVID' to identify donations. On 1 April, a more detailed prospectus of the Public Appeal was prepared and placed on the Denis Hurley Centre website and also sent to any donors requesting more information.

On 16 April a paper was published explaining the system for the dispersal of funds. Any NGO providing services at the designated emergency shelters could apply by completing a simple form and submitting back-up material and references.

Whilst the DHC Trustees were ultimately responsible legally for the funds, it was explained that the Trustees would delegate to a separate Advisory Group the task of recommending how the funds be used (thus avoiding a conflict of interest since the Denis Hurley Centre might themselves be applicants). The Advisory Group would comprise five individuals reflecting the diversity of stakeholders in Durban, would not include Trustees or interested parties of any of the likely benefiting organisations (including the DHC), and would not include any Municipal officials or political figures.

The Denis Hurley Centre Trustees have discharged their legal responsibility to oversee the allocation of the money. We have now successfully distributed all of the R1,661,684.78 of funds collected under this appeal and it was announced on social media on 21 July that the appeal was closed for new donations.

All funds were paid into the Denis Hurley Centre bank account and identified using the reference COVID (or in some cases via follow up emails). Between 30 March and 21 July there were 634 separate transactions. 26 were major amounts (over R10,000) from grant-making bodies or corporates; but most were smaller amounts from companies and individuals in the Durban area (and some were anonymous). This is testimony to the generosity of ordinary Durbanites.

Applications for funds were sent to Siphophakati (DHC Treasurer) who passed them all on to the Advisory Group to assess. The focus was to grant funds to NGOs working with the designated emergency shelters and so a few applications were rejected since they fell outside this scope. They initially prioritised refunding costs of work that had already been done (and so was easier to assess), and only then did they consider providing funds for any work that was still to happen.

The Denis Hurley Centre Trustees have accepted the recommendations of the Advisory Group which was made up of 5 independent parties. They are:

- Dave Richter, Grace Family Church (Chair)
- Jeremy Droyman, President of the KZN Jewish Board of Deputies
- Milo Mahomed, Muslim community social activist
- Yasmin Rajah, Refugee Social Services
- Jackie Tau, Aspen Pharmacare, Group SED Manager

In the end, through six tranches of grant allocations, funds have been given to 10 organisations in the following amounts:

Organisation	Grant (ZAR)	% of total	Principal activities
SANPUD (SA Network of People who Use Drugs)	R418 062.43	25%	Drug withdrawal
Denis Hurley Centre	R243 348.00	15%	Primary healthcare and IDs
RAUF	R214 200.00	13%	Food and volunteers
Silethokuhle Organisation	R190 080.00	11%	Food and volunteers
We Are Durban	R175 000.00	11%	Food management
Nelesco (for Bashier Rashid CBO)	R171 440.00	10%	Food and volunteers
Thanda Bantu	R105 000.00	6%	Food and volunteers
Siphila Ngomusa Community Development	R 80 532.32	5%	Food and volunteers
Highway Christian Community	R 34 022.03	2%	Food and volunteers
City Celebration Charitable Trust	R 30 000.00	2%	Recreational activities
TOTAL	R1 661 684.78	100%	

We are very grateful to the many donors, large and small, who were so generous.

For audit purposes, the funds have not been treated as income to the Denis Hurley Centre but instead were held in suspense until being dispersed to the designated recipients. This process will be audited as part of the Denis Hurley Centre's annual audit to be conducted by BDO after our year end (31/12/2020). The Denis Hurley Centre did not seek any compensation for its work in managing this fund; the members of the Advisory Group similarly acted in an unpaid voluntary capacity.

While substantial, the amounts referenced here are only a part of the efforts made to help the homeless during this time. Many NGOs and Corporates have delivered services funded through their own resources and so are not part of this appeal. In addition, we also acknowledge the considerable effort and cost expended by eThekweni Municipality in setting up and supervising the emergency shelters and in particular the personal commitment of Deputy Mayor, Cllr Belinda Scott who ensured that talk was turned into action.

On behalf of the homeless of Durban, we would like to thank the individuals, corporates, grant-makers, faith-based organisations and NGOs who have made this initiative so successful.