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**UPDATE**

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**July 2023**

**Finally, good news from Dalton!**  
**Mandela Day with new and old partners**  
**Films and music**  
**International intellectual conversations**



**Lawyers  
serving food**



**Blanket  
handout**



**Discussing  
leadership**

**PROGRESS FINALLY AT DALTON**

We have often used this platform to share our concerns about Dalton, an area about 2km from the DHC, where there are hundreds of people living in squalid conditions and where we run a clinic and a crèche. This is one way in which we continue +Hurley's mission to be 'a voice for the voiceless'.

The story that ran in our April Update showed how much worse the situation had become, with sewage and rubbish building up and dirty water from the rains and the drains seeping into our compound. But it also expressed hope because of the lobbying of local partners – Alain Tschudin at ICON and Martin Clement at the Botanic Gardens – that the Municipality might actually be moved to act.

We are pleased to report that they finally did. 'Only' 3 months after they came to inspect – and four years after the problems were first reported – they finally sent in a team to clear away the worst of the rubbish and dry away the sewage. iTrump, the part of the Municipality that is supposed to co-ordinate Government initiatives for our area, managed to get 13 different departments to turn up over two days and make a significant positive impact on the site.

The pictures below come from their own report and you can see some of the differences between 'before' and 'after' which were repeated across the site. They were not only clearing rubbish but also speaking to residents about health and hygiene, and inspecting local food suppliers and the skin traders that operate there. Sadly, they had to destroy the shacks that some of our patients call home. But for the first time ever – there have been many such 'interventions' in the past – they gave the residents notice so they could remove their personal belongings and so this time they did not lose their medicines or their ID documents.

Mpume Fuze, our community health worker who focuses on the Dalton site was positive in reporting on the operation she had witnessed: "They treated

people with dignity.” That was certainly a big change from the past and we are pleased to acknowledge that.

Not all the problems have been addressed and there is still some work to be done. The main toilet block which is just outside our compound remains closed until the refurbishment work is completed. The sewer pipe from there still needs fixing so it does not overflow again and return us to where we have just been. And an on-going system for refuse collection is needed so we do not have the same build up as before.

And – by the way – the sinks and toilets in our containers that serve the clinic and crèche – are still waiting to be connected to the mains water supply exactly six years after they were blessed by Cardinal Napier at the official opening. But we are now beginning to believe that even with eThekweni Municipality miracles can happen. Their claim to want to be Africa’s most liveable city requires concrete steps like this – as Raymond wrote in a recent article for the “Sunday Times”. Let us hope that these are more such steps.



### **PARTNERS, OLD AND NEW, JOIN US AROUND MANDELA DAY**

Dalton was also a recipient of Mandela Day largesse and from an unlikely source. Officers from the local police station, SAPS Umbilo, came to visit the crèche bringing gifts of T-shirts and MacDonalds meals for the children.

This was just one of a number of ways in which something special was offered, on and around Mandela Day, by existing partners and also by new organisations that we had not worked with before. The day is the UN-initiated celebration of Madiba’s birthday (since 18 July 2009) that encourages everyone to reach out and help those who are disadvantaged.

A wide range of organisations helped in different ways: Boxer Stores made a generous cash donation for us to buy food; staff from Spar West Street sourced a special breakfast and sent volunteers in to distribute it, as did a group of lawyers from Norton Rose Fulbright for lunch (*pictured at the top*). Our pest control company, Rentokil Initial, brought gifts of high-action cleanser and sanitisers. Non-perishable food items came from St Anthony’s Catholic Primary and also from Pacific International Lines; while St Henry’s Marist College and Lubeck Pharma both donated ‘a meal in a jar’ (a combination of dried goods which when combined with hot water will provide a healthy meal for a family). Some of these were forwarded to the Cathedral SVdP to distribute.

Hirsch’s enabled us to purchase a new washing machine at a greatly discounted rate and we also received bundles of sandwiches from both the Umhlanga Jewish School and the Union of Jewish Women. There were

donations of quality second-hand books from the staff at Wakefields Property and at the *Independent on Saturday*. Our Street Lit vendors were not only on the receiving end of generosity, they also did their bit: they assisted in the sandwich-making at the Durban Jewish Centre and they also helped organise a distribution of goods at Umlazi Mega-City (a Broll-run mall where we now have a bookseller, Xolani).

Another inspiring example of giving rather than receiving came from the KZN Blind & Deaf Society, some members of which hand-sewed blankets, 50 of which were donated to the DHC.

In the midst of the joy of Mandela Day there was also a moment of profound sadness. David van der Westhuizen, one of our best-loved booksellers, passed away aged 43 suddenly from medical complications late on 18 July. It is a mark of how well-regarded he was that he received the honour of a printed obituary in the *Independent on Saturday*. A deeply moving memorial service has been held for him at KZNSA Gallery where he had been selling books for the past few years. It was a stark reminder of the importance of doing the good we can while we can because we do not know how long any of us have.

*Photo: Pastor Peter van Niekerk was one of those paying tribute to bookseller, David van der Westhuizen, at the KZNSA Gallery.  
More photos from the memorial service and from Mandela Day on our Facebook page.*



## **WORKING WITH PARTNERS TO BRING MUSIC AND FILM TO THE DHC**

Another long-standing arts partner of the DHC is the Centre for Creative Arts at UKZN one of whose festivals is the annual Durban International Film Festival (DIFF). We were honoured that they again included the DHC as a venue for their community outreach programme, *Isiphethu*.

One morning, between the serving of breakfast and lunch, our homeless guests were invited to enter our pop-up cinema to watch three short films. They were joined by some staff, volunteers and outside visitors to create a uniquely diverse audience. Tracy Bolt, our cook, made it an even more authentic experience by providing popcorn for everyone!

The chosen films were all in English since DIFF recognised that reading English-language subtitles at speed can be quite challenging for some our visitors. There was an American film about moral dilemmas in street violence, an Australian depiction of magic realism in a launderette, and a South African documentary about the 2021 riots.

Given how close to home the subject was – both literally and metaphorically – it was not surprising that this last film provoked the most interest. Called ‘Catch My Baby’ it centred around the famous scene, just down the road from the DHC, when a woman had to throw her baby from the 4th floor of a burning building in order for him to be saved. Yamkela Ludonga, the mother involved, explained how it was too risky to climb down the ladder with her baby and so she instead had to trust that the crowd below would catch him. Also interviewed was Thuthuka Zondi, the BBC videographer who captured it

on film. He highlighted this as a moment of hope in the chaos of the riots: “a promise of better days to come”.

The 30 people in our audience were keen to share their views of the film, wondering what they would have done in the situation. One hailed it as an example of South African *Ubuntu*, where people come together to help each other. But another pointed out that it was an African moment since it was a Congolese man, Chris Kashindi, who played a key role.

The audience then spent some time reflecting on their own stories during a short intervention led by Khulekani Mdletshe and Nomthandazo Shandu from DIFF. Mdletshe explained: “In an African culture of story-telling, it is important that people realise that their own stories have value.” Having never been to the DHC before he said he was brought almost to tears to see a place where people were willing to take risks to show how united they can be.

A new partner who experienced something similar is African Enterprise. This long-established Christian evangelical organisation was running a “Mission to Durban” working with a number of churches and community centres. Through the last week of July, about 20 evangelists have been working at the DHC and other locations serving food, sitting and talking to people, and praying with those brothers and sisters who requested it. They also brought enough blankets so that, joined with previous donations, we could distribute to all 200 of our regular guests (*see photo at the top*).

The week culminated with music when the youth team known as the Foxfires came to encourage our homeless audience with drama, dance and sharing of personal testimonies. Pastor Dumisani Fakude led a reflection on Mt 11: 28-30: “Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Amen to that!

*Photo (Minenhle Zikhali): A diverse audience enjoy films and popcorn at our pop-up cinema as part of DIFF 2023.*



## **WORKING WITH INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS TO ADD TO THE INTELLECTUAL CLIMATE OF DURBAN**

One of our longest-standing and most generous American supporters was in town recently. Professor Al Gini was for over 50 years a professor at Loyola, the Jesuit university in Chicago. He graciously included time in his visit to deliver a lecture at St Joseph's Florida Rd on the subject of leadership. About 40 of our Durban partners were present and engaged with him animatedly on this issue.

Al quoted the view of African theologian St Augustine writing 1800 years ago that the only role of leaders is the betterment of the people who follow them. He contrasted this with leaders who see leading as an end in itself without any desire to use their power for good. Though Al mentioned no names, the audience could instantly identify examples of this kind of leader from the political and ecclesial spheres in both the USA and SA.

The professor, who has published 14 books on leadership, focused on three key features of a good leader: character, experience and a commitment to stewardship. He warned us that, such is our need for leaders, that we will often embrace a bad leader rather than survive with no leader at all and that created a toxic relationship that bad leaders will exploit.

Present in the audience was DHC-Patron, Ela Gandhi, a leader in her own right and the grand-daughter of the great Indian liberation leader. She



pointed out the value of being open to learn as a leader and how both Mandela and the Mahatma had developed as leaders because of what they read while in prison. (Fuller report in the "Sunday Tribune".)

Further stimulating conversations were taking place in Durban as part of the Global Irish Diaspora Congress being hosted by Prof Donal McCracken at UKZN. Dozens of academics from around the world, many of them specifically interested in Irish-South African studies, came to Durban to learn from each other but also to learn from the history of our city.

Their tour included a visit to the DHC and to Denis Hurley's shrine in the cathedral. They later heard a lecture from Raymond as he speculated on which aspects of the Archbishop's legacy he felt were especially Irish. He highlighted the commitment to justice, to education, to feeding people and to the written word; he also explored how +Hurley - in contrast to his Irish upbringing - had been so open to cross denominational and religious lines.

In the week when South Africa saw the naming of only its third ever cardinal - Stephen Brislin, Archbishop of Cape Town who delivered the Hurley-Gabuza lecture last year - one of the questions asked was about why +Hurley himself had never received a 'red hat'. Another was about his progressive views on women in the Church, something which especially interested Her Excellency Fionnuala Gilson who was chairing the lecture in one of her final missions as Irish Ambassador to SA. She commented on how delighted she had been to visit the DHC and what a remarkable example it was of justice in action. In turn, Raymond asked her to pass on our thanks to the Irish Government (and taxpayers) for the financial support they have given the centre.

*Photo (Roy Reed): Some of the delegates from the Global Irish Diaspora Congress learning about Archbishop Hurley at the DHC.*



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