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UPDATE

Care • Education • Community
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Ukunakekela • Imfundo • Umphakathi
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June 2021

Wishing the best of health to all our readers around the world, coping with lockdowns and 3rd waves, or waiting for vaccines.

CAPRISA donation supports our Clinic work
Law Students and the rights of the homeless
Digital Empowerment for the under-5s
Links with the Methodist community



**4th year law
UKZN students**



**Using a Tablet
for the 1st time**



**Methodist links
then and now**

HOW HAS THE CLINIC BEEN COPING WITH COVID?

The primary healthcare work of the DHC has carried on quietly and steadily through the pandemic. There continues to be much attention – understandably – to the risks of COVID. But the most pressing health problems faced by the homeless and the refugees of central Durban remain the same as before: HIV, TB, opportunistic infections and the regular everyday illnesses that for poor people can become much more serious because of the situations in which they are living.

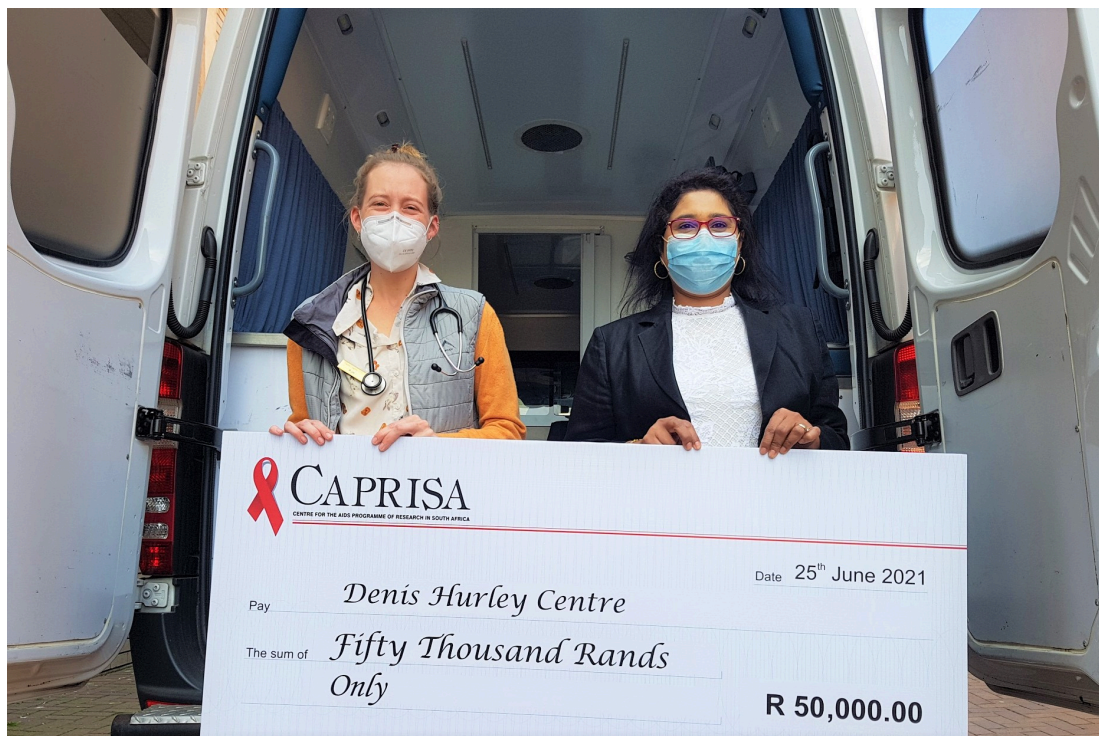
We have mentioned before the fact that we have not encountered a single COVID-related death among the thousands of patients we see throughout the year. And most of our clinic team have now been vaccinated as part of the first phase of the SA vaccine roll-out. But we have even more than that to be grateful for.

Many homeless people are susceptible to TB – a life-threatening airborne disease that does have a treatment. In the past, we have struggled to keep homeless people, whose lives are often chaotic, adherent to a six-month daily medication programme. But we are proud to be able to report that in the last 12 months we have successfully accompanied 25 people to become clear of TB – much higher than in previous years!

This is in part because of Nonhlanhla Nhlangulela, the dedicated clinic social worker, and Mpume Fuze at our Dalton site. They oversee a daily observed treatment strategy (DOTS) which currently helps 120 people who are taking ARVs and/or TB medication. If someone does not appear for their daily medication, they can be found through our mobile clinic so that we get them back on track as soon as possible.

A recent vote of confidence in our clinic work came in the form of a substantial donation from the CAPRISA Cares foundation. The organisation's work on TB and HIV is world renowned and their head, Prof Salim Abdool Karim, was a key adviser to the president at the start of the pandemic. The grant comes from funds contributed by CAPRISA staff members who voted that the DHC (alongside two other organisations) was a worthy recipient. This will help fund almost half a month of our clinic activities – it costs us about R120,000 (\$3,500) to see over 1,200 patients each month.

Ruth Birtwhistle (Clinic Co-ordinator) gratefully receiving a very large cheque from Prof Kogie Naidoo (Deputy director, CAPRISA) standing in front of our mobile outreach clinic. (Photo: Illa Thompson)



UKZN HELPING HOMELESS TO REALISE THEIR RIGHTS

Janine Hicks and the UKZN School of Law has been working closely with the DHC for a few years now, with 4th year law students coming in to spend time listening to the homeless. They cannot, of course, provide formal legal advice but they have been working with small groups to teach people about their rights. They are also helping people to be more aware of the quality of evidence they would need to bring a complaint against the police.

This is important because the very law enforcement officials who are paid to protect all citizens – Metro Police, SAPS and Municipality-funded private security – are in fact the most likely to perpetrate violations against the homeless. We had seen a ‘ceasefire’ since the beginning of the first lockdown in March 2020, but just recently there has been an increase in the complaints we have been hearing about. A recent [e.tv news item](#) drew attention to the theft of blankets from the homeless in Durban by the police, even as the nights were getting colder.

One law student, Blaire Masters, commented: “My experience at the Denis Hurley Centre opened my eyes to the reality of the justice system.” Another, Zesizwe Biyela, added “It made me aware of the hardships the homeless face; from being ignored by police and hospital staff to getting shunned by society in general.”

The law students have had an extra focus of late. Municipal elections are coming up in October and, as in the 2019 General Election, we are working with the Independent Electoral Commission to register homeless people as voters. But about half of them lack

the necessary ID document. The law students have been helping complete forms for each homeless person without an ID so that we can work with the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) to secure replacements.

The slowness of DHA, and the restrictions created by COVID, are making this important task a steep mountain to climb. But Navi Pillay, Durban-resident and retired UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, has added her voice to our request to DHA to make the process easier for the homeless.

Chanelle Naidoo, another law student, identified this as one example that “although the law is upheld ...in theory, it is not upheld ...in practice.” She went on to say: “I am grateful for my experience at the DHC as it has reminded me why I chose to study law and it has reinforced my intrinsic desire to help and serve others by advocating for justice.”

Two of the UKZN law students taking information from some homeless young men who need replacement identity documents.



GETTING OUR CHILDREN DIGITALLY EMPOWERED

Stuart Talbot, our Empowerment Officer, points out that his role encompasses not only ‘economic empowerment’ and ‘civic empowerment’ (as described above) but these days also ‘digital empowerment’. People need an ID to be recognised but they are invisible on-line without an email address; they need a safe place to keep belongings but, if you do not have a permanent home, then a place in the cloud is a good way to keep documents safe.

As well as pursuing this with some of our adult beneficiaries, we have recently extended digital empowerment to our youngest ones. The 15 four- and five-year olds who attend the pre-school at our Dalton site have been getting on line.

We handle a lot of tablets at the DHC but a very special donation from Khanya Africa Networks led to the delivery of 15 iPad-type tablets. It was a great gift; but hardware is only useful if you have the human-ware to unlock it. We were blessed that two of the OT students from UKZN who have been with us for the past few months took on the task of learning how to teach the children.

Tiffany Cook and Nerisha Maghoo familiarised themselves with the devices, identified an app that was suited to the age group, and worked with Charity Motaung (the pre-school teacher) to lead short classes. We were amazed at the ease with which the children learnt how to identify their profiles (each had a different animal), to use the keyboard and to swipe the screen.

The children came in to the DHC for their classes since there is no electricity or WiFi at

the Dalton site. (In fact, after four years and countless emails and meetings, we still do not have water or sanitation connected to our clinic or our crèche). Of course, for the children this made the whole exercise even more of an adventure.

The next contingent of OT students in August will continue where this group left off. They will, in addition, continue occupational therapy work with patients identified by our clinic and also with our Street Lit booksellers. The latter group have been helped by the OT students in learning how to set goals and how better to manage money and time.

The Dalton children at the DHC getting familiar with their tablets assisted by (adults, left to right) Tiffany Cook, Charity Motaung and Nerisha Maghoo.



METHODIST LINKS IN THE PAST AND NOW

The donation of tablets came via Manning Road Methodist Church and is just one example of the way in which our work has been supported in so many ways by the successors of John Wesley.

If we could transport him across 300 years, he might be surprised to see such strong Methodist connections with a centre named after a Roman Catholic Archbishop – but there are interesting parallels between Wesley and Hurley. Both had their consciousness awakened when they saw the scale of poverty and injustice around them; both responded in practical ways and also used their eloquent preaching to be a voice for the voiceless; both worked hard for reform and revival in their part of the Christian Church; and both understood the value of powerful and attractive hymns as a way of teaching good theology to their congregations.

The congregation at Musgrave Methodist Church – in person and on-line – recently had the chance to hear some theology from our Director when he was invited to preach at their Sunday service. He drew on the concept of the ‘Communion of Saints’, one usually seen as very Romish, and suggested that it can be valuable for all. ([You can view the reflection here](#)).

The Communion of Saints reminds us that we are never alone as Christians; we are linked to those who have gone before us and on whom we can draw for inspiration: not just the canonised saints but our own heroes like Wesley and Hurley. He also pointed out that St Paul used the term ‘saints’ to refer to all members of the churches he was writing to, even while knowing that they were far from perfect. Thus, we are all on the road to becoming saints and can help each other on that road.

The video of DHC staff and volunteers enabled some of our own ‘saints’ to be seen and heard in the service. Our Director was also able to thank ‘the saints’ from all the different churches in Musgrave who have been working in tandem over the past year to send sandwiches down to the DHC to supplement the cooked meal that we give out at

lunchtime.

Former Natal Coast Methodist Bishop, Mike Vorster, is one of our Patrons; and current bishop, Linda Mandindi is a Patron of the Napier Centre 4 Healing. At least two of their predecessors were also very close to +Hurley and to Paddy Kearney: Norman Hudson and John Borman. We were saddened to hear of the recent death of John aged 86.

John was here for the unveiling of the photo that hangs on our staircase commemorating the Freedom March of November 1989. At that event, John's wife, Gloria, explained that the day of the march was always etched on her memory: it was also her birthday. Until John returned home safely that evening – having not been arrested, shot or beaten up – she did not feel that she could relax enough to celebrate. We thank the Lord for the great witness that John gave, and also for his many years of ministry in writing 'Faith for Daily Living'. We extend our condolences to Gloria, to all his family and to our Methodist brothers and sisters.

The 2017 opening of the Hurley Exhibition (left to right): Paddy Kearney, Gloria Borman, Rev John Borman, Saydoon Sayed, Rt Rev Michael Nuttall and Raymond Perrier.

(In the smaller photo above you can see Saydoon, +Michael and John being re-united with their younger selves from 1990).



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