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UPDATE



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February 2023

The start of Lent - and end of tax year Annual Stakeholders' Meeting Barry Wood Awards for Service Partnership to tackle TB



**Laying flowers
at the
+Hurley shrine**



**Honouring
those
present and
past**



**Why is Siya
looking so
happy?**

START LENT, AND END THE TAX YEAR, BY MAKING A DONATION - AND ALSO REDUCING YOUR TAX BILL!

This week saw the start of Lent, the period of 40 days leading up to Easter. It is a time when Christians are asked to focus on prayer, fasting and almsgiving. And it is well timed since, a donation made now before end of February will also reduce your tax bill for 2022/23, if you are a South African tax payer.

The DHC is hugely grateful for the donations from individuals, companies, church and other faith groups, and trusts which support our work. But as was explained at our recent AGM (*see story below*) 2022 was the first year since we started in which we did NOT raise sufficient funds to cover our costs within the same year. So, while recognising the difficult economic conditions that we all face, we also ask our supporters to consider making an extra donation or increasing their regular contribution (especially if it has been at the same level for a few years). [Click here](#) for easy ways to make a donation.

Almsgiving - donating to help the poor - is one of the pillars of Lent, alongside the deepening of our prayer lives and giving up something ('fasting'). These three support each other: when we choose to sacrifice something we enjoy, we come closer to the people who have no choice but to 'go without' every day like the hundreds of homeless people who come to us looking for a meal. And prayer enables us, by drawing closer to God, to also draw closer to all God's children especially the ones whom we do not always see as our brothers and sisters. This year, part of Lent will overlap with the beginning of Ramadan and it is interesting that these same three tenets -

fasting, prayer and giving to the poor – are also key parts of the Islamic observance. We will be arranging an event in March to help Muslims and Christians learn from each other's traditions of a 'holy month'.

As usual, we began Lent by giving our staff team some time away from the busy-ness of work to reflect and pray. We were delighted to be hosted by Musgrave Methodist Church for this day away; the reflection was led by two visiting Jesuit priests, Fr Dennis Baker from the USA and Fr Isidore-Splendour Chukwu from Nigeria, who have spent the last four weeks working with us. There are some excellent on-line resources to help people to deepen their experience of Lent and focus not just on 'giving up' but also 'giving back'. If you are in Durban you are welcome to the 30 minute organ recital and reflection every Wednesday lunchtime in Lent at St Cyprian Umbilo. At the first one, at 1.15pm on 1 March, the organist is AJ Bethke and the speaker our own Director. We pray for all who are embarking on this journey of renewal.

Photo: The first day of Lent, Ash Wednesday, is when Christians wear ashes on their foreheads as a sign of repentance. Ashes were offered by two of our managers, Sr Cathy Murrugan and Stuart Talbot (an Anglican lay minister) to homeless people waiting for lunch.



REPORTING BACK TO STAKEHOLDERS ABOUT 2022

Near 13th February, the anniversary of the Archbishop's death in 2004, we mark our annual Hurley Weekend: a chance to celebrate his legacy and report back on what we have been doing. We were delighted that over 70 people attended our AGM to hear a detailed report from our Director. A video version of that will be available on You Tube soon; a copy of the 2-page handout is attached.

Raymond used the theme of books to highlight aspects of our work: ours is a 'Tale of Two Cities' in which we try to bring people together; sometimes it feels like we are in 'The Heart of Darkness' but we still have 'Great Expectations' for the people we serve; the prospects for the next few years are tough because we are all facing 'Hard Times'; that requires perseverance because this is a 'Long Walk to Freedom' but we know that we can succeed if we address problems with 'Sense and Sensibility'. Books from our award-winning Street Lit project were selected to illustrate aspects of our work and gifted to some of the people attending.

Between the evocative photos there were also some arresting statistics: we served almost 160,000 meals last year: an 85% increase on the usual number before COVID and yet, because of the generous donations of food items and efficient management by our cooks, our own spend on ingredients was only 3 cents per meal! We managed to keep our spend within budget – as we have done every year – but for the first time the money raised (R4.16M) was not enough to cover all costs within the year and so we had to draw on our Sustainability Fund.

The AGM was also the first opportunity to present our new Chair of Trustees, Rev Dr Delysia Timm an Anglican priest and a retired academic from Durban University of Technology. She spoke with passion about being called to a place which she described as having 'a heart for service' and which was not afraid to stretch itself (and others) out of their comfort zone. She reminded us

that the words on our foundation stone from John 10:10 are Jesus promise that all should have 'life to the full'.

The AGM was preceded by an inspiring concert in the Cathedral in which organist AJ Bethke and soprano Nozuko Teto generously donated their skills to help us to rise above the noise and the mess of the inner city and reconnect with the transcendence of God's creation. And then, after the AGM, we were back in the Cathedral, this time with John Ward on the organ, to celebrate our first Hurley Memorial Mass. This ended, as has become our tradition, with a candlelit procession to his shrine and the placing of floral tributes by people representing different aspects of his life and ministry.

Then on the Sunday there were further Memorial Masses celebrated by Most Rev Neil Frank, newly installed bishop of our neighbour Mariannhill diocese who, like +Hurley, is a member of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate (*he is pictured at the top laying flowers on behalf of the OMs*). In his homily he talked about how +Hurley had used a righteous anger to stand up against injustice and to inspire others to do the same. Quoting from Sirah 15:16 ("God has set fire and water before you") he challenged us today not to choose 'fire which is the vindictive anger that destroys' but rather 'water which is the righteous anger that cleanses and transforms'. A full copy of his homily is attached.

Photo: Our AGM in the Gandhi-Luthuli Peace Hall. (Niamh Walsh-Vorster)



OUTSTANDING SERVICE AND LONG SERVICE GET RECOGNISED AT THE HURLEY WEEKEND

Another fellow Oblate, alongside Bishop Neil and Archbishop Hurley, was Barry Wood who was the Auxiliary Bishop of Durban until his death six years ago. He with all our deceased supporters and service users was recalled in a moment of silence at the AGM (*see photo at the top*). We make sure that +Barry's passionate commitment to service is remembered by making awards every year in his name. The awards are based on nominations received from staff members, volunteers, partners, donors and service users and we were pleased that there forms received this year from 39 people.

The Outstanding Award for Service by a Staff Member was given to Gcina 'Connie' Mhlongo. She is one of our roster of cooks usually covering Saturdays and weekends and had also been part of the team who moved into the building 24/7 during the hard lockdown to serve the 100 people we had living on site. The words used to describe her say it all: 'dedicated', 'loving', 'consistent', 'passionate', 'humble', 'hard-working', 'motherly'.

Runners up in this category were both members of our Clinic Team who have demonstrated a high degree of flexibility and responsiveness in a difficult work environment: Marie-Goreth Nduwimana, a Community Health Worker, and Clovis Dusabe a nurse specialising in ARVs. In the volunteer category there were also Runner's Up, ironically both of them people who have now become members of the staff team because, as volunteers, they demonstrated how valuable they are: Maiglin Kolesar a Physician's Assistant and Wendy Tomo, a social worker in the Nkosinathi project.

The winner of the Volunteers Award was Mette Bunyan who works tirelessly in the Street Lit project. She has helped transform our bookstore from a dusty, dirty dungeon into a light and welcoming place which not only helps our vendors select from the thousands of books that are donated but also gives them a safe and welcoming home. So many people in this city - with skills, with resources and with time - say that they would like to do something but never get round to it. Mette is someone not afraid to get stuck in, to visit parts of the city others are afraid of, and to engage with people from a range of backgrounds. One of the booksellers summed her up neatly as 'a passionate hard-working soul'.

In addition to the Barry Wood Awards we also recognised two people for long-standing service, by coincidence both of them dealing with the financial side of our organisation. Siphon Phakathi is the only remaining member of the original set of Trustees that Paddy Kearney brought together and is about to step down having been our (unpaid!) Treasurer for 14 years. He has been able to rely on our very dependable Finance Manager, Errold Victor who after more than 8 years in his role, has announced that he will be retiring in a few months' time.

We give thanks to God for the great service to our organisation and to our beneficiaries that all of the above-named have given and hope that they will be an inspiration to others who work with us.

Photo: Some of the award winners with our Director (left to right): Clovis Dusabe, Gcina Mhlongo, Errold Victor, Mette Bunyan, Marie-Goreth Nduwimana and Justice Navi Pillay. Navi is a Patron of the DHC and as former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, the highest ranking UN official ever to come from South Africa. (Niamh Walsh-Vorster)



PARTNERING TO PROVIDE LIFE-SAVING HEALTHCARE

The DHC clinic is unique in the country in the scale and focus of the primary healthcare that we provide to two very significant but distinct marginalised communities: homeless people and refugees. Although it sometimes feel that we are walking a lonely road, we do sometimes come across organisations with a similar commitment and are pleased to partner with them when we can.

One such is Advanced Access and Delivery (AA&D) who since lockdown have been overseeing a opiate-substitute programme to help people addicted to heroin. The principle of such a 'harm reduction' approach is that it is better to help someone manage their addiction and use less harmful substitutes when for some people giving up their drugs completely is so hard.

We have been supporting AA&D at their Bellhaven site by providing primary healthcare and also ARV management; it is satisfying that two of their team were also trained by the DHC clinic.

This week they helped us by bringing a mobile TB testing service to Paddy Kearney Way outside our building. TB, as we have written before, is a shocking disease in South Africa because it kills about 100,000 people every year and yet is completely treatable if diagnosed early on.

In our clinic we are able to take sputum samples for TB testing but this is not as effective as being able to also do a chest X-ray. AA&D have been moving around the various homeless shelters and hot spots providing TB screening and spent a day with us and at our satellite clinic at Dalton, seeing over 50 people. Given the high and rising prevalence of TB in our community, we were also pleased that they were able to test some of our staff members: both to keep them safe and also make sure that they are not inadvertently vectors of transmission to our patients and visitors.

The X-ray is initially scanned by a computer programme to identify any which show irregularities and then these get a closer inspection by Dr Stephen Carpenter, the doctor who volunteers at the DHC once a week who is a renowned TB expert. Patients who are identified as having pulmonary TB are then very quickly initiated by us on to a daily medication which quickly reduces their risk of transmitting to others and, after six months, clears them of TB completely. Because of the challenge of completing the six-month course, we have over 200 patients taking TB medication (and/or ARVs) as part of our Directly Observed Treatment (DOTS). We are immensely proud of the fact that we had 80 patients last year successfully come completely clear of TB. Anyone identified as part of this week's screening will be joining a programme which has shown how effective it is at improving the health of the poor and also of the wider community.

Of all the things that people 'give up' for Lent, healthcare is unlikely to be one of them. But for the thousands of homeless and refugee patients we see, if we were not there, they would have to give up access to healthcare and life-saving treatments. Each patient we saw in 2022 cost us R72 or £3.50 (to cover staffing, medication and all the other costs of running a clinic). That is immensely good value but since we had over 30,000 patient interactions last year, you can see that we still have to raise a lot of money to keep the clinic going. A regular donation of R300 per month would enable us to see 50 patients a year. So please consider giving something back and not just giving something up if you are observing Lent or Ramadan.

Photo: Siya Mngadi (at the top and seated in the pic below), our Clinic driver, was one of the staff members who with dozens of our other patients benefited from TB X-ray screening conducted (as you can see) on Ash Wednesday.



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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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