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UPDATE

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February 2025

Ramadan Mubarak to our Muslim readers
and Lenten Blessings to Christians

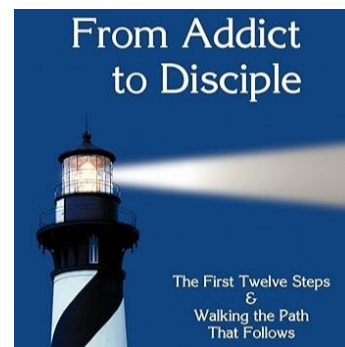
The Search begins for a New Director
Highlights from our recent AGM
Winners of this year's Barry Wood Awards
On-line Seminar on Addiction



+Jwara with Patrons and Trustees



Outstanding Service by a Volunteer



US Expert shares with National Network

CHANGES AFOOT IN HOW WE RUN THE DHC

At the recent AGM, Chair of Trustees Rev Dr Delysia Timm announced some important changes in how the DHC is run. After 10 years in office as full-time Director, Dr Raymond Perrier has indicated to the board that he would like to step down.

"I only promised Paddy that I would come for 2 years – and that was 10 years ago! But I feel that, after a decade, it is time to make room for new

blood and new ideas. I also want to avoid the trap of still being here after my sell-by date. It's best to go voluntarily before that time is reached!"

Raymond will not, however, be leaving imminently and is committed to staying around for as long as it takes to find a suitable replacement. As part of the transition, he has handed over internal operational matters to Leanne Banks who has been our Administrator since 2017. She has increased her hours and now takes on the title of Chief Operations Officer (COO).

Leanne commented: "I'm looking forward very much to fulfilling my role as the COO. So far, the transition has been quite seamless; Raymond and I have been a good team for almost 7 years after all. I'm very grateful for the support from my fellow managers, staff and the Board of Trustees."

Raymond, who will still be at the DHC two weeks out of four, will focus on external issues such as PR, fundraising, advocacy and relationships with partners. During 2025, he is also acting as the Chair of the National Homeless Network which necessitates him also being in other parts of the country.

Delysia welcomed the way in which the Board can prepare for a 'managed transition': "Whilst we are aware that transitions can be challenging, we are hopeful that this will be an opportunity for ongoing growth and successes in our DHC community. We are confident in Leanne's ability to provide leadership in the Centre, with Raymond's guidance and support. We trust that the process of recruiting a new Director will be thorough, transparent and focused on selecting the best candidate to lead the DHC with vision and integrity. We are very grateful that the Batho Batho Trust who have supported the DHC from its inception have generously stepped up to assist us financially during this process of transition."

So the DHC is now actively looking for a **new Director**: the role could be the full-time position that Raymond had, or the reduced-time role that he now has. Clearly, we need someone who is passionate about social justice and has an empathy for the homeless and refugee constituencies that we serve. She or he may well come from one of the various faith communities who support our work and must be able to work effectively with the range of religious traditions in Durban, as well as with our secular partners. The person will have had experience in fundraising, networking and building partnerships; and probably also in the administration and governance of a medium-sized organisation.

Whatever their professional career to date, we would expect them to have demonstrated their commitment to the [ethos and values](#) of the DHC. The role reports to the Board of Trustees and will work very closely with the Administrator /COO as well as with our other professional managers.

A full job description is being drawn up. But if you want to be considered for the role, or you know someone who should be, please send an '**expression of interest**' plus a CV to vacancies@denishurleycentre.org. We will not be setting up interviews immediately, but we will register your desire to be considered.

Photo (Rob Morris): Raymond at the recent AGM with two esteemed Justices and Patrons of the DHC, Leona Theron (left) and Navi Pillay (former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights). They are holding a framed parchment of the preamble of the SA Constitution which was donated to the DHC by Justice Albie Sachs when he visited recently.



ANNUAL STAKEHOLDERS' MEETING AND INSPIRING REFLECTIONS

The announcement above was made as part of our 'Hurley Weekend'; for 15 years, we have commemorated the weekend nearest to Archbishop Hurley's death on 13 February. The AGM was a chance to report back to the many individuals and organisations who hold a stake in the DHC. We were delighted that over 70 people attended including service users, staff, volunteers, partners, Government officials, religious leaders and donors.

One highlight was the **Director's presentation** covering the previous 12 months. He used the theme of the Year of Jubilee, proclaimed by Pope Francis, to talk about the DHC's work. How are we announcing that 'now is the acceptable time; now is the year of the Lord's favour?' Using the Pope's slogan for the year, 'Pilgrims of Hope', he demonstrated how the DHC is one of several 'Places of Hope' that bring together 'People of Hope'. Attached is a short summary of the key data from the presentation; and [via this link](#) you can watch the whole of Raymond's presentation.

Another highlight was the presence of one of our Patrons, the Durban-born **Leona Theron** who is now a Justice on the Constitutional Court (SA's Supreme Court). She reflected on whether the law is effective in protecting the most vulnerable in modern-day South Africa. She recalled the ways in which, during Apartheid, the law had been used to exclude people and noted that it was exactly 40 years ago when two legal cases were used (unsuccessfully) to intimidate and silence Archbishop Hurley and Paddy Kearney, our founder.

Whilst acknowledging that the new dispensation had made a huge difference, she pointed out "the painful truth that, for many, the rights enshrined in our Constitution are words on paper, not guarantees in life".

"For millions in South Africa ...justice feels distant, dignity is fragile, and belonging is uncertain. The poor, the marginalised, and foreign nationals often find themselves on the fringes, not because our laws do not recognise

them, but because society fails to uphold their worth. They navigate a system where access to justice depends on wealth, where opportunity is a privilege, and where prejudice can outweigh principle.”

She generously highlighted the DHC as one way of responding to this: “We must be part of creating ripples of hope in our community. And the Denis Hurley Centre offers us a platform to be part of social change and social justice.” The full text of her speech, reproduced in the *Sunday Tribune*, [can be read here](#).

The Saturday ended with a Memorial Mass in Emmanuel Cathedral in honour of Archbishop Hurley at which the presider and preacher was **Bishop Elias Zondi**. He offered his blessing for the work of the DHC and asked that “the hearts of those-who-have be open to help those-who-do-not-have”. The Mass ended with a candlelit procession to +Hurley’s shrine.

Before the AGM, a small lunch was held with Trustees, Managers and some of our Patrons, including the Chair of the Patrons **Archbishop Mandla Jwara** (pictured at the top with Trustees Nomfundo Dlamini, on the left, and Dr Nondumiso Shangase). He shared a delightful story about encountering the older +Hurley when he had come to buy some religious goods at Mariannahill and could not start his car. “I lent him a knife - and he has still not returned it!” Archbishop Jwara commended the work of the DHC and stressed the importance of a close collaboration between us and the Cathedral parish.

Photo (Stuart Talbot): Mass goes gather with candles around the shrine of Archbishop Hurley to recite the prayer endorsed by Cardinal Napier.



WELL-DESERVED WINNERS OF THE BARRY WOOD AWARD

Earlier, at the AGM, Bishop Zondi presented this year’s Barry Wood Awards for Outstanding Service. This was especially appropriate since he is the Auxiliary Bishop of Durban and thus Bishop Barry’s successor.

Following his death in 2017, the DHC Trustees launched a special award named after Bishop Barry as a way of honouring staff members and

volunteers who exemplify our values in the way that he did.

31 submissions were received from a wide range of people who know the DHC; in total 14 staff members and 6 volunteers were nominated. These were reviewed by senior managers and a Trustee, and the results announced at the AGM.

In the staff category, one of the runners-up was **Lindani Ngubane** who works as Assistant to the Building Manager and has taken on additional responsibility as Driver for the Street Lit project. The other runner-up was **Bongani Chonco** who joined the Clinic team as Security and General Assistant. Both were commended for being committed and enthusiastic, and always willing to assist their colleagues.

The winner in this category was **Illa Thompson** who has been part of the backbone of the DHC since its inception. Her work (paid and unpaid) has impacted every part of the DHC, continually going beyond what is expected. She was praised as a living embodiment of respect, courtesy, honesty, trust and upliftment of others. As project co-ordinator of Street Lit, during 2024 she managed the drive which collected over 20,000 books in honour of Madiba. One bookseller who nominated her wrote: "Since I met up with Miss Illa, my life changed like magic because of her heart."

Lynette Courtois was the runner-up in the volunteer category. She has worked quietly at the DHC, once a week since 2022 without any fanfare. She has helped document and update the database of the service users whom we assist with ID applications; that means 532 applications over the past two years!

The winner in the volunteer category was **Bongani 'Gagasi' Madida**, the overwhelming choice of those who submitted nominations (*pictured at the top*). He has volunteered in various ways, across several years. Without being paid, he worked tirelessly as a member of the eThekweni Task Team on Homelessness and has been a regular participant in several of the National Homeless Conversations, including as chair of a key part of the programme when we hosted last November.

He not only volunteers in Nkosinathi by serving meals and washing dishes, he also oversees the use of our Computer Room and assists users with drawing up their CVs and with other computer skills. Bongani always has a smile on his face and is willing to help wherever needed. One of his nominators wrote: "I have often heard him speak with wisdom, persuasiveness, and dignity on important community matters."

In addition to the Barry Wood Awards, a special 'long service' award was made to **Dr Stephen Carpenter** who has been volunteering in our clinic between one and three days a week since we started 10 years ago.

All those named received certificates and the winners also were given a small shopping voucher as mark of our appreciation.

Photo (Val Adamson): Illa receives her Barry Wood Award for Outstanding Service from Bishop Elias Zondi.



THOUGHTFUL WEBINAR ON 'RESPONSES TO ADDICTION'

In between its annual 'National Conversations', the National Homeless Network is also offering public on-line seminars every quarter. These webinars are an opportunity to focus on one particular aspect of the very complex issue of homelessness, and learn from the experiences of experts in that area. The first one took place this week on the subject of 'Responses to Addiction'.

The National Homeless Network was delighted that over 120 people from all around the country registered for the 90-minute webinar. The host was Ilse Maartens who is based at the Cape Town branch of MES ('Mould-Empower-Serve') which operates in several cities across the country.

There were three speakers who all have hands-on experience of assisting addicts, two from South Africa and one from the USA.

Ronnie Naude who works with **MES** in PE/ Gqeberha spoke passionately about his own journey of recovery and the key role that Christian faith had played for him. He quoted from Scripture "When tempted, no one should say, 'God is tempting me.' For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed." (Ja 1:13-14)

He recommended that we should not think of someone's addiction (to drugs, alcohol, gambling or whatever) as the struggle. "That is not the struggle; it is an expression of the struggle." He pointed out that recovery only works when we deal with the need for an underlying change of heart.

A second speaker, **Maletje Maleka** was from **COSUP**, the substance-use programme that is part of the University of Pretoria. Their focus is on working on the ground with communities and, where possible, making sure that the Municipality and local clinics are part of the response to addiction. He pointed out that we should be prepared for a roller coaster when trying to

help an addict. “Addiction is a chronic relapsing disease – we should never give up even when we have set backs.”

We were especially privileged to welcome **Dr David Hain** who is based in America but also works frequently in South Africa. His programme is named after his book ‘From Addict to Disciple’ (and its follow up ‘From Ashes to Destiny’). He shared a vivid image of a person as a Russian doll and stressed the need to dig deep down to find the cause of an addiction. When asked if we could change an addict who is not yet ready for a recovery programme, he answered: “We cannot change the person, but we can change our attitude to the person.”

A panel discussion chaired by Raymond enabled the three speakers to interact with each other and with the varied audience which included people with a lived experience of homelessness.

[Contact us](#) if you would like to receive a link to a recording of the webinar or if you want to be invited to future events which will be **Weds 14 May and 13 August**, from 10am to 11.30am. Also [let us know](#) if you have ideas for themes or speakers for future webinars.

Photo: While in South Africa, Dr David Hain has been working with Tower of Life in Krugersdorp, a member of the National Homeless Network.



Director: Raymond Perrier (raymond@denishurleycentre.org)
Bookings: Leanne Banks (leanne@denishurleycentre.org)
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