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Woolies really cares!

Since the Belvedere Square branch of Woolworths opened its doors eight years ago, there has been a constant, unbroken relationship.

NOAH collects the Woolworths donation of goods just past their sell-by date from them on a Thursday afternoon. On Friday morning it is distributed on a rotational basis to all the outlying houses and both assisted living facilities. Each person receives their own share, which makes a significant difference to their nutrition.

“With food being so expensive, this wonderful regular donation certainly helps our seniors - who are on such a tight budget - immensely. Woolies are kind enough to make sure we always get basics, such as milk and bread,” says Sr Ada Kennedy, NOAH’s Health Manager. “Often they spoil us with luxury items like fruit, meat, ready made meals and salads, which most of our residents simply cannot

afford to buy.” Sr Ada confirms that the weekly donation definitely raises nutritional levels, so vitally important for maintaining health in old age.

Some have even used the seed from fresh produce to plant up vegetable gardens. Store administrator Vanessa Daniels remarks: “We couldn’t believe Bernard’s garden – talk about maximising our contribution!”

Woolworths Belvedere Square branch’s social committee paid NOAH a visit late last year, on a round to see for themselves what their regular recipients were all about. “At the time we were aware that we had to cut back on our commitments in the community,” says store Administration and Financial Manager Daniel Layman, “but it really touched our hearts

to see such a well run facility with happy old people. We went back determined to do something more for them.”

Something more turned out to be a donation of R15 000, raised mainly by branch staff and bolstered by a contribution from Woolworths Head Office. “At the time of our visit I asked for a ‘wish list’,” continues Daniel. “Soon it will be our pleasure to make a few of these wishes come true!” Far from withdrawing from the relationship, Belvedere Square branch has put in a request to their head office to ‘adopt’ NOAH – so the relationship is not only set to continue but expand.

Store manager Garron van Rensburg says: “I would like NOAH residents to know they have my support and we are right behind them!” From all at NOAH, a heartfelt thanks to Woolies!

Members of Woolworths Belvedere Square branch’s social committee, back row from left, Yazid Abrahams, Daniel Layman, Thembelani Waka. Front from left: Natalie Nayman and Ndumi Janda.



Tough times call for renewed commitment –
please use the enclosed donor reply slip to help keep NOAH’s doors open!

The “Happiness” department

Jeane Coetzee is NOAH's new part time Occupational Therapist, appointed in August last year. In the short time she has been on board, this competent and lovely young woman has thoroughly assessed the workings of NOAH and is effecting positive change.

Spreading sunshine

“I belong in NOAH's happiness department,” says Jeane, who is focusing primarily on interpersonal relationships in the NOAH homes. “The quality of life can falter over these dynamics, which is quite normal given that the residents come from greatly varying backgrounds.” Some differences are merely petty, but some are quite serious.

However, Jeane believes residents can learn to accept and appreciate diversity, and also be equipped with basic conflict management skills – eg. handling conflict assertively as opposed to aggression or submission and sweeping issues under the carpet, where they tend to fester and breed malicious gossip. “No-one is too old to learn,” she says, “and it is a healthy challenge!”

Coming soon

Wishing to be pro-active, Jeane envisages rolling out workshops and is looking at personalising the NOAH Code of Conduct for each house, reviewing it annually (since people inevitably move on, bringing changes). She believes the responsibilities in the houses

should be spread more equitably. She will also work closely with the social clubs, in Woodstock and Khayelitsha. “We want to resurrect the ‘walking club’, as well as institute games and exercises for both NOAH's assisted living facilities.”

Wonderful volunteers Anna Brauniger and Katherine Knoetze are helping to keep residents happy. Anna has started an art group which meets every alternate Saturday and Katherine runs the “clay, coffee and conversation group”.



Jeane studied and qualified in Stellenbosch, specialising in mental health. Having worked for three years in the United Kingdom, she returned to South Africa to work at Stikland Hospital and subsequently in private practice. She also offers training, therapy and consulting to private companies. In addition she is a mediator for the Family Advocate's office

BELOW: Happy crafters at NOAH's Woodstock seniors centre.

NOAH's Code of Conduct

- All residents are expected to play an active and meaningful role in the house activities. They are required to attend monthly meetings and contribute to the decision making and management of the house.
- A tolerant and friendly attitude towards other household members is expected. New residents are to be made to feel welcome. Personal property of others must be respected.
- Residents are obliged to participate in NOAH activities and share their skills and experience with others.
- Abuse of alcohol or any other substance resulting in negative behaviour changes affecting other residents is not tolerated.
- A healthy and clean environment makes for happy residents – this includes not smoking in a NOAH home; not eating or keeping of food in bedrooms; adherence to the cleaning duty roster and control of own possessions.
- No firearms or weapons are permitted in a NOAH house.
- There is a formal grievance procedure and failure to comply with the rules results in disciplinary action.

At this time when we are facing a world economic crisis, nobody has been left unscathed with cost of living increases - particularly food, loss of income from retrenchments and poor returns on investments; we are facing a tough year.



And so it's really great to see Woolworths on the cover of our newsletter as one of our most regular and generous donors. Woolworths is to be congratulated for effectively distributing 'waste' to communities who need it badly. This is such a tangible way of making a difference to the daily lives of ordinary people in need. In these difficult financial times, there should be a zero tolerance for throwing away anything that could be of use to people in need in this country.

We are pleased to see that the minister has increased the pension by 5.5% and included all men from 60 years of age, which will bring relief to a large group of pensioners. While this decision may add a burden on the state in terms of the number of people relying on social grants, we believe there is very little choice for government to bring some relief to the many elderly people who live in abject poverty whilst also having to provide for grandchildren left to their care as a consequence of HIV and AIDS.

We are, however, also mindful that the increase is below inflation which will make this a challenging year to get through. We anticipate that in the next few years, as the impact of the global economic crisis is felt by developing countries, government and the private sector will have to strengthen partnerships with NGOs to effectively address social issues.

As always, I gratefully acknowledge all our friends and donors who have so loyally supported NOAH, without whom we would not be able to continue to make a difference to the lives of all the elderly we serve.


Dee Wills

**Dee Wills
Programme Manager**

NOAH's Health Manager, Sister Ada Kennedy, reports on the highs and lows on the health front :

- Our regular doctor at the Woodstock clinic has been on maternity leave. Thanks to locum Dr Marianne Andrade we have been able to continue with the NOAH Clinic twice a week.
- The Woodstock Clinic membership remains stable at 200 patients and all chronic conditions are well controlled.
- Thanks are due to Dr Setoaba, who is still running a successful clinic at Khayelitsha assisted living facility once per month. Likewise all chronic conditions there are under control.
- At the end of last year we had a health talk given by the Arthritis Association. This was well attended and very informative on a new trend in the treatment and management of arthritis. The next health talk will be on diabetes by the SA Diabetic Association.
- Health assessments of the independent houses have been increased to every second month in order to monitor and evaluate residents in between their day hospital appointments.
- Flu vaccines have been given free of charge to all assisted living residents and staff. Other clinic members can get the vaccination on request at a nominal fee.

NOAH's Housing Manager Vivienne Prince reports:

Going Solar: All NOAH houses have now been fitted with solar heating and this has proved to be a great saving. We were able to compare 6 months before and 6 months after, and the saving in electricity was as high as 36% in some places. Can you imagine what it would have cost us with the price hike we have already experienced and also future price hikes? 

Maintenance: With the heavy rains last winter quite a few houses had to put out buckets, but with a funder's help we were able to do repair work on most of our NOAH houses. In some instances the roofing was even replaced. We also put up security fencing at Frederika House in Parow and Millicent Gunn House in Athlone, took care of major electrical needs, insulated the roof of Harmony House in Rondebosch East and so much more – ongoing maintenance is always necessary but there are not always funds available to accomplish our goals!

New appointment

Shaundre Stewart is NOAH's new Administrator.



New vision for Khayelitsha

After 22 years of championing the cause of the elderly in Khayelitsha, NOAH is witnessing a major shift in cultural perception. People are realising that their elderly have special needs, which cannot be met at home. A multi-purpose geriatric wellness centre in Cape Town's largest township is therefore now on the cards...

KHAYELITSHA is the third largest township in South Africa, with a population of almost a million people. Yet there is no facility addressing the needs of frail elderly. NOAH's Nonkululeko assisted living home in Z-block provides accommodation for 18 pensioners, primary health care for its residents as well as social clubs for both residents and other pensioners in the area who still live with their families.

Turning people away

NOAH's Khayelitsha manager, Sinah George says "I am forced to turn away those who need full-time caregivers." She adds that the current elderly residents are themselves naturally aging. In turn this puts considerable strain on the carers, as their clients are steadily becoming frailer and requiring nursing beyond what assisted living can reasonably offer. "It's very hard on the carers," says Sinah, acknowledging their dedicated contribution.

Not only is there nowhere to refer older people in failing health, there is now a queue of applicants for Nonkululeko. Commenting on the long waiting list, Sinah says: "It is wonderful to see that people do really care about their old people. This is a big thing – a major cultural shift!" Day care is now being offered at Nonkululeko for those few whose families can afford to bring them in on a daily basis, but sadly this can only accommodate a limited number of individuals.

Taking the initiative

Since NOAH obviously can't meet the need, petitioning of stakeholders such as government and other non-profit organisations with expertise in geriatric care has begun. The Departments of Health and Social Development have already been consulted and a meeting arranged with the Department of Housing.

"Our vision is to have a dedicated multi-purpose centre for the elderly of Khayelitsha – comprising a residential frail care facility, a day-care facility supported by carers, and a specialist geriatric clinic," says Sinah. "It will be a great step forward for this community – and so far the idea is being very enthusiastically received."

Land and appropriate zoning is obviously required – in fact, a site has been suggested not far from the day hospital and close to the police station. A fundraising campaign will naturally be the next step.

Hive of activity

The Monwabisi ("we are happy") social club used to have five satellites; this year after review it was decided to consolidate them into two. This was done because the outlying venues weren't suitable and it involved a lot of travelling. NOAH is now concentrating on Z-block (Sites C & E) and Elitapark (Harare).

Monwabisi club co-ordinator Thembi Gecelo has upgraded her skills and together with NOAH's new OT, Jeane Coetzee, has planned an exciting programme to include reviving regular exercise classes and visits to and from other NOAH houses.

Thembi has been with NOAH for just on a year. Extremely outgoing and trained in the dramatic arts, she likes to laugh and has a frank and open communication style. "I am also an artist and have taught the makhulus to make different handwork which they can sell as income generation for their clubs. I have such a sense of achievement seeing them happily making useful things!"

EXCITEMENT is running high among residents and staff. A special and long-desired outing to Robben Island has been organized for the end of April by James Fernie of Uthando, a non-profit organization that promotes responsible tourism. A longtime friend of NOAH, James is a tour guide who regularly brings overseas tourists to visit as part of a township tour. He arranged and financed this long-held wish by putting a request on his website!

Sinah's wish list:

- Blankets and linen for single beds
- A vehicle to transport the elderly



The staff at Khayelitsha in the garden.



Tata Fadana celebrates his 80th birthday!



Thembi dancing with members at the Monwabisi Xmas party.



Tata Hinana is NOAH Khayelitsha's driver and caretaker.



Giving in difficult times



TOP business and financial experts tell us that the state of the global economy is at the worst it has ever been. It is anticipated that emerging economies such as South Africa and the rest of Africa will be the hardest hit.

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) who rely on donations in order to bring services to the poorest members of society will find

it harder to survive in a climate where foreign and local donors are freezing expenditure.

There are indications that NGOs are already bearing the brunt of this global economic crisis. We know of NGOs in the Western Cape who were forced to close their doors last year due to lack of funding. Others are on the brink of disaster. For those who used to benefit from their services, the consequences are potentially devastating unless they can find an alternative to fill the gap.

In a country where we have a high unemployment rate and many social ills, NGOs are significant stakeholders in developing communities and helping government deliver services. I believe everyone should have a role to play in ensuring the sustainability of NGOs.

At NOAH, we are fortunate and very grateful to have partners who have supported our work over the years. It is these partnerships that have kept us afloat and this should be the path for CSI partnerships. Loyal friends have also played a big role in our sustainability - some have supported NOAH for years. I encourage you to emulate their generosity and commitment as we prepare to face some of the hardest times.

Maya Angelou, the African American who survived a tough childhood to become a singer, actress, activist, and writer once said, *"I have found that, among its other benefits, giving liberates the soul of the giver."* And all of us need to apply and experience this noble sentiment, and enjoy the satisfaction that follows. I wish you could be with us when the faces of the poor and needy elderly are suddenly lit by your acts of kindness. It is a memory for keeps!!

In the words of US President Barack Obama: *"With hope and virtue, let us brave once more the icy currents, and endure what storms may come. Let it be said by our children's children that when we were tested we refused to let this journey end, that we did not turn back nor did we falter..."*

Please, can we count on you walking with us in this journey and on your unfaltering support?

Mbuzeli Mrwetyana
NOAH Fundraising Manager

Newsflash

The letter below published in *The Times* on 27 January 2009 remains pertinent.

FURTHER to your article 'Charities feel the squeeze' (*The Times*, January 26), I wish to encourage all your readers to consider committing their support to their local NGOs by donating a regular monthly sum. NGOs provide essential services to the most poor in our communities and as a result, all of society benefits. The current economic slowdown will certainly increase demand for services provided by NGOs as more and more people battle to meet their needs.

We anticipate that fundraising will be even harder this year as companies and donor organisations try to maintain their positions in a shrinking global economy. Everyone is affected, particularly the poor.

To minimise the degree of suffering I urge everyone who earns an income to commit a monthly donation of R50 or more to an NGO of their choice; this will go a long way in helping us continue to serve the poor.

Dee Wills
Project Manager

Half-year highlights

- The HCI Foundation made a generous grant of R80 000 towards the maintenance of NOAH houses.
- The Alexander Forbes Trust donated R56 000 for the renovation of the NOAH house in Khayelitsha.
- The Nussbaum Foundation donated R100 000 towards the extensive renovations at NOAH Stellenbosch.
- The Maagdenhuis Foundation funded the finishing touches to the Stellenbosch house with R52 000.
- We continue to value and enjoy the support of the Western Cape Department of Social Development.

Anne's back!

Anne van Niekerk, NOAH's very first fundraiser has rejoined the fundraising team on a part-time basis. Her experience and capability should help cast the net wider as, similar to many NGOs, NOAH is facing shrinking donor support.



Never a day's illness

Mildred Mangiagalli will be 88 in October and is still a fit and active resident of Fredericka House in Parow, where she has lived for the past 18 years.

THIS makes her the NOAH resident who has enjoyed the longest tenure - proving that the NOAH model does work in prolonging quality life for the elderly. She even drove her car up until five years ago when, after a minor accident, her nephew insisted it was time to give up. She says she has never had a day's illness in her life apart from the occasional cold.

Mildred has lived all her life in Parow. She had a very happy childhood, being one of 5 sisters, and recalls being quite spoiled. They never argued, except over clothes! Her dad went away to fight in World War One, so there was a five year gap between herself and her nearest sibling, Doreen.

Leaving school after Standard 6, she went to work for Ackermans on their telephone exchange. After six years she married her Italian sweetheart and never worked again because she expected to raise a family - that is what girls did in those days!

However, the couple was not blessed with children - so she was free to accompany her husband on his work trips. He was an engineer working for Cape Town firm Consani and together they were able to visit Salisbury (now Harare), Durban, Port Elizabeth, East London and Kroonstad on company business.

Upon the death of her husband, Mildred went to live in a small flat.



She heard about NOAH through a friend at the Catholic church she attends, and met previous project manager Margie Dobson. She was offered a place at Fredericka House, slotted in immediately and has been there ever since!

"I am so lucky to live here, I couldn't afford anywhere else," says Mildred. "No-one interferes,

I can come and go as I like." She belongs to the Tygerberg Seniors Social Club just down the road, and takes most of her meals there as well as partaking in all their outings.

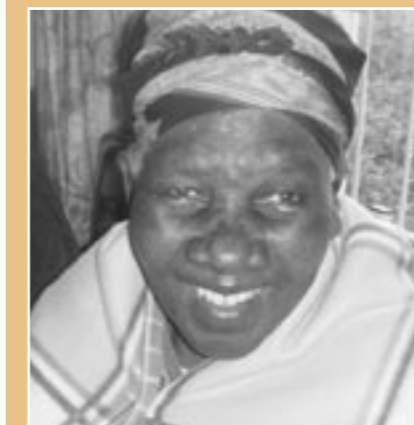
Her especial friend, Winnie Kohler, although younger than herself, was recently moved to McNulty House in Woodstock for assisted living.

Sadly missed

Cupido Frisley from Pothier House in Woodstock died in November 2008. Cupido first stayed at Mc Cann House before he moved to Pothier. He had severe problems with asthma yet never complained. He was very independent and kept much to himself, although he always pulled his weight around the home.

Joyce Van der Merwe of Avonskemer in Atlantis died in October 2008. A lady of class, she was always dressed up to the nines as if she were going out. Joyce was very active and helped her daughter in her house shop until a few months before her death. She loved baking and was always hospitable at house meetings.

David Swanepoel of Millicent Gunn House in Athlone died in December 2008 from a sudden illness. David and his wife had recently moved into Millicent Gunn and fitted in well. He was quietly spoken and a real family man.



Mrs Ethel Mpingwana passed away at the age of 80 last November. She came to NOAH's Nonkululeko Home in Khayelitsha through her neighbours, who were concerned about her health because she was staying alone; she was lucky to be admitted immediately. Mrs Mpingwana never had children and only one person, her next of kin, used to visit her. He was very happy he could work without worries about her safety or wellbeing.



ABOVE: The Woodstock NOAH Garden Club visiting their mentor, Jane Robertson's lovely garden.

Successful fundraiser

THE theme for NOAH's fit elderly houses' annual fund raising event was "Spring is in the air". What a wonderful afternoon: 11 out of 12 houses participated, the menu was exotic and fabulous - all prepared by our very capable senior citizens, who once again rose to the challenge and proved that they had not lost their magic touch. The walls were decorated with flowers and the table decorations were stunning, Karaoke was provided by NOAH's very talented driver, who also entertained with a few songs - everyone had a great time.



Singing & dancing

AT a Women's Day Tea hosted by Chevron, the manager and staff came along to serve and engage with the residents. Johnny Stigling brought along his piano-accordion and singing and dancing ensued... it was amazing!



Avril Jonas is NOAH's acknowledged dancing queen!

The Jazzy Vibes invited the Woodstock residents to tea in September at St Mary's Church hall in Woodstock. Thanks to Trevor Cloete and his group they enjoyed karaoke and danced the afternoon away. Of course, many complained the next day of sore feet!

Uncle Bennie goes global!



Bennie Klein at the airport.

77-year old Bennie Klein had been saving to visit the Holy sites for over 40 years. When the opportunity to finally go on a pilgrimage to Rome arrived, he grabbed it with both hands. The two-week tour also encompassed France and Egypt. "It was a great privilege to participate in the candlelight procession at Lourdes in France, as well as to learn more about St Benedict and how the Holy Mother appeared to her," he says.

Flower power

A trip to the Darling Orchid and Wild flower show is not to be forgotten! Residents of Frederika House in Parow who seldom go anywhere, decided to come along. The long drive and scenery was stunning and the orchids even more beautiful.



RIGHT: Desiree George among the orchids.

Comings and goings

Welcome to Manie Brown, Dulcie Smit, Vivian Johnson, Trish Neuworth, Magdalene Sias, Anne Sedras, Florence Jacobs, Muriel Carelse, John Arnold, Wilma February, Caroline Philnallerphy, Gladys Henry and Edmund Henry.
Transfers: Aubrey Josephs from Fairview to Millicent Gunn.
Farewell to James Daniels, Clive Forbes, Alice Kemp, Minnie Hendricks, Cecilia Dennis & Mollerina Swanepoel.

BELOW: Valentine's Day outing to Kalk Bay.



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