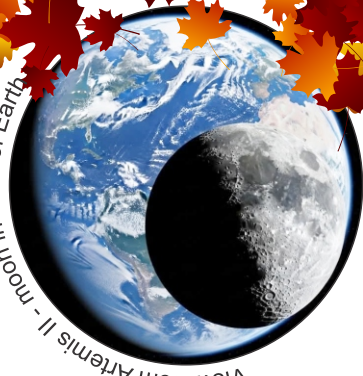


View from Artemis II - moon in front of Earth



methodist homes

# MHA on the Bay

No. 43  
Autumn 2026

## PROTECTING WHAT MATTERS MOST



As is mentioned at every Liaison Committee Meeting and every AGM, Safety and Security is a focus of the MHA Board's attention.

At Liaison Committee Meetings the Chairman always checks in with the managers to see how the security systems are functioning. The one issue that constantly crops up is gate protocol. There is never a time that any village manager can say that everyone complies with gate regulations. Hats off to the residents because 99.99% of the time they are excellent at upholding gate rules. It's visitors and service providers who transgress.

With all due respect we ask that you constantly remind your visitors and service providers to stop at the gate and watch it close before driving off. With millions of rands spent on sophisticated security equipment, it is just one slip at the gate that can put a village at risk.

Please let us all do all that we can to ensure that we are never sorry that we didn't do enough to ensure our residents' safety.

Here's a little gate trivia to enjoy:

- ✿ The first true electric gate was invented in 1881 by Canadian Fred W. Watson. It was not originally for housing, but rather for railway crossings to improve safety and allow remote operation by staff.
- ✿ Motorized gate systems for private use began to take shape in the mid-20th century (1950s and 60s), using simple electric motors and manual switches.

- ✿ By the 1970s, automated gates became a common feature in apartment complexes to manage parking and garage access. Remote controls allowed residents to enter without leaving their vehicles, providing both safety and ease of use.
- ✿ In the 1980s early systems often failed during power outages. This led to the development of integrated battery backups, a critical feature for high-security "villages" in regions with unstable power. (Sounds like Port Elizabeth!)
- ✿ Digital Integration: In the late 20th century, gates evolved into sophisticated access control networks using sensors, intercoms, and later, smartphone apps and AI-powered cameras.

MHA has clearly managed to keep up with the times!



## WE COUNT OUR BLESSINGS

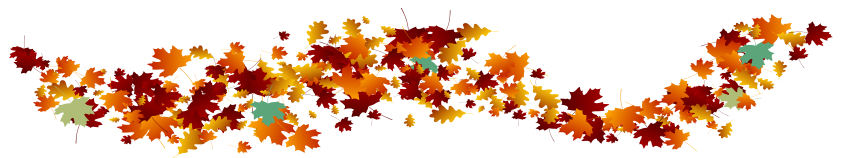
It was an ordinary Thursday afternoon when Nina Ponsonby from Irvine Villa set out to join her friends for a game of bridge. Nothing seemed unusual, at least not until a mighty cracking noise broke the silence. Glancing in her rearview mirror, Nina saw that a massive tree had fallen. It completely enveloped the car behind her.

Tenth Avenue in Walmer has such a proud heritage of beautiful old trees. Trees that have stood there for decades and are such a familiar part of the landscape that no one would ever dream that they could fall.

Some of the branches brushed against the back window of Nina's car, and her immediate reaction was a very human one: "I didn't do it! It's not my fault!"

With traffic beginning to back up, Nina had little choice but to move on. Later she learned that, although the driver of the car behind her had sustained some cuts and bruises to her face and body, the injuries were thankfully not terribly serious.

Moments like these remind us how quickly the ordinary can turn into the extraordinary. And it's times like these that remind us to count our blessings.



# Welcome Autumn

Autumn is a season of change, a quiet reminder of life's natural rhythm of ending and beginning again. As the days become cooler, we can see the leaves turn to shades of gold, orange and red before they fall, a lesson that change can be both beautiful and necessary.

Falling leaves symbolize movement and renewal in nature; a reminder that energy is never lost, only transformed. As the forest prepares for rest, it is certain that life will emerge again in Spring. And although change can sometimes feel unsettling, it is also what allows us to grow. Without change, how would we have moved from infants to toddlers, from curious children to thoughtful adults? Each stage of life carries us forward, shaping who we become.

Just like nature, we move through different seasons in our lives—each with its own purpose, beauty, and the promise of renewal. Our thoughts and prayers lie with those who have had to face the challenges that come with change or the loss of a loved one over past months. We hope you find comfort in nature's gentle lessons.



## SEEK AND YE MAY FIND

Cassia Gardens resident Alan Gauld has always had a bit of a soft spot for finance. Some people enjoy line dancing, others enjoy gardening... Alan enjoys keeping an eye on money.

So, when he randomly came across an article on the internet inviting people to check whether there were any funds still owing to them from various sources, his curiosity was immediately aroused.

Alan remembered a time during his working career when he had contributed to a pension fund that did not pay out his portion because he had worked for the company for less than ten years. He subsequently changed jobs and the company lost track of him. These funds were kept in suspense until they matured a few years later. By then the financial institution had totally lost touch with Alan.

Most people would not have remembered this or, if they did, may have thought, "Let sleeping dogs lie". Not Alan.

He was never going to let such an invitation pass him by, so with the determination of someone hunting for lost treasure, he decided to investigate. He contacted his Pension Fund and found that his name was indeed on the surplus list. Nowadays, Alan says, it is much simpler and a query can be resolved online within a few hours.

Now before anyone starts lining up at Alan's door, he would like to make it very clear: he is not offering loans! What he is doing is kindly sharing the information with fellow residents through MHA on the Bay, because his thinking is: if it happened to him, it might very well happen to someone else too.

The website Alan used to check is the website of the Financial Sector Conduct Authority (FSCA).

According to the FSCA, the numbers are quite staggering.

There are currently over 4.3 million people in South Africa with unclaimed retirement benefits, worth more than R51 billion. That's a lot of money quietly sitting around waiting for its rightful owners to come knocking.

The FSCA reports that although some people are stepping forward to claim their funds, the total amount of unclaimed benefits is still growing, which suggests many people just don't know that this money exists.

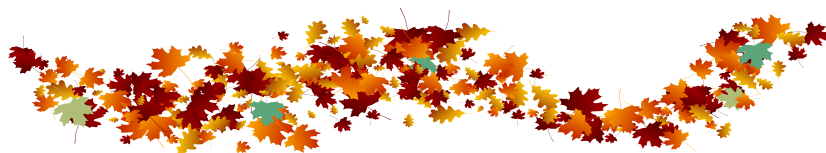
So, what do you have to lose?

The process itself is pleasantly simple. The FSCA website offers links and contact details where members of the public can make unclaimed benefits enquiries. Type FSCA into the Google search bar and you will find a link to the FSCA website. You will also be given an option to go directly into the "Unclaimed Benefits" section in which there is a very user-friendly video explaining how to enter your details for a search. Alan does offer important words of caution. While legitimate companies do exist, there are unfortunately others who advertise similar services but may use your personal information for their own benefit. So be sure that you are dealing with a reputable provider (preferably FSCA) before sharing details. Still, if there's even the slightest chance that a long-lost pension is quietly waiting for you somewhere, it might be worth a look.

Finding unexpected money is always much nicer than finding unexpected bills!



**Alan Gauld's bucket list dream – he finally gave into it last year! It helps to have the cash!**





## THE STAYERS



**QUEENETH NJONGI**

Occasionally you meet someone who just seems to embody dedication and compassion. We highlight two such people who display those qualities every day. One is Queeneth Njongi from CP Bradfield and the other, Nomhle Bloko, who works at Maranatha Frail Care. Both are truly remarkable women

who have each celebrated 30 years of service with MHA.

I recently popped over to see both of them. After all, anyone who has devoted three decades to the same calling is someone worth meeting. It has to be a calling; you don't continue with this kind of work, day after day, year after year, unless it truly comes from the heart.

Both ladies began their journeys as casual careworkers at Epworth Close. Queeneth had completed her training with the Red Cross Society in Parliament Street. It didn't take long for her natural gift for caring to surface and she was soon appointed permanently and moved to Aldersgate, where she assisted residents on a rotational basis, stepping in wherever care was needed the most. Nomhle trained in Grahamstown at St John's Ambulance and when she was taken on permanently worked at Epworth Close until 2012 when she transferred to Maranatha Frail Care.

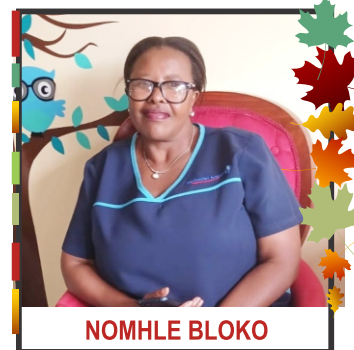
Those early years were happy ones for the pair.

Under the leadership of Aldersgate Manager, Susan Bosch, Queeneth flourished and built strong relationships with residents, learning their needs and their stories. She seemed to have a gift for honouring the small things that make care so personal. At the same time, she was raising her own children, balancing the demands of family life with her unselfish commitment to others.

One memory stands out for Queeneth: when a fire destroyed her home and she lost many of her possessions, it was the Aldersgate residents, under the guidance of Susan, who stepped up to offer extraordinary generosity. As she recalled the past, the

softness in her eyes spoke volumes about the kindness she had experienced.

Meanwhile, Nomhle was also trying to find a work/life balance, raising children, running a home and working. Both she and her husband worked the nightshift at the same time. Her husband was a security guard, and often her school-going son had to take care of his younger sister while both parents were working. Nomhle found it very difficult to leave the children under these circumstances but knew she had the responsibility of a job caring for the aged, a job she was extremely proud to have.



**NOMHLE BLOKO**

When policy changed and permanent carers were no longer based at Aldersgate, Queeneth continued her work at CP Bradfield. She often encounters the familiar faces of residents she had met years ago and finds great joy in reassuring them that they are once again in her care.

When I asked her the secret to her long service Queeneth didn't hesitate: no matter what she leaves behind her each day when she arrives at work, she finds herself smiling.

For Nomhle, being a wife, mom and carer was a challenge but also a privilege. Nomhle's favourite shifts are nightshifts where the residents are peaceful and the rooms quiet.

Perhaps staying for thirty years is not just about loyalty and tenacity, it is mostly about finding joy and purpose in what you do.

Queeneth and Nomhle are just two of the many dedicated carers within MHA. For now, they are amongst the longest serving. We also celebrate other carers who are fast following in their footsteps, each contributing their own years of service and care. To all our "stayers", thank you. Your commitment, your compassion and your faithfulness are a wonderful example to all of us in the MHA family.

*written by Alison Manasse*



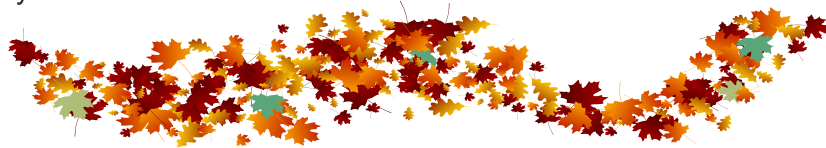
## SUPPORT CIRCLE



Lynné Smitsdorff, Village Manager at Annesley Gardens/Sheariton has collaborated with Santa van Rooyen from Dementia Connect SA to establish a Parkinson's Support Group. The first meeting took place on 23 March 2026 at the Annesley Gardens Community Hall.

A dementia support group, also facilitated by Santa van Rooyen, will be held on alternate months and is expected to be a valuable resource for residents and their families.

Please contact Lynné Smitsdorff if you would like more information regarding either of these support groups. Lynné can be reached on 061 475 5532.





## BUILD A BRICK

## MHA ALLEVIATION FUND

No one seems quite sure who first had the bright idea of stuffing a 2-litre Coke bottle with bits of recycling and discovering that it could become a building brick. But whoever it was deserves a medal for creativity!

If knitting and sewing aren't your thing, and crocheting beanies leaves you feeling a little tangled, then this might be the way that you can lend a hand to your community.

The idea is simple: plastic bottles are tightly packed with small pieces of clean, non-biodegradable waste — things like plastic wrappers and packaging. Once filled and compacted (compacted being the operative word), the bottles become surprisingly sturdy “eco-bricks” that can be used in building projects.



This method has been used extensively in Mexico and other parts of the world for low-cost construction. The eco-bricks reduce the need for traditional building materials and make it possible to construct homes and shelters for people who might otherwise never have the opportunity to build a place of their own.

Closer to home, in Port Elizabeth, the company Green Cycle collects these filled bottles and supplies them to various charitable organisations involved in building projects. It's a small act that can make a meaningful difference by turning everyday waste into the foundations of someone's home.

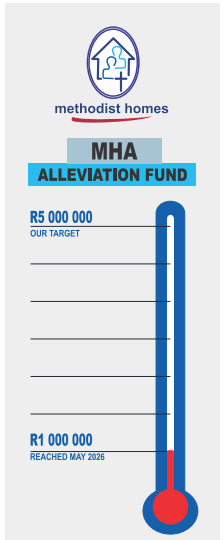
If you have bottles filled and compacted kindly contact Green Cycle on 041 581 2174 for delivery/collection.

Since we launched the Fund in mid-2024, we have been blessed with a steady income flow from various sources. MHA is deeply and humbly grateful to the residents, members of the wider MHA Family, a couple of our Villages and some other individuals and organizations that have contributed so generously to the Fund. We have just hit the ONE MILLION RAND mark---this is a wonderful milestone and achievement! We have some way still to go before the Fund achieves a level where we can start utilizing some of the capital with which to address the destitution of some of our residents, particularly in Frail Care. Our primary goal right now is to stimulate growth in the Fund, and this will be achieved by better marketing, the continued contributions by those who embrace what the Fund is about, new contributors, and to eventually be recipients of bequests from estates.

Let us spread the word, and help MHA to achieve an initial, more achievable goal of R5 million by the end of 2027. We can do this, together!!

Our long-term goal is a Fund of R20 million; the interest earned from a Fund of that size would enable MHA to carry the Frail Care cost of five destitute residents per year, at current Levy rates. Until we can achieve that level, MHA will need to absorb much of the cost of subsidizing or even writing off the Frail Care cost of many needy or destitute residents. This will ultimately become unsustainable, unless we have a new income flow (the Alleviation Fund).

We ask for your prayerful consideration of the Alleviation Fund, as we endeavour to assist those MHA residents in our midst who are less fortunate than others. If you don't have an Alleviation Fund brochure, please visit our website or speak to your Alleviation Fund Administrator, Malcolm Stewart, 073 187 8999

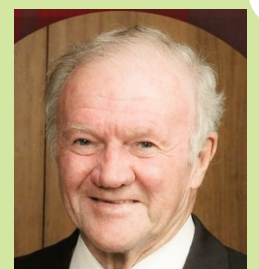


To everything there is a season,  
A time for every purpose under heaven  
Ecclesiastes 3:1

### REST IN PEACE, Ron Cleland

It was with great sadness that Ron Cleland's family announced his passing on 24th February. His Memorial Service was held at CP Bradfield where family and friends gathered to celebrate his remarkable life.

Ron who was our first Editor of MHA on the Bay (editions 1-27) will be remembered for his involvement with his family, community and his ability to see where he could help when needed. We were privileged to have shared a little in his life's journey. Our thoughts and prayers remain with his family.



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