



methodist homes

No. 39
Christmas 2024

MHA on the Bay

MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRMAN, MICHAEL BURMEISTER

I wonder how many of us remember the words and tune of the old jingle:

*“Christmas is coming, the geese are getting fat
Please do put a penny in the old man's hat
If you haven't got a penny a halfpenny will do
If you haven't got a halfpenny God bless you!
Ding dong ding dong...”*

I can recall our children's choir singing this song on many occasions, and would most probably have performed it on Christmas day in Berlin before we went to the wall, as I described in my message this time last year. Little did I know at the time that I would recall the song so many years later!

The message reminds us as to what I believe this time of year, Christmas, is all about.

Firstly, generosity, particularly at this time, to those who are less fortunate than we are and who possibly have fallen on hard times and may be obliged to beg to stay alive. A kind word or gesture costs nothing.

Secondly, the elderly. Let us have respect for them and assist wherever we can. Their life experience and guidance can be invaluable. This advice should please all of us in this category!

Thirdly, self-sacrifice. If we can't give much let's give what we can, to alleviate the situation of others less fortunate than ourselves - even if it's only a halfpenny! This reminds me of the parable of the lady who could only afford to put two mites in the temple collection plate. We are encouraged to give not only of our goods but also of our time and talents.

And then, lastly, the recognition of God and His ability to bless all, including those who have nothing. We are reminded in the song of the existence and presence of our Lord who will be there to bless and comfort spiritually, and be there when needed.

And let's not forget the geese. Their ultimate sacrifice has brought great joy to many and is greatly appreciated!

May we bear these lessons in mind not only at this blessed time of the year but throughout.

And so we look forward to sharing this special time with our families, friends and even, if circumstances require, strangers. We in the villages, bedsitters and frail cares are indeed fortunate in having the company of fellow residents, and being able to enjoy their love and friendship.

There may be some of us whose families are far away, and we will not be able to enjoy the love and comfort their being with us would have brought. Be assured of our Lord's presence in this time, and be comforted by Him being so close.

And so I wish each and every resident, member of our caring staff and all associated with MHA a wonderful, blessed Christmas!



With grateful thanks for sponsorship:





OUR DAILY BREAD



Valma (centre) and some members of her team

MHA has two industrial kitchens - one at CP Bradfield Frail Care and a smaller one at Maranatha Frail Care - in which 15 staff are employed in shifts, and everything that goes on regarding food and catering happens under the watchful eye of Valma Human-Ruiters, who heads up MHA's Catering Unit.

Served meals are provided daily to residents in our two Frail Care units and in Bedsitters, and there is an increasing number of residents across all of our Villages who are now ordering midday meals, delivered to a pick-up point at each Village. The popularity of these 'take-away' meals is testimony to the quality and variety provided, and to the pricing. This all takes us back to what happens in the kitchen, and to the way in which Valma and her staff dedicate themselves to the tasks at hand.

Valma studied Food Service Management, and then did in-service training at Greenacres Hospital, before moving to Durban where she worked in a frail care facility which accommodated 1167 residents! While there she developed a passion for caring for the needs of elderly people. Back in PE, after a spell at Spar she began working in the Maranatha kitchen, and in 2013 she transferred to CP Bradfield to assume management of both kitchens.

On a monthly basis, across the two Frail Cares and Bedsitters, a total of 5893 meals are cooked and served, and then the crockery and cutlery washed and put away, and the kitchens cleaned, to await the next day's demands. In addition to that workload, each month approximately 2250 meals are cooked, packaged and delivered to those residents in the Villages who order and pay for lunch, and the kitchen also provides refreshments and snacks, mainly to the Bedsitter lounge, for functions, big birthdays, memorial services and entertainment events. They're busy!!

To provide 'our daily bread' on every day of the year requires precise logistical skills (planning, ordering, menu preparation, and execution) and professional food preparation skills. All of this, in turn, requires passion and commitment, and Valma and her team certainly have that, by the plateful!



WEAVING OUR WEB

Amazing but true - there are many people within the MHA Family who are blissfully unaware that we have our own website, or else they have heard about it but haven't paid it a visit!! Since its launch ten years ago, over 31000 people have visited the site. Our website is full of very useful information about the organization; where we are, what we do, what we offer, our waiting list and when it is an appropriate time in life to move to MHA, latest and historical news, past editions of the Newsletter, information on Bequests and Donations - and much more.

Please visit our website, and tell your family and friends to do the same. It will change your life forever!

www.methomes.co.za



LISTEN WITH YOUR HEART AND SOUL



Mário de Andrade was a Brazilian poet, novelist, musicologist, art historian and critic, and a photographer. One of his writings, a poem titled “My Soul is in a Hurry,” urges us to value maturity. It teaches us that, to live a fulfilling and peaceful life, we must face and

overcome every challenge that comes our way, just like waves and storms in the sea. When you read his words, remember that he wrote this piece in the first half of the last century, and yet they ring truer than ever. May the poet's words, challenging but from his heart and soul, bring you courage, peace and direction.

MY SOUL IS IN A HURRY

I counted my years and realized that I have less time to live than the time I have lived so far. I have more past than future.

I feel like that boy who had a bowl of cherries: At first, he gobbled them, but when he realized that there were only a few left he began to taste them intensely and passionately.

I do not have time for endless gatherings where statutes, rules, processes, And internal regularities are discussed, knowing that nothing will be achieved.

I don't have time anymore to bear absurd people, Who despite their age have not grown. I don't have time anymore to fight the mediocrity. I don't want to participate in conversations, where inflated egos are parading.

I can't stand manipulators and opportunists. I am annoyed by those envious people, who seek to discredit the most able, in an attempt to take over their position and seize their talent and success.



My time is too short to discuss headlines. I'm aiming for the essential, as my soul is in a hurry – not so many cherries left.

I want to live close to people who are “human” Humans who laugh at their own weaknesses and are not terribly conceited About their success.

Humans, who do not consider themselves elected before their time.

And humans, who take responsibility. Humans, who defend human dignity and who are willing

To stand for truth and uprightness. It is this that makes life worth living.

I want to surround myself with people who understand how to touch the hearts of others. People who have learned through life's hard punches to grow by tender touches of the soul.

Yes, I am in a hurry. I am in a hurry to live with the intensity that only maturity can give, I do not intend to waste any of the remaining cherries. I am sure they will be exquisite, much more than those eaten so far.

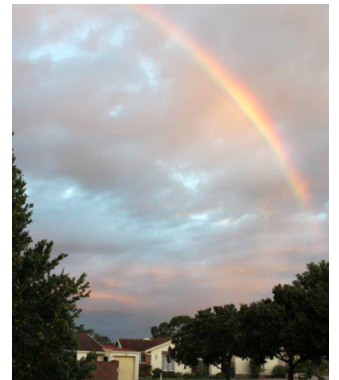
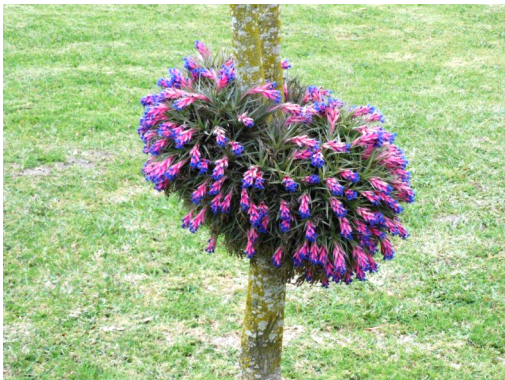
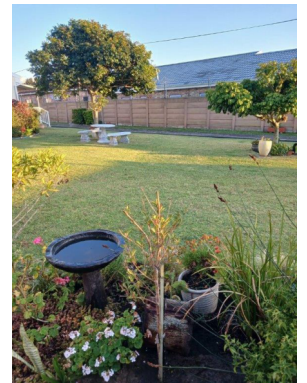
My goal is to reach the end – contented. At peace with myself, my loved ones and my conscience. We have two lives, and the second one begins when you realise that you only have one.

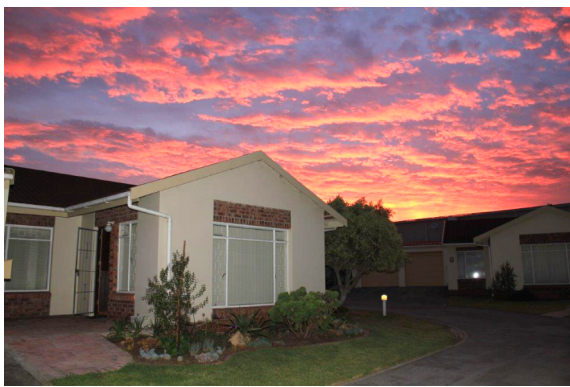
“MHA on the Bay” (aka MHAOTB)

- ⦿ We continue to celebrate our first edition which was published in September 2012
- ⦿ Newsletters 1 to 27 were edited by Ron Cleland, over a seven year period. He lived in Irvine Villa for many years and now resides at CP Bradfield. He still maintains a keen interest in what lies behind MHAOTB's production. We should not forget our trailblazers, and so this 'bumper' edition is dedicated, with our thanks and best wishes, to Ron
- ⦿ During Covid we produced a black/white one-page edition (all printing houses were closed!)
- ⦿ This Christmas 2024 edition (No. 39) is our first 8-page 'bumper' edition
- ⦿ This edition has been co-edited by Alison Manasse, Michele Brooks and Malcolm Stewart
- ⦿ We are most grateful to the numerous sponsors who assisted us to distribute these newsletters to our residents.



Every picture tells a story ...





In our first Newsletter of 2025 we will be focussing on our most valuable asset;
our staff ...



TEDDY BEARS AND LOVE



This story shared by Alison Manasse (the Manager at Irvine Villa), is a story about love, about kindness, tenacity, and about teddy bears.

Marian Wright gave me a warm welcome into her room at CP Bradfield. Since moving from Annesley Gardens earlier in the year, this is where she shares her time with the many teddies that she makes.

Having lost her precious husband Rev. Robin Wright recently, Marian has continued to do what she had done all her life; make things easier for those who are struggling. It's a very special brand of person who can offer help to another when they themselves are dealing with their own grief.

Knitting jerseys for homeless children, or making beanies for people with cancer, has been a long chapter in Marian's story as a minister's wife, but more recently Marian started to craft these delightful little bears. They are created with loads of love, and each one just seems to develop its own character in the making!

Denise Manning, who lives at Aldersgate, told me how The Neighbourhood Watch for the Walmer area had become aware of an elderly lady living nearby who, having knitted for the best part of her life, lost her eyesight. She simply could not finish off the teddy bear project she had started, and there was a large bag of knitted bear skins needing to be sewn up and stuffed. The bag was taken over by the TLC (Tabitha Ladies Circle) at the Walmer Methodist Church, and congregants were invited to assist with finishing the teddies. Denise volunteered to take what was left of the bag. She promptly put out an appeal for assistance to the creative ladies at Aldersgate. There was to be a workshop in the hall where the group would stuff and sew up all the teddies. Denise simply couldn't believe the wonderful turnout! At least seventeen ladies showed up to help, and during a time of fun and laughter they completed the job. There were still faces to be stitched onto the teddies and this Denise did with some help from a neighbour. Another neighbour, Carole Jamieson, volunteered to make cards so that each bear bore a Christian message of encouragement for its recipient.



Then I visited a third lady (who does not wish to be identified). What a ray of sunshine! Just walking into her cottage lifted my already high spirits even higher. She lives in a cottage at Aldersgate and works from her sunroom. There are bits of brightly coloured wool hanging from the security gates and the burglar bars, and teddy bears in different sizes and forms, at various stages of completion, adorning her tables and chairs. Her enthusiasm was truly contagious as she introduced her carer, Melody Mwazha, who she has taught to sew faces onto the bears. There are strict criteria when making a bear because they are for children, so no buttons are used, all ribbons are stitched down so that they



can't be removed, and the stuffing used is a particularly soft kind, making the bears easy to snuggle.

So, what do these ladies have in common? They are all retired. They have beautiful souls. They use every resource they can to bless people who may be facing the struggle of their lives. Simply by association, their friends and families and neighbours also do good without really knowing it.

NGOs such as Thand'usana Baby Safe Home, St. Francis Hospice and CHOC are the recipients of the soft little bears. They bring much comfort to children who may be undergoing rigorous treatments for cancer or be suffering extreme emotional anxiety as they are separated from parents or siblings who may be dying. A simple teddy bear, an act of love, an act of great kindness.

BERYL WATKISS: MHA'S SIXTH CENTENARIAN!!

On 27 October 2024 our beloved resident Beryl Watkiss celebrated her 100th birthday, and her family arranged a tea party in her honour.

Beryl spent many years in a cottage in Wesley Gardens, she then moved to an apartment in Bob Zeiss Bedsitters, and in recent years she has lived peacefully and safely in CP Bradfield Frail Care. In earlier times she was a very talented artist, and two of her lovely paintings hang in the Reception area of MHA's Head Office.

Testimony to her age, and to who she was, is that Beryl served in the Royal Navy in WWII. She was a member of the team that had the difficult task of decrypting messages sent by the German armed forces on their Enigma code machines. By eventually cracking the coded messages sent to U-boats, the Royal Navy was able to contribute significantly to the ending of the war. Beryl was sworn to absolute secrecy about what she actually did while in uniform; even her family were kept totally in the dark, until the war was over.

To make Beryl's 100th birthday celebrations even more special, she received a signed letter from the King and Queen in recognition of this wonderful milestone.

The entire MHA Family joins in celebrating Beryl's "100 not out" score!



AUDREY MARAIS

Audrey Marais was one of the pioneer residents to move into Aldersgate in the mid-1990s, and she lived there until she decided that it was time for her to move to Bob Zeiss Bedsitters, and eventually to CP Bradfield Frail Care where, sadly, she passed away on 30 September 2024.

Audrey lived a richly blessed and colourful life, with a large and loving family and countless friends. She dedicated a huge amount of time, energy and talent to MHA life too; she was involved in getting our first Frail Care unit in Westbourne Road up and running, and she threw herself into making the fledgling Aldersgate village the cohesive and supportive community it became. It is said that dynamite comes in small

packages; Audrey was a living testimony to that!

At her memorial service her family shared a poem which Audrey once wrote. Especially in these times of turmoil, with so much pressure and demands exerted on families and on relationships, we need to be reminded of the power of love. The Beatles were right: "All you need is love"! With her family's blessing we share Audrey's poem - her profound message and plea - with you:

LOVE IT RIGHT *(By Audrey Marais)*
*There is no situation, however big or small
No angry fight or argument, or any words at all
Which cannot be resolved if you LOVE IT RIGHT*

*Had a disagreement with a special friend
There is only one way to have a happy end
Choose to be the one to LOVE IT RIGHT*

*Families hurt and broken, too stubborn to forgive
Preferring separation, the way they choose to live
When all the need to do is LOVE IT RIGHT*

*What a wonderful world we'd all enjoy
If instead of anger, we chose to employ
Understanding, with the wish to LOVE IT RIGHT.*





THE MHA ALLEVIATION FUND

The Fund, which has been created to assist those MHA residents facing destitution, especially in our Frail Care units, was launched in August, and is now beginning to gain some traction. Having delivered a copy of the Alleviation Fund brochure to every resident, and placed it on our website, it is important that the momentum, and the purpose of the Fund, be maintained. The following comments might be of help to readers of this Newsletter, when considering the Fund:

- ✓ Many donations have been received from residents and others, and some residents have made generous commitments, in their Wills, to bequeath to the Fund
- ✓ Thus far, there is no discernible pattern in the type or amount of donations received. Some donations are one-off amounts, and some are monthly contributions (added to the Levy debit). Any

amount, by whatever means, is warmly welcomed and received!

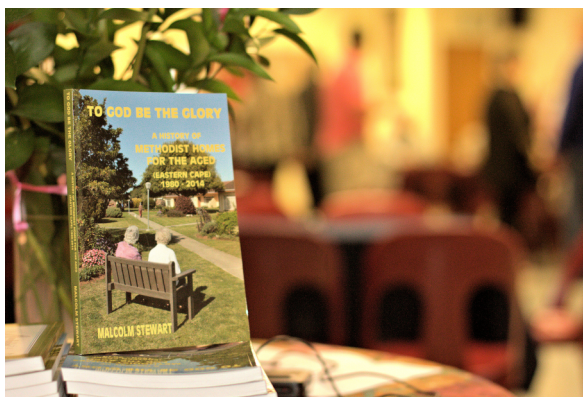
- ✓ It is evident that many residents are vague about their understanding of the Alleviation Fund, or of the desperate need of an increasing number of residents. Regular input and marketing is necessary, and so the Fund Committee will continue to spread the word regarding both Donations and Bequests; consistency and sensitivity around communicating is key
- ✓ All that the Fund Committee wishes to achieve right now is to ask each and every resident to read the brochure, and to give the matter careful and prayerful consideration. If we can continue to nurture the seeds of generosity, we will be on our way to growing the Fund in a significant way
- ✓ We will continue to provide updates in future Newsletters and on the website, from time to time.

Please do not hesitate to approach the AF Administrator (Malcolm Stewart/073 1878999) if you require any information or advice regarding the Fund.



THE HISTORY OF MHA: 1980-2014, AND BEYOND

Tempus fugit/time flies! Ten years have flown by since the publication of the MHA history book. So much has happened since: residents obviously change, 75% of our cottages have been refurbished, our Head Office was relocated, we went to war against the Covid monster, we continue to sophisticate our services and our systems and, importantly, our residents across MHA continue to weave their own magic as loving and caring communities. There are so many new stories to tell! Who knows, one day a Volume Two will appear!? In the meantime, if you don't have a free copy of the book, speak to someone in Head Office. Hurry while limited stocks last!



It is important to preserve history. Photographs, documents and any other memorabilia, if lost or destroyed, cannot be replaced, unless there is a back-up system in place. Some of our Villages have maintained their own library of photograph albums and documents, and some of those which were accessed during the preparation of the 2014 book are stored at Head Office. Please don't let us lose our tangible history references and memories. If you have some old photos or memorabilia relating to your Village, and you no longer want to keep that clutter, then please speak to your Manager, or alternatively speak to Malcolm Stewart (073 1878999); we will ensure that they are preserved in your Village archives and/or in Head Office.

Ultimately, we should move to digitizing all of our historical documents. Any volunteers?!

