



#### A TRIBUTE TO OUR NURSING, CARING AND SUPPORT STAFF

You are "Hero"  
thank  
you ❤️

A short video is currently going around town, and no doubt way beyond. It's 'star' is a well-known, well respected and much loved medical Specialist, shown lying on a gurney, being wheeled out of a Port Elizabeth hospital, on his way to being reunited with loved ones waiting for his return home. The Specialist had been in ICU for a long time, close to death, on and off a ventilator, while other Specialists, Doctors and dedicated nursing staff fought day and night to save him from becoming a victim of Covid-19. He has survived, and many, many people will be wishing him a

complete recovery, and a return to his practice. This alone is a story worth sharing, an event worth celebrating.

However, apart from the sheer joy of the occasion, what is remarkable about the video is that it shows two long rows of nursing and caring staff lining the passage and foyer between the Specialist's ward and the exit doors, all clapping and cheering and waving, and shouting words of encouragement and affection. Even more remarkable is the brief speech at the exit doors, given by a senior nurse; on behalf of her colleagues, she thanked him for blessing them with his presence there, for his healing, for being a much loved member of the hospital 'family' for many years, and for recovering from the deadly virus. The Specialist gave a repeated thumbs-up sign and joining his hands in prayer; if he hadn't been wearing a mask he may have even said some words himself, to give grateful thanks to them!

We can all hope and pray that every day, across the city, the country and the world, those who have been infected with Covid-19 can leave a hospital, and go on the road to full recovery. Very few would receive such 'star' treatment as they leave, but we know that every life is important, all lives matter, and every life saved is a victory.

The video is a timely reminder to everyone in the MHA family to pause for a while, to stop doing what keeps us busy and occupied, to stop worrying about the virus which is right in front of us, and to give our own grateful thanks to nursing, caring and support staff everywhere, but particularly our MHA angels. All of them report for duty each day or night, dedicating themselves to looking after the health and the various needs of our elderly residents who can no longer do that adequately themselves. We are increasingly needing to use the services of an agency to provide additional trained nursing and caring staff, and we thank them. We are totally reliant on cleanliness and hygiene provided by our dedicated and professional Housekeeping staff, and we thank them. Our outsourced Catering staff

provide nutritious food for residents who no longer prepare their own meals, and we thank them. They have been doing a magnificent job to serve food to our Bedsitter residents who are currently isolated in their rooms, while they await the results of swab-testing for the virus.

Sister Lesley Lawson, a Board member who has had a long and distinguished career in the nursing profession, has also seen the video, and she has contributed this message:

An extract from the Nurses Pledge of Service: "I solemnly pledge myself to the service of humanity and will endeavour to practice my profession with conscience and with dignity".

We thank our Nurses and Carers who commit themselves every day to honouring this pledge.

To all our nursing, caring and support staff, from the carers seconded from our Nikithemba team to the Matrons and our Nursing Services Manager:

- We salute your dedication
- We thank you for your commitment to caring for others
- We thank you for your professionalism, and for the skills you have learnt and apply
- We thank you for your courage
- And we pray for God's continued protection over you, and your loved ones.

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# COVID-19

## NEED TO KNOW

CovidCom reported in last week's Newsflash that the COVID-19 virus was now present inside one of our facilities. It has been decided that this "NEED TO KNOW" item in the Newsflash will be featured in every edition, to keep residents and staff, and members of the wider MHA family, fully informed of what is happening across all of our facilities. Since CovidCom was formed in early March, and the Newsflashes began to flow, we have believed in communicating to everyone in a clear and transparent way. It is critically important for residents and staff to know what is happening within MHA; it is only in this way that all of us can play our part in fighting the battle which is currently raging. By being informed, you will understand what lies behind some of the decisions being taken, what actions have been implemented to best fight the ever-changing war, or what remains 'work in progress'. We want to spread the same message to staff and residents alike. Because of the rate at which the scenario is changing, our report will, of necessity, be brief and to the point. If you require clarification, please speak to your Manager, or e-mail [covic.concern@methomes.co.za](mailto:covic.concern@methomes.co.za)

We share the following today:

- The total number of swab tests carried out and submitted to Ampath pathologists=141 (awaiting 65 results)
- The total number of positive cases as at 13h00 on 26 June 2020 are:
  1. Maranatha Frail Care=3 residents and 1 staff member
  2. Bedsitters=1 staff member (which is why all Bedsitter residents were also swab-tested)
  3. Aldersgate=1 resident
- Thankfully, all those infected with the virus are currently asymptomatic (showing no signs of illness)

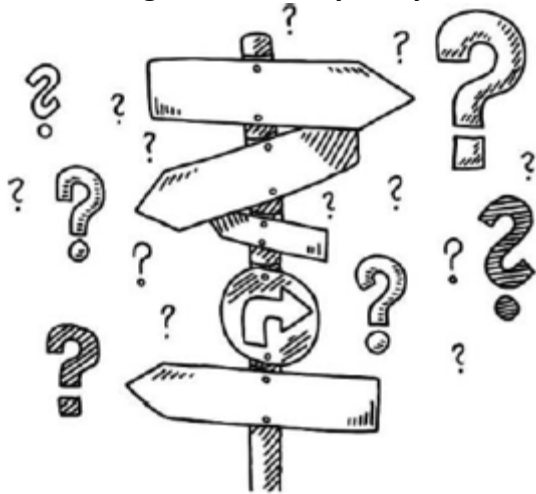
- Staff who tested positive have been sent home, on full sick leave pay, to self-isolate for 14 days
- The resident who has tested positive has been instructed to self-isolate in the cottage (NO visitors)
- Frail Care/Bedsitter residents who return after hospitalization go to the MHA Isolation Ward for 14 days
- Other than for short-term post-hospital nursing care, the Isolation Ward is not available to Cottage residents; MHA does not have the facilities or capacity to handle Covid+ residents who are sick. Those who require isolation must do so in their cottage or, on advice from their GP, be moved to an available hospital. We cannot sugar-coat this reality, and it further emphasizes the need for all residents to be disciplined in wearing a mask, sanitizing, social distancing, being responsible about visiting and socializing, and not receiving any visitors other than fellow residents
- While the important issue of Domestic Cleaners (MHA employees or private) remains under review, the rapid increase in the spread of the virus is such that Cleaning services will not resume until at least end-October. A range of interim measures is being considered, and information will be shared soon
- In response to some queries, we should clarify that it is not compulsory to wear a mask when you are moving about your village, but it is the law of the land to wear a mask whenever you are in a public space, beyond your village. We do, however, recommend that you wear a mask as a matter of habit; it is a critical first-line barrier
- On a daily basis, limited to as few minutes as possible, keep informed about the spread of the virus in our Metro; it is escalating at a frightening pace, and infections doubled in the past ten days. Our hospitals are full. This is war; it is not a drill

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**COVID-19: NEWSFLASH #50: FRIDAY 19 JUNE 2020**

**LOCKDOWN@LEVEL 3: 36(L5)+30(L4)+19(L3)=DAY 85**

**Celebrating a half century in style!!**



Think about how much has happened, and how our lives have been changed, since Newsflash #01 was issued on 27 March 2020?! All of us, within the MHA family but also across the world, have been gripped by fear, uncertainty and a deepening sense of loss. The tragic deaths to Covid-19 are now an everyday event; we have almost become numb to the statistics and the stories. So too have we become numb to the repeated bungling, sloppy management and disagreement among most of the decision-makers in Government; you can visit/no you

can't; you can buy cigarettes/no you can't; you can go back to school/no you can't----and on it goes. So today, 85 days into Lockdown, we celebrate the 50th edition of Newsflash!

The President's address to the nation on Wednesday night only gave us a glimpse of what Lockdown relaxations we can expect in the coming days; he will leave it to the circus performers to entertain us with their decisions. Don't hold your breath; it's bad for your health!

CovidCom met yesterday, to discuss a range of issues, and we can share some of the outcomes with you. On certain key matters affecting you, the residents, we have to wait for final clarity from Government, which we anticipate will be available in the next few days.

The following will be of interest to you, as they will have a significant impact on your lives as residents, and should be reason enough for muted celebration!!

- With immediate effect CovidCom is lifting the ban on your visiting one another in your cottages. You are free to visit one another as you wish; it remains your responsibility to ensure safe distancing
- Lockdown Level 3 rules do not allow receiving visitors from outside (family and friends), but we remain hopeful that there will be clarity on this from Government in the coming days
- Hairdressing services (by Rae Smith) at AnnesleyGardens/Sheariton and at Aldersgate will resume as soon as the necessary health/safety protocols have been agreed with her. We expect this to happen early next week. Unfortunately Rae will still not be able to use the salon at Bedsitters, used by their residents and by Cassia Gardens and CP Bradfield. We will continue to address this matter in the hope of finding a workable solution
- Lockdown Level 3 regulations do not allow gatherings, and so we are still not allowed to unlock our community halls (other than for limited access to the hairdressing salons). We all desperately hope that the rules will change in the coming days, and you'll be able to resume this essential part of community life which the halls bring. Watch this space!
- Regarding MHA's Domestic Housekeeping services and/or private employees, this difficult issue is still being addressed by CovidCom, in consultation with the Complex Managers. Various scenarios and solutions are under consideration. Until informed to the contrary, no Domestic services (private or MHA) will resume

CovidCom hopes to clarify most of the above issues soon, and that we will be able to make announcements via the Bulk SMS facility, rather than wait for next Friday's Newsflash.

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### **The value of friends and family**

Christopher Hitchens, lauded public intellectual and a controversial public figure, said this: "I am at the stage of my life where I can still make friends but I will never make old friends again"

That might be a chronological fact, but it is surely never too late to forge meaningful, supportive, loving friendships; it's the depth, not the length, that matters! We won't know unless we try!

Maybe we should rather embrace this saying: "Family and Friends are the only currencies capable of lasting wealth"

### **MHA's war against Covid-19**

CovidCom brings you up to date as follows, insofar as matters relating to the MHA family is concerned:

- Three further Covid-positive cases have been recorded at Maranatha Frail Care, following swab-tests of all residents and staff there. All three cases (two residents and one employee) are thankfully asymptomatic (showing no symptoms of Covid-19)
- We all need to understand and accept that testing of a resident or a staff member only provides a snapshot at a point in time, and some results would be different at any time thereafter
- Our CEO, Hein Barnard, reported to CovidCom yesterday that some members of his immediate and extended family have tested positive, and are self-isolating at home. All are asymptomatic. Hein is taking all necessary steps to ensure that he is not exposed, but is isolating himself at home for fourteen days. We have plans in place to deal with this
- An additional taxi has been hired, to avoid crowding in the transport which MHA provides for its Frail Care shifts
- Encouraging and supporting our wonderful and dedicated staff is even more critical than ever, in these Covid times. MHA is continually seeking ways to achieve this
- The Covid-19 virus is now all around our city, escalating daily at a dramatic rate. On 1 May there were 5951 infections and 116 deaths. On 1 June the figures were 33043 infections and 700 deaths. Today the figures are 83890 infections and 1737 deaths. All of our hospitals are full. This requires all of us to be even more vigilant than we have been; it is essential that we limit social visits, trips to public places like shops and malls, and that we exercise precautionary behaviours as we have done for the past 85 days and more. This is not a drill; this is war.

Please continue to keep all members of the MHA family in your daily prayers. In these challenging times we all need support, protection and encouragement; and prayers.

### **More reasons to celebrate!**

CovidCom has received a lovely, handwritten letter from Noreen Dymond of Aldersgate. With her permission, we share a slightly edited version (for space purposes!) with you now: "This is a letter of Thanksgiving and Thankfulness, firstly to my Lord God and Saviour, and secondly to Methodist Homes for all that has been done for me over the past years. 2020 is a very special year for me. In March I turned 90, and on 19 June (today!) I celebrate 25 years at Aldersgate. Quite unbelievable!

My experience with Methodist Homes was quite unique. Although not ready for an 'old age home', in December 1994 my husband and I enquired about putting our names down at Wesley Gardens. The waiting list there was 5 years, but building of phase 2 at Aldersgate was underway, with only 3 cottages left. We were given 24 hours to decide; we hadn't seen a cottage, but only a plan. At church we were told of a missionary who asked God for guidance about whether he should move to another place. God gave him the verse given to Abraham where He told him: 'It is time or you to pick up your tent and move on'. It was like a gun going off in my head; I got such a fright. Here was my answer!

We moved in on 19 June 1995, while other cottages were still being built around us. I am so glad I obeyed God's word. When I look back I see God's plan for my life and how everything has unfolded. I thank God every night for my beautiful home, village and security. Not having children to help me I am so blessed to have friends here who are willing to help me with shopping and other things. Also for the love and care of Susan and Jannie.

I feel for you, and pray every day for help and guidance as you seek to look after our needs and security, especially now with this pandemic. Thank you also for the peace and assurance given me that I will be cared for until the lord calls me Home.

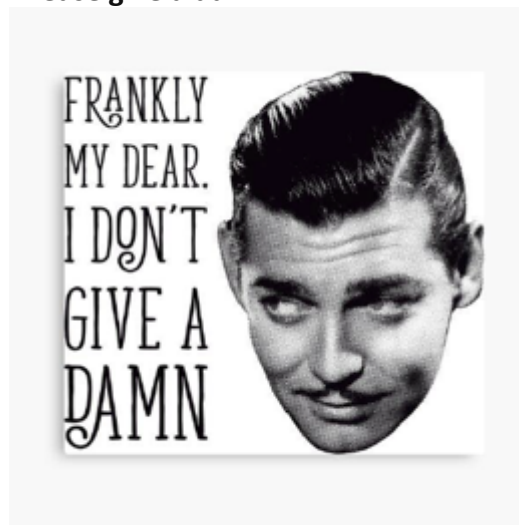
God's blessings on you and your families, and Methodist Homes"

Bless you, Noreen. What a beautiful way to start the weekend!!

#### COVID-19: NEWSFLASH #49: FRIDAY 12 JUNE 2020

LOCKDOWN@LEVEL 3: 36(L5)+30(L4)+12(L3)=DAY 78

Please give a damn



"Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn" is a line from the 1939 film 'Gone with the Wind' starring Clark Gable and Vivien Leigh. The line is spoken by Rhett Butler (Gable), as his last words to Scarlett O'Hara (Leigh), in response to her tearful question: "Where shall I go? What shall I do?" Scarlett clings to the hope that she can win him back, but Rhett has finally given up on her and their tumultuous relationship. He's moving on!! With all the racial tension around the death of George Floyd (Black) at the hands of a policeman (White) in the USA, which has spilled over across

the world, this iconic film has been withdrawn from at least one major network which the public can access to watch films; they have said that the racial background to the story (read slaves and servants) is inappropriate at this time, and would just add fuel to the 'race' fire. On this basis, all of history will have to be re-written which is, of course, impossible. We can't re-write history; we can only learn from it.

What is becoming an increasing worry and a crisis is that, in South Africa but especially in our City, there is an attitude about COVID-19 which can probably best be summed up like this: "Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn". Some examples:

- Visiting with friends and families is becoming commonplace, and is even bragged about on Facebook or Instagram

- A mask is no longer regarded as a life-saving piece of equipment; it is now just a nuisance or a little neck scarf
- When people and alcohol mix, common sense seems to go down the drain; street parties, socializing, abuse, accidents
- Keeping a safe distance from one another is being ignored (in a photo in today's Herald, the Provincial Premier and the Transport MEC are in earnest discussion at a funeral; they are literally within kissing range, and no masks!)

Fortunately there are far more compliant citizens than those who won't comply, and we must be grateful for this. The above list of examples could fill two pages, but let's stop here, and get to the point. To borrow from Clark Gable's famous line: "Frankly, my dears, the Board and Management and CovidCom do give a damn". Here's why:

- Up to now, the vast majority of MHA residents have been courageous in dealing with Lockdown and everything else never experienced before discipline, and abiding by the laws, rules and regulations, is praiseworthy
- CovidCom has put in place all the people, practices, protocols and documents needed to prepare ourselves for war
- Hygiene and sanitization practices are world-class, and are maintained
- For almost three months we have gone about our daily business, keeping the Coronavirus monster from our doors
- So far, so good---or so we thought.

Suddenly, everything has changed. The virus is no longer knocking at the MHA door; sadly, it is now inside. Two residents recently spent time in hospital and then rehabilitation. One has since returned to a MHA facility. Both residents showed some flu-like symptoms in the past few days and were tested for Covid-19. Both tests are positive; they have the virus. The residents are being professionally handled, and today both have temperatures in the normal range. Using the Standard Operating Procedure manual which we created to guide us through this very nightmare, MHA is managing the situation by adhering to those procedures, to the letter, and to the practices laid down by the Department of Health. We knew that this day would come; we just didn't know when. The past months of preparation and professional nursing/caring practices have paid dividends, but we cannot and will not drop our guard. We remain vigilant; we remain professional; we remain committed.

What can you, the residents, do to help? Please continue to maintain the healthy behaviours you have embraced, and which don't need repeating here.

Please continue to be a part of the solution, not the problem. We're not even near the middle of the storm yet.

And yes: please give a damn!!

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Spare a thought; say a prayer



Look around you and you will see countless act of courage, humanity, caring, concern for others, and love. It is everywhere!

As members of the MHA family you live in a supportive, caring community but you may not be aware of some of what is happening beyond your perimeter fences (in a way that's good, because it indicates that you're not wandering too far!).

Today we want to share this with you:

- Jenny van Niekerk, our Cassia Gardens Manager, was in a serious motor accident last Saturday.

She spent some time in ICU, then a general ward, but has been discharged from hospital and is making a steady recovery, in isolation

- The Matron on duty, who took the phone call which told her that a resident had tested positive, had been dreading that day, but she knew it would come at some stage. She was prepared for it; she knew what needed to happen; she did her duty
- Spare a thought too for the families of the two residents who were tested positive; they too must have been dreading the day when they might receive a call. The Matron made the call in a compassionate way, and followed up
- Our CEO, his Management team and the Matrons are spending exceptionally long hours waging the war against the virus; when they're not working, they're worrying, planning, checking, encouraging, and going about their daily tasks too
- Our nursing and caring staff are working in circumstances for which only the most basic of training must have been received in the past. They are now proficient at working in a 'pandemic' environment, working shift after shift to ensure that the residents in their care are safe, comfortable, warm and loved. We can never thank them enough
- Winter is here; it's dark when most of our staff leave home, and dark when they return home. Let us be mindful of the services delivered by our nursing/caring/cleaning/gardening staff, and let us also be mindful of their families
- Some of our residents have family or extended family members who have contracted the virus, and who have had to endure the illness and the uncertainty. Our thoughts should be with those residents and family members too.

We have so much to be grateful for.

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### **We're back; I'm back!!**

A personal note: As expected, and as planned (as much as one can plan anything nowadays), the past week has been a busy one. I got stuck into other projects which were keeping me awake at night (largely completed), Penny and I sat on a bench and had a sandwich at Schoenies (yes, the sea is still there, and still blue!), and I have done a bit of cooking (a lamb neck curry is bubbling away in the slow-cooker, as I write!).

As unpredictable as it is, life goes on. Embrace it! Live it!!



### LOCKDOWN@LEVEL 3: 36(L5)+30(L4)+5(L3)=DAY 71

#### Wonderful wisdom for the world

We received an e-mail today from Rev George Irvine, the Founder President of MHA and an Aldersgate resident. We have his permission to share it with you verbatim today:

The '10 things' is by Anna Grace Taylor, followed by some thoughts of my own.

10 things to remember.

1. *Love is the answer. Always. (I, George, would want to add tough love.)*
2. *Vulnerability is not weakness. It's a strength.*
3. *Your body is sacred. Cherish it.*
4. *Gratitude shifts everything. Be thankful.*
5. *Forgiveness sets you free. It really does.*
6. *You cannot change others, only yourself.*
7. *Little acts of kindness are never little. Ever.*
8. *Fun is underrated. Enjoy yourself.*
9. *Age is just a number. It's never too late.*
10. *Life is precious. Live it now.*



All of the above is true, but I have discovered as a stumbling follower of Jesus that the Cross and the Resurrection live together with us. In Isaiah 40. 31 we read: "Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not faint." It is important to remember that we cannot experience all three at once. Sometimes we soar on wings like eagles. I experienced this at the birth of my children, or at some worship services, or walking towards the sunrise at the beachfront. At other times I have been given strength to keep going without getting tired, but

sometimes I am just able to walk without falling over. Many of our residents during lockdown may find themselves in the last category, like I do at the moment, but don't feel guilty. Make room for suffering and joy to shake hands within you. They belong together and what God has joined together let no person pull asunder.

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We must always change, renew, rejuvenate ourselves

#### **The Humanitarian Heartbeat of the MHA family**

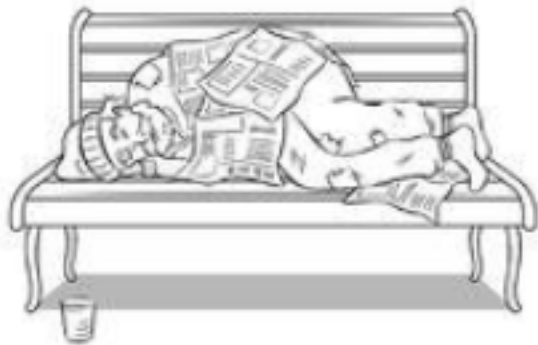
**BREAKING NEWS:** A couple of weeks ago we put out a request for residents to provide support for Ekuphumleni Home for the Aged in Zwide. They were, and are, in desperate need of support for their residents and staff. They shared a 'wish list'.

The response has been overwhelming; apart from a large pile of foodstuffs handed in at the Managers' offices, a whopping R21,530 in cash has been donated. MHA will add to that kitty. Bless you all!

Head Office is engaging with a wholesaler to provide all of the required foodstuff, which will be delivered to Ekuphumleni, together with a supply of some of the needed medical/PPE items.

Photographs and an article will appear on our website, in due course, but we wanted to share this wonderful news with you now.

### **The future of the "Newsflash" (I am writing this piece under my own name)**



When I woke up this morning, after a restless night's sleep, I told my wife Penny that today's edition would be the last for a few days; I was going to take an extra long weekend break, until say Wednesday or Thursday next week. Apart from serving on the MHA Board, working closely with the CEO and his team, and chairing CovidCom, I have two other exacting post-retirement jobs, as well as a loving and tolerant wife, all

demanding my quality time and attention.

I shared this with our CEO, Hein, who in turn shared it with his Managers. It was been decided that, after this edition #48, a Newsflash will be published every Friday, until the need no longer exists. So, I'm taking a break! Unfortunately I cannot afford the time to snooze on a park bench!

I come from a business environment where the general belief was that one can never over-communicate; keep your staff, clients and suppliers fully informed, and in that way one eliminates confusion, rumours, dissatisfaction, unhappiness and fear of the unknown. This is what CovidCom has tried to achieve over the past 10 weeks of Lockdown. From all of the written and verbal feedback gratefully received, it is evident that the objective has, for the most part, been successful; residents and staff have been told, on a daily basis, what was happening in keeping the COVID-19 monster from our doors; the material shared in an endeavour to uplift spirits apparently did the trick; lots of advice was given, and there was a smattering of entertainment and humour to help get you through the day. Some content caused huge offence to a handful of people, who expressed their view, in no uncertain terms. They were entitled to their opinions and interpretation, but it didn't in any way influence the decision to cut back on the Newsflash.

If and when there is significant news to share with residents, an urgent Newsflash will be issued, on an ad hoc basis. Our Managers will also share news with residents and staff, as necessary.

Our country, our city, our community and CovidCom still have massive challenges ahead, in waging the war against the enemy we cannot see (other than under a microscope). I will continue to be a part of the team which is dedicated to keeping 570 residents and 112 staff safe and healthy. All I ask is for you to share the responsibility by looking after yourself and your neighbour, and for you to work with those dedicated to your welfare, not against.

May God continue to bless South Africa and its people----and MHA. Malcolm  
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**Malcolm Stewart (who reminds us all to Stay---Spray---Pray)**



COVID-19: NEWSFLASH #46: THURSDAY 04 JUNE 2020

LOCKDOWN@LEVEL 3: 36(L5)+30(L4)+3(L3)=DAY 69



### Musings of a Recycled Teenager:

CovidCom has received this lovely article from Sandi Osborne, retired (!) teacher and a fairly recent arrival at Maranatha Village. We have her permission to share it with you today:



When I made it known that I was moving into a retirement cottage at Maranatha, my announcement was met by a myriad of emotions ranging from hysterical laughter to genuine concerns that I had, finally, lost the plot.

There is an enormous difference between being alone and being lonely. I love my alone time and freedom. But

I'm never lonely. I have taken a year of my life to start again. Life indeed, begins at 60. I am loving every second of lockdown. I read myself stupid, eat whenever I feel like it, sleep at my leisure and generally lead a hedonistic life. Bliss!!! I have created a beautiful rockery, painted my outside table, I have made 35 anklets and bracelets, and 8 mosaic crosses of varying sizes. I've surfed the net and created worksheets and notes for my kids, and purchased a classical guitar. But the best has been my teaching.

I returned to the classroom after 17 months of retirement. It was only supposed to be for 3 weeks. Yeah, right! I'm now back in the classroom and thriving. Teaching is my passion. During lockdown I have had wi-fi installed, upgraded my tablet and computer, and am now a whizz at technology.

It is mind-blowing when you can sit at home, click a button, and your pupils can all see you and talk to you. I can see and hear them all, and lessons continue. The programme which I use allows me to load any document, notes, exercises or exam paper onto the screen and chat my way through the lesson using any and every resource that I have, including text books. I can highlight words, change fonts and colours, upload music, screen video footage, and annotate without pausing for breath.

The reaction of my pupils has been so inspiring. I taught my entire Matric Poetry syllabus during lockdown. My Grade 11 pupils completed Macbeth with me, and my Grade 10s finished the prescribed novel. My pupils all wrote a test every Friday. Comments such as "Ma'am it's so cool writing my test at home" or "I'm in my jammies, lying in bed, drinking a cup of coffee and writing my test." Another responded, "Mrs Osborne I just love that we can work at our own pace. I finished all my week's English over 3 days, and now I'm going to tackle my maths for 2 days."

This remote teaching thing works. The kids are happy. This is the way to go.

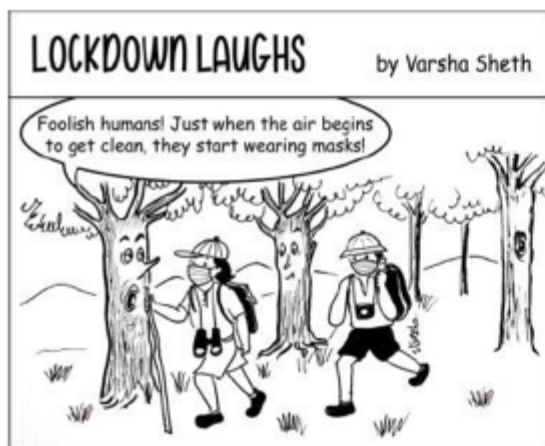
### **Input and feedback from the MHA family:**

The old adage “You can’t please all of the people all of the time” crops up all the time in life, but it seems to have grown another head during these Coronavirus times. People all over the world are generally not coping well with the uncertainty, frustration, fear and personal misery being heaped on them as consequences of the pandemic. We are all having to find new ways of coping. Being critical of or angry with others is not the way; being tolerant and supporting each other is. We continue to receive many bouquets via e-mail, and we also receive both constructive and destructive criticism; that’s life, and we need to deal with it all in such a way that our ‘customers’ (you!) are satisfied, and that the business and our reputation remain intact.

Our CEO and/or CovidCom members do their best to deal with the complaints and frustrations which are directed their way. There is no manual or website which has prepared or taught anyone how to deal with the array of challenges presented to a business by the Coronavirus. This dilemma applies to MHA too. If any member of the MHA family, whether a resident, employee or a concerned family member or friend, is concerned about anything which the organization is or isn’t doing in line with its Mission and its commitments, please bring it to the urgent attention of the CEO, and preferably in writing. All MHA’s resources are being stretched and tested right now, and MHA asks for your co-operation in getting all of us through this COVID-19 nightmare.

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Let us close today with some light relief. It is worth mentioning that both these cartoons were published in mid-March 2020, well before the 2019 version of Coronavirus became a global pandemic, and was called COVID-19.



**Malcolm Stewart (who reminds us all to Stay---Spray---Pray---and enjoy some more freedom from Monday!!)**

## COVID-19: NEWSFLASH #46: WEDNESDAY 03 JUNE 2020

LOCKDOWN@LEVEL 3: 36(L5)+30(L4)+3(L3)=DAY 69

Obfuscation is everywhere!!



Today's issue of The Herald (no, not the one shown left), which many of you will have read or skimmed though, provides us with enough confusion, obfuscation and rumour-mongering fodder to last us through to Christmas. Without being accused of nitpicking, or being in any way critical of our country's Commander-in-Chief, let's unpack a few bits and pieces (some comments are deadly serious, one requires your co-operation and commitment--see page 2 of this Newsflash--and a couple are aimed at brightening your day!):

- The Lockdown rules and regulations promulgated by Cogta Minister Dlamini-Zuma have been declared by a High Court as being "unconstitutional and invalid". Almost 60 million South Africans have endured varying levels of hardship and sacrifice for 69 days, and we now get told this?! It is highly unlikely that those millions of people who have lost their jobs, lost businesses, lost an academic year, lost loved ones, lost their dignity, or have gone to bed hungry, will take any comfort out of this, neither should they hold their collective breaths. By the time that Government has studied the judgment, launched an appeal, and for it to be heard in court, everything will have changed dramatically anyway. It is highly likely (the personal view of your scribe, by the way: E&OE, Ts & Cs apply!) that the masses will increasingly ignore the phased Lockdown approach via levels, many of the rules and regulations imposed by Government will fall apart (whether or not the appeal is successful), social distancing will quickly become an obsolete phrase and behaviour, and the COVID-19 virus will spread like a mid-summer bushfire. But all is not doom and gloom; tobacco products will shortly be back on the shop shelves
- Sticking with that subject, Minister Dlamini-Zuma continues to defend her ban on tobacco products, contending that the ban would result in a 'sizeable number' of South Africans quitting the habit, and that 'the poor and youth are particularly likely to quit'. If that wasn't enough entertainment for one day, she also said that the only way to deal decisively with the illicit cigarette trade was to ensure that the demand for cigarettes was reduced. Wrong! The way to deal with any illicit trade is to cut off the supplier and the customer; hunt down and lock up the culprits. Perhaps the Minister would like to add Poaching to her portfolio? Put this whole subject into some perspective: The tobacco industry in SA contributes more than R8 billion in excise duty and VAT to the government per annum, and private consumer spending on tobacco is approximately R12 billion per annum. Maybe the Cogta Minister could enlighten the population by telling us what percentage of that is attributable to the 'poor and youth'?! The major spend and resultant tax comes from 'the others', the vast majority. Smokers who can afford to smoke will smoke, or give up the habit, of their own free will, not through the whim of a cabinet Minister who happens to have MBChB behind her name
- It may not have been important to whoever is responsible at The Herald for content and layout, but only on page 4 do we get told that "Up to 80% in (Eastern Cape) province likely

to get Covid-19". The report that 80% are expected to present mild symptoms and only 5% would need high care is hardly comforting. Your scribe only got an F+ for Maths in matric in the 1960s but, on the basis that there are 7 million people in the Eastern Cape, Premier Mabuzyane and his Health Department officials are potentially facing 5.6 million infections. Even if 4.48 million Oos-Kaapenaars (80% of the 80%!) will only present mild symptoms, they will still be carriers of the virus. Or is the maths and logic wrong?!

### **MHA's stance on Visitors and Domestic**

CovidCom hopes that it has displayed at least two critical behaviours since COVID-19 became "headline news" in SA in early March:

1. As a responsible and compliant organization, which cares deeply about its mission and its responsibilities, MHA will comply with and adhere to all of the rules and regulations set from time to time by Government, via the Disaster Management Act and subsequent Gazettes
2. MHA will apply its own rules and regulations, in addition or as a variation, in order to safeguard residents and staff.

Up to today, the steps taken to manage the coming pandemic have proved to be successful, and we thank God that we can say that. Staff and residents, and their families, have been hugely tolerant and accepting of the situation. We are, however, reaching a point where virtually everyone is becoming impatient or intolerant, and this can lead to dropping our guard, individually or as an organization. We cannot afford to do that!

Today's news, highlighted on page 1, doesn't help either. A couple of residents have expressed the opinion that, if Lockdown, is 'unconstitutional and invalid', then they are going to bring their private domestic employees back to work, or have demanded that the MHA domestics return to work. In this regard, CovidCom needs to share the following with all residents and the MHA family:

- We cannot and will not see all the good work done thus far come to nothing
- The full force of the COVID-19 pandemic hasn't even got going yet. Using a weather analogy, we are experiencing a fresh wind at present; the gale and then the destructive tornado are still to come, over the next three months or more
- As has been reported in an earlier Newsflash, and at the AGMs in March, the CEO and his Management team are urgently reviewing the whole subject of Domestic employees; it is a complicated matter, which requires research, consultation and sensitivity. Please regard this as urgent work in progress
- No Domestic worker, whether employed privately or by MHA, is allowed to enter any MHA facility, other than the Frail Cares and Bedsitters. No exceptions will be made, and residents are urged to comply with this decision
- The decisions taken by CovidCom in mid-March to lock down our facilities has undoubtedly been the right one; we have thus far been infection-free
- Regarding visitors, para 40 of the Disaster Management Act, as amended on 28 May 2020, clearly states that: "Visits by members of the public to---older residents' facilities---are prohibited". MHA's own rules support this; no visitors are currently allowed into any MHA facility.

Please rest assured that CovidCom is continually reviewing the matter of Domestic and Visitors; along with a myriad other issues. We ask for your support and your compliance, as we go about this.

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This Lockdown business is heavy stuff; it's taking its toll on everyone, in one or more ways. The chopping and changing, and some poor decision-making, on the part of Government isn't helping either. Sometimes we just need to sit back and laugh about it---or cry. But remember this: we are not alone. Never more than right now is the expression "living in community" more relevant, more precious. Whether you are a grumpy resident or an exhausted member of staff, we are all in this mess together, and we will get out of it together. These two bits of wise advice may be of comfort to you today: Words from Philippians 2: Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too. You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had.

**COVID-19: NEWSFLASH #45: TUESDAY 02 JUNE 2020**

**LOCKDOWN@LEVEL 3: 36(L5)+30(L4)+2(L3)=DAY 68**

**Coping with the challenges of COVID-19**



The MHA family is blessed with having Charné Eaton as a resource to turn to, as an involved team member, especially in these tumultuous Coronavirus times. She is a Social Worker in private practice, and she has been involved for some while, providing support, encouragement and a professional listening ear to the MHA Management team who, as readers will appreciate, have stressful and demanding jobs, even more so as they deal with the challenges thrown at them daily in coping with the pandemic. They are each coping as best they can right now, with what is

in their control, and they are tapping into their unique strengths which enable them to keep on.....keeping on. Here's to all of the Managers in MHA, and to Charné----take a well-deserved bow!!!

With Charné's permission, we share with you today some of the (edited) words of encouragement which she has recently shared with the Managers, via e-mail. Her wisdom may also resonate with residents, the other staff, and with the wider MHA family who receive the daily Newsflash:

- These COVID-19 times call for everyone to come together in finding creative, healthy and safe solutions to help deal with whatever one is faced with; some days are easier than others and some conversations are easier than others; emotions may fluctuate a lot, depending on the different scenarios you are dealing with and, very importantly, how you are managing your thoughts and your responses



- Consider your thought processes when you feel loss and change. This pandemic is most certainly a time of crisis for everyone, however more so for some than for others; we are all in the same storm, however in different boats!
- For many individuals and families, their circumstances prior to the Covid-19 outbreak were already very unsettled and in crisis, leading to even further distress and worry
- We are called to be courageous and keep perspective as we face each day with the goal of doing what we can, within our control, with lots of support and love for, as well as from, others
- Simon Sinek, author and motivational speaker, believes that if we want to find opportunity in a time of crisis, it is absolutely appropriate and necessary to focus on the bad things now and then; allowing ourselves time to think about the bad situations, giving ourselves time to ventilate how we feel, giving ourselves time to cry
- The best way to deal with this trauma is through human relationships, by asking for help and by offering help; to call friends who are living alone and to let them know you are thinking of them and to actually just 'sit on the phone' for a while
- We can all agree that we were never meant to be socially isolated. More importantly, it is so natural in our human interactions to have physical touch when greeting one another; hugs, hand shaking, a touch to express warmth and care. The current pandemic forces us to refrain from what is part of us. It takes time to work at this and accept it for now. Just because we might be socially distancing does not automatically follow that one will be feeling lonely. Isolation, however, can most definitely lead to a deep sense of loneliness, especially those who are most vulnerable.

Charné then posed the following question to the Managers: What can we all do to encourage individuals to remain connected in order to prevent a sense of disconnect that could potentially cause a sense of deep loneliness and despair? She has used the word 'CONNECT' as an acronym, to share some thoughts and reminders on the importance of maintaining interpersonal connection in different ways, for the sake of emotional well-being. We can all learn from these wise words!

**CONNECT:**

**CREATE** opportunity to connect in different ways. Connect by taking existing relationships online and communicate via your computer or the telephone, WhatsApp video calls, exchanging voice notes etc. Many may have been doing so for a while now; share your creative ideas with others

**OPENLY** approach people to ask for help. Be honest with yourself about your need for help. At the same time, offer help. Needing support is not a sign of weakness – it's a sign that we are part of the human family!

**NETWORKING** with support and resources available. Try to maintain existing connections and find ways to build new ones in this time. Look out for any new ways to connect with others in your community who wish to help

**NOTICE** potentially concerning physical symptoms: difficulty sleeping, feeling on high alert for possible threats, and having more tension and stress in your body. If you are experiencing physical symptoms that cause you distress, it is particularly important to reach out for support, and encourage others to be brave to reach out when they need it

**ENGAGE** in healthy habits at home (quiet times, uplifting music, etc); thinking in the short-term (today, this week, this month) rather than the longer-term. Strategies for staying in the moment include mindfulness and breathing techniques, or planning something every day to

look forward to (eg. a phone call, watching a good movie, meal preparation, etc)  
**CHOOSE** to focus on the positive – what do you have that’s important to you and that you want to keep doing? Choose to re-ignite an interest or a craft as a means to distract and provide a sense of purpose right now. Choose activities within the home that distract you or are self-soothing. Choose to empower yourself; discover your ability to tap into your strengths

**TALK** about your worries. The stigma of loneliness may be reduced at the moment, given the extreme circumstances, and it may be easier for people to talk about how they’re feeling. People need reassurance. Talking helps.

Charné ends off: Keep well and stay safe and remember these words:

***“Start by doing what is necessary; then do what’s possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible”***

(Saint Francis of Assisi)

As a valuable MHA resource, over and above the services offered by our Professional Nurse/Counsellor and our Volunteer Counsellor, Charné would be available to residents who may feel in need of speaking to her. Please liaise with your Manager in this regard.

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Some more wonderful feedback, gratefully received by CovidCom, has been the following:  
*Thank you for all the work that has gone into looking after the residents of the Methodist Homes, but it is not only that. You have cared enough to plan a first class service, even if not all realize it. I have been tremendously impressed, particularly when I compare it with what has happened in so-called first world countries. Please also give our thanks to all of the staff of Methodist Homes. We hope this will be some encouragement to you. Yours in His name too.*

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Cassia Gardens residents would like to express their appreciation to the CovidCom for allowing us to open the Library again. It has been a busy week with residents being able to borrow books, DVDs and Jigsaw Puzzles.

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Be at peace, not in pieces

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**Malcolm Stewart (who reminds us all to Stay---Spray---Pray---and feel for those with an empty ashtray!!)**

**COVID-19: NEWSFLASH #44: MONDAY 01 JUNE 2020**

**LOCKDOWN@LEVEL 3: 36(L5)+30(L4)+1(L3)=DAY 67**



**CovidCom is down on its knees**



The CEO Hein Barnard and I are writing this under our joint names, in the hope that it will resonate more loudly than something written under the broad "we" banner.

This is really not the ideal way to start a new week and a new month, and to herald in Lockdown Level 3, but sadly it needs to be done. Here goes: generally

speaking, to be "down on one's knees" means begging someone for something, hoping for a positive result, thanks to that humble and kind of extreme act. In terms of seeking residents' co-operation in complying with our Government's and CovidCom's Lockdown rules and regulations, the majority of MHA residents have embraced them and complied, because they intellectually understand the magnitude of the pandemic coming our way. Our gratitude is enormous. Sadly, others have chosen to be disrespectful, negligent, selfish, or just bloody-minded. Fact.

Via the daily Newsflash, the Board and Management of MHA, via CovidCom, have requested, begged, implored, cajoled and used every other synonym imaginable to get residents to do the sensible thing; reduce the risk of COVID-19 entering our facilities, by acting responsibly. Some learned residents have provided material for Newsflashes, trying their different approaches to achieve what CovidCom has been trying to achieve: co-operation, and compliance with the rules. Failed.

It is evident that some MHA residents are wired in one or more of the following ways: they resent authority; they do as they wish; they have a death wish; they don't understand what responsibility is about; they truly believe that God will protect them from the virus, just on the basis that they are believers; rules are there to be broken; #&% the government; or they do not care about the value of living in community, or the spirit of protecting and watching over one another. Those 'square pegs' come and go as they please; they allow visitors (mainly family) into a MHA facility on the pretext of needing an urgent repair done to something or because they think that only they are the lonely or needy ones; they abuse the rules to suit their selfish needs; and they are blatantly putting other lives at risk. Tragic.

Here are four brutal facts, primarily aimed at those 'heroes' who refuse to comply:

1. Learn from the Italy experience. Its leaders and its people didn't listen to others, who warned that measures to isolate areas and limit the movement of the population needed to be taken early, put in place with absolute clarity, then strictly enforced. Italian authorities fumbled the early steps to halt the contagion; when it mattered most they instead tried to preserve basic civil liberties as well as the economy. Some officials gave in to magical thinking, reluctant to make painful decisions sooner. All the while, the virus fed on that complacency. They failed, and they failed the people; over 33000 Italians have died. An official from their Health Ministry said "Every day you close a bit, you give up on a bit of normal life. Because the virus does not allow normal life."

2. The COVID-19 pandemic is here. Please take your head out of the sand for just long enough to look around you. It knocked on the door of Maranatha Frail Care on Friday. A member of the morning shift arrived for work, showing some flu-like symptoms (yes, we know that she should have stayed at home, but she heard duty call); her temperature was

elevated, so she was sent away for testing, which cost MHA R850. The results came back this morning: negative. While we all breathe a sigh of relief, it is cold comfort today; COVID-19 has hit a psychiatric facility in Kirkwood, which accommodates over 600 patients. Some deaths have already been reported. Please pray for everyone there.

3. The numbers speak for themselves: on 1 March there was just 1 case of infection in our country; on 1 April it was 1380 infections/5 deaths; on 1 May 5951/116; by the time you read this Newsflash today, 1 June, the figures will be around 33000 infections/700 deaths. There has been a 12% increase just over this past weekend.

The infection rate is going to continue to escalate even more dramatically; actuarial models don't all produce the same projections, but it is apparent that, by mid-winter, SA could be dealing with 8000 new infections per day, with 500 deaths per day, and that will just be known statistics. SA has a huge rural population, where reporting of cases is slow, or even absent. Members of the MHA family don't need reminding which sector of the population remains the most vulnerable. Do the Maths. Scary.

4. Hein and I ask all residents this: do you want to be a part of the solution, or a part of the problem? The Board, Management and CovidCom all have a duty to protect our residents and staff, whatever it takes. We are doing this, and successfully so far, for which we thank God, and we are so grateful to the majority who have protected themselves and one another, and worked with us. In particular we are grateful for the Bedsitter folk; they have been locked in since late March, not going out, or visitors allowed in. Frail Care residents have also had no visitors since mid-March. We will not allow the selfish minority to undo all of this good work, and potentially decimate the MHA community; residents, staff and others. Take heed.

Let us close with an appropriate quote from scripture, and a final comment:

***For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind***  
**2 Timothy 1:7**

Yes, this is a fear-full time in history, and in our lives. We have many reasons to be afraid, but as many reasons to be positive and courageous and thankful. Let us all stand together; powerful in words, deeds and actions; loving in the ways we look out for and protect one another; using common sense and responsible behaviour. May God bless South Africa, and may He continue to bless and protect the MHA family.

**Hein Barnard**

Chief Executive Officer

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**Malcolm Stewart**

Director, and CovidCom Chairman

### **More positive feedback received at CovidCom HQ:**

I write to let you know just how much I appreciate the Newsflash that appears in my box daily. It undoubtedly takes time and a lot of effort to put something together for us, to keep us focused and encouraged, and to motivate the unmotivated!

The recent comment regarding the taxi driver with an over-loaded taxi seems to have done the trick for some of us. Bright and early this morning, at first light, I saw someone who I have never seen wearing a mask doing just that; all masked like the majority of us! So, be encouraged, the Newsflash is getting through to us. In these days of isolation it is sometimes difficult to be up-beat, but there usually is something in the Newsflash that makes me laugh, and I appreciate that, and look forward to it.

Thank you for having our best interests at heart; all of MHA Management, I salute you!

There seems to be no end to the amount of trouble and expense you'll go to for us, the residents. Some of us have had to look out for ourselves for a very long time; now having

MHA looking out for us is indeed a great blessing, and at the same time very humbling. In September 2019 I moved in, and have loved every moment of it. I am exceedingly grateful to be a resident of this haven. It feels like yesterday that I moved here, and yet eight months have already gone by. I sometimes marvel at just how fast time passes by.

At the wedding at Cana the very best wine was kept for last; our Lord has indeed kept the best for me for last!

Please convey my thanks and appreciation to all of your colleagues.