



methodist homes

MHA on the Bay

No. 41
Spring 2025



Hein's Journey of Joy with us

A farewell to Hein Barnard

It's not easy to imagine Methodist Homes without Hein Barnard at the helm. For nearly fourteen years, Hein has been our leader, our steady hand, and often our quiet voice of reason. Now, as he retires, we look back on a journey that was truly one of joy – for him, for his staff and for the residents.

Hein joined MHA at a time of change, following the retirement of Andries van Westenbrugge. The early months were, as Hein himself recalls, "an absolute nightmare" with him trying to find his direction in unfamiliar territory. Yet it was during those trying days that he showed us who he really is: a leader who knew that the way through any storm was to deal with the problem, not the person. That approach became his compass, guiding MHA through some seemingly impossible challenges.

Hein didn't come from a corporate background. He was first a teacher—at Framesby Hoërskool and later at Technikon—before dabbling in short-term insurance. But at MHA, he found his true calling. And what a calling it turned out to be. Although his predecessors had built a solid foundation, Hein found on his arrival that our financial systems were still being done by hand, technology was practically non-existent, and several of our facilities were crying out for renewal. Slowly but surely, Hein rolled up his sleeves and began to transform the way that MHA had worked.

It wasn't just about numbers and systems. Hein cared deeply about people's safety and wellbeing.

He was the one who pushed for stronger security measures at our villages—first introducing fencing, then cameras, and upgraded systems—always with residents' best interests at heart. Change is never easy, and Hein knew it often made him unpopular at first. But in time, residents understood that his heart was always in the right place, and their gratitude spoke louder than their initial resistance.

If you ask Hein what he believes in most, he'll tell you: love always wins. And he lived that out every day. He led with respect, with empathy, and with a genuine desire to include people in the journey.

One of the best examples of this was his decision to appoint not only men, but also women as Village Managers. Hein recognised that empathy was just as important as efficiency in these roles—and he was right. His decision changed the culture of MHA for the better.

Perhaps the hardest chapter of Hein's leadership came during COVID times. He, Sr Sanet Marx and a dedicated team carried the heavy responsibility of keeping residents safe while enforcing onerous restrictions that were sometimes extremely unpopular. Families needed reassurance, and Hein was often the one to give it. He never grew tired of explaining again and again that everything was done only with the residents' and the staff's best interests at heart. Looking back now, with only four COVID-related deaths across MHA, it's clear he made the right calls, even if they came at a personal cost.

There have, of course, been sad moments along the way. Hein has admitted that the hardest part of his job was saying goodbye to residents who passed on. But through it all, he remained steadfast in his belief that his work here was not just a career, but a calling. And as he leaves, Hein says without hesitation that these past almost fourteen years have been the happiest of his life.

We couldn't agree more that he is a legend. Hein Barnard didn't just manage Methodist Homes—he shaped it, renewed it, and filled it with heart. His mark will be felt here for years to come.

Hein, thank you for everything. You led us with your strength, you cared for us with your love, and you leave us richer for having known you. May the next chapter of your journey be filled with the same joy you've given so generously to us.



Marsh are our Insurance Brokers and Risk Management consultants. We acknowledge their professionalism and guidance with the devastating Maranatha Frail Care and Aldersgate fires, and we thank them for their sponsorship of this Newsletter



SEW MUCH LOVE TO GIVE!

Recently I popped over to Bob Zeiss Bedsitters to visit Mrs. Betty Gibson who had been working on a collection of rag dolls, beautifully made and soon to be donated to CHOC, where they will bring comfort and joy to the children who need it most.



The story behind the dolls is quite touching as some years ago Betty lost her sister. While clearing out her sister's home, Betty came across several dolls' faces and kept them. Most of the time they were not even thought of until she packed up to move to Bob Zeiss Bedsitters. She tackled the job of bringing the faces to life a few months ago and is so happy with the outcome. She said with a smile that each one seemed to take on a character of its own.

Betty has always loved dolls, though she never considered herself a collector. Before they go off to CHOC, she plans to share them with her fellow residents at Bedsitters where they'll be put on display for everyone to enjoy.

As we chatted, Betty told me a story from years ago after she had retired from her job at Edgars, Greenacres. With a little more time on her hands, she made two enormous clowns—so big that she used a size 36 dress pattern to create their outfits!

The clowns became display pieces for the sales team and were so well loved that they stayed there for a long time.

Betty laughed as she told me about a smaller clown she had made for herself. Inside its stuffing, she stitched a sound box that could laugh. She and her husband took it everywhere with them, entertaining petrol pump attendants and shopkeepers on their travels, with its unexpected giggle at the press of a button!

Her love of sewing reaches back to her childhood when she remembers spending time with her grandmother who created rag dolls, and it was Betty's and her sister's job to sew clothes for them and give each doll a name.

Before leaving, I asked Betty how long she had been living at Bedsitters. She explained that she had moved there from Aldersgate and has been happily settled for just over two years. Then she surprised me; in January, she will be turning 101. Looking at her bright eyes and delightful spirit, it's hard to believe she is a day older than 75.

Perhaps it is her exceptional heart—her life stitched together with creativity, kindness, and humour—that has carried her so well and kept her in truly good cbut Betty claims that it is her trust in God – what a blessing!



OUR HANDY HEROES!

Most residents at Annesley Gardens/Sheariton, Cassia Gardens, Bob Zeiss Bedsitters and CP Bradfield will instantly recognise “Team Jacques”, the dependable duo of Jacques McLeod and his assistant Ply Hendricks who make their rounds each week. Meanwhile, Wesley Gardens, Irvine Villa, Maranatha and Aldersgate are well cared for by “Team Willie”, made up of Willie van der Walt and Granton Bashella. These dream teams keep our residences in tip-top shape, repairing broken doors, windows, and roofs, to name just a few of the countless tasks they tackle with great skill and good humour.

They are affectionately nicknamed our “MacGyver guys” because there's hardly a problem they can't solve. And if they don't know how at first, they'll find a way — just like the famous secret agent himself, using a little ingenuity and a lot of practical know-how!

Now, there's an old adage that says, “the apple doesn't fall far from the tree.” Well, never a truer phrase because we have not one but two duos between our MacGyvers and the “men in white”.

Clive Bashella, the original handyman, once teamed up with Willie van der Walt before stepping aside for his son, Granton, and joining the painting crew. He now works alongside another father-and-son pair, Verny and Charl Peacock.

Not as regular with their visits, but certainly leaving a lasting impression, the “men in white” are our dedicated painting team!

For the past twenty months, they've been hard at work redecorating the cottages at Aldersgate, bringing a fresh newness to every corner. Once they're done there, they will take their brushes and ladders to their next assignment.



IT'S A HAT TRICK!

Google says: "Strong women are individuals who demonstrate resilience, courage, and inner strength, often inspiring others and contributing positively to their communities."

Well, here are three strong women who seemingly inspired each other as well as their communities.

It all started with Susan Bekker (now living at Annesley Gardens) commencing a nursing career in Tarkastad in 1973. She qualified with a Diploma in General Nursing and Midwifery and then worked at the Tarkastad General Hospital until the 1980s when she took up a position at the Tarkastad Old Aged Home. There she worked until she retired at the ripe age of 72.

Having had an exemplary role model as a mother, it was inevitable that one of her two daughters would choose nursing as a profession too. Daughter Riette lives in Robertson with her family and the other daughter - our very own Sr Sanet Marx, Matron at CP Bradfield and Nursing Services Manager for MHA. Sanet graduated with a Diploma in General Nursing, Midwifery, Community Nursing and Psychiatric Nursing. She started training for service at the Municipal Clinics in 1998 and later added a qualification in Education to her long list of accomplishments. She joined MHA in November of 2017 as Nursing Services Manager and Matron.

Sanet is also the mother of two daughters, Sanri and Esté, both of whom took up tertiary studies; Sanri opting to become a Chartered Accountant and Esté - a professional nurse.

Sanet says she does not remember Esté showing an interest in nursing growing up but simply decided in her final year at school that nursing was the career for her.

Esté has just graduated from the North West University, Potchefstroom where she studied for her degree in General Nursing and Midwifery. A chip off the old block, she graduated with Honours and Distinctions.

Sanet is convinced that Esté's entry into the health care world was an act of God. Esté had applied for entry to Potchefstroom University during her matric year and was turned down. She made applications elsewhere and was already studying towards a degree in Sport at the University of the Free State when she was contacted by the Admissions Officer from North-West University to say that there was a vacancy for her to study nursing. She switched universities and curriculums in a heartbeat!

Sanri, despite not having an interest in becoming a professional nurse, has passed her Board Exams and is currently working for a well-known audit firm in Cape Town. She is hoping to find a position as a financial manager within a humanitarian organisation or hospital so that she can make a difference in people's lives.

Three generations of nurses! Is it simply a coincidence, an influence, or is it in the genes?



OUR HANDY HEROES! *Cont...*

They are also the ones behind the refurbishment of re-sale cottages, so there's never a dull moment in their busy schedules. Where would we be without these talented teams who keep everything running smoothly and looking its best?



Left to right: Verny Peacock, Rodwell (Chicken) Draghoender, Clive Bashella, Chris Schutte, Charl Peacock & Virgil Koopman.



Team 'MacGyver' Granton Bashella, Willie van der Walt, Jacques McLeod and Ply Hendricks

MHAOTB has a new Editor!

MHA is pleased to announce that Alison Manasse, Manager of Irvine Villa, was approached to be the new Editor, and she graciously accepted. Apart from having all the skills required of a Village Manager, Alison also has wonderful journalistic and other related skills, which are clearly evident in this edition of our Newsletter; she conducted all of the interviews and wrote the articles!

MHAOTB is an important tool for the MHA Family; it spreads news, it educates, it voices concerns, it celebrates and showcases special people and moments, and it helps to glue the wider community together. Alison has some ideas for refreshing MHAOTB into the future.

She would welcome feedback and comments (her e-mail address is alison@methomes.co.za)



"To plant a garden is to believe in tomorrow."
— Audrey Hepburn



Glorious
Spring