

Rand Aid review

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Santa comes to Ron Smith Care Centre



Matron Avril Maltman of Ron Smith Care Centre with Santa (care centre resident John Harvey).

When John Harvey moved from Rand Aid's Tarentaal Village to its Ron Smith Care Centre in October, he feared his days of spreading joy as Santa were over.

He had become known as the Santa of Tarentaal because each year, from when he moved to the village in November 2016, he would don a red suit and beard and deliver

gifts to residents at the village's annual Christmas dinner.

Due to the coronavirus, Ron Smith Care Centre is not having a large Christmas function this year, although a festive lunch will be served on Christmas Day – so John's fear looked set to become a reality.

Determined to let him continue with his merry tradition, John's daughter Sharon, Tarentaal Village manager Tammy Neilson and Rand Aid social worker Ulricka Beukman stepped in and on November 18, John was transformed into Santa and we went through the care centre in his wheelchair – with bell in hand – handing out chocolates and bringing joy to fellow residents.

Message
from CEO

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Visit Rand Aid's all-new website

Rand Aid has revealed its slick side, with a brand-new website offering current and prospective residents and frail care and rehab clients all the information they need to know about the non-profit organisation.

"While Rand Aid has entrenched itself as one of South Africa's leading retirement, frail care and rehab facilities over the past century, there's certainly nothing 'old' about our new, modern and easy to navigate website," says Rand Aid CEO Peter Quinn.

"It not only provides visitors with all the information they need about our life right retirement villages, frail care centres and substance abuse treatment centre for men, but also offers easy access, via links, to other organisations that specialise in various medical conditions, from diabetes and arthritis to cancer and more," he adds.

While providing valuable information to visitors is the website's core aim, it also tells the story of Rand Aid's legacy over the years, is kept updated with frequent news from all of the organisation's facilities, and provides a safe and easy way to donate to the Rand Aid cause of your choice online.

Visit the website at www.randaid.co.za to learn everything you need to know about the organisation and its unique business model, which enables it to sustainably care for Elders and others in need. And, while you are online, visit our Facebook page @RandAidAssociation and give it the thumbs up by liking the page.

If you are not yet part of the Rand Aid family, the new website will certainly make you think about becoming part of our caring, dynamic and connected community.

Sr Catherine joins Elphin Lodge family

Rand Aid's Elphin Lodge retirement village has a new cottage sister, Catherine Dube (49), who took over from Sr Helena Bezuidenhout on her retirement.

Sr Catherine has vast experience working in aged care, having worked for Helping Hands Live-in-Care in the United Kingdom. On returning to South Africa, she was the charge sister at Nazareth House in Yeoville.

"I used to drive past the Elphin Lodge complex but had never seen beyond its walls. When I first entered the property, I was awestruck; the gardens are refreshing and the residents so happy. The village is incredibly organised and very professional," she says.

"My core functions are to meet the primary medical needs of the residents, including health awareness, monitoring vital signs and giving medical advice."

Sr Catherine, who joined the Elphin Lodge family on September 1, 2020, says she specialised in the care of elders



Elphin Lodge's Sr Catherine Dube.

when in the United Kingdom, where she worked for around four years. Before that, she did general nursing.

She holds a diploma in nursing from United Bulawayo Hospitals and has completed introductory courses in dementia and caring for elders.

"The elderly stole my heart as I found them to be welcoming, appreciative and a fountain of knowledge. My mum is 93 and is also my inspiration. Whenever I am with elders, I feel like I am at home with my parents and will always go the extra mile for them," she says.

Sr Catherine lives in Edenvale and when not at work, enjoys socialising and listening to music. She has four children, all of whom live in Germany – her eldest son is 27, her twin daughters are 23 and she has a 10-year-old 'laat lammietjie', who lives with her mom.

"We wish St Catherine a long and happy working life in the village," says Elphin Lodge manager Helen Petrie.



Dr Kaplan's got the moves... Thembalami Care Centre resident Brian Penney and general practitioner Dr Dave Kaplan face each other over the chess board. Brian loves chess and whenever he hears that Dr Kaplan is due to do rounds at the care centre, he sets up a chess board at one of the tables in the bright foyer. If Dr Kaplan has the time, the two enjoy a challenging session of one of the oldest games around. These spontaneous games between caregiver and resident reinforce Thembalami's holistic approach of looking after the whole person and promoting physical, emotional, social and spiritual wellbeing.

Isobel toasts longevity with an icy beer

If you ask Isobel Peddie for the secret behind her longevity – she turned 92 on October 11, she'll tell you it's her evening whiskey and lunchtime beer!

Described by her daughter Lynda Paige as very positive and full of fun, Isobel – who still drives – has lived at Rand Aid's Elphin Lodge retirement village for over 20 years and is a much loved part of the community.

She has always been a happy participant in all village events and is admired for the work she does to ensure the premature babies at the Rahima Moosa Maternity Hospital in Johannesburg are warmly clothed. Although Isobel no longer knits herself, she has a crew of ladies who, over many years, has knitted hundreds of blankets, beanies, booties, vests and dolls. These tiny garments have played a big part in keeping the babies snug.

Retired chief paediatrician at the hospital, Professor Keith Bolton, met Isobel years ago through their church – Aldersgate Methodist in Glenhazel.



Isobel Peddie (92) is a staunch supporter of the premature babies born at the Rahima Moosa Maternity Hospital over the years.

One Sunday, he appealed to the church ladies to help knit clothing for the hospital's prem babies and the rest, as they say, is history.

Isobel worked as a primary school secretary at Fairways Primary in Sandton. Her first husband died when she was 69, in 1997, and she remarried at age 74. Her second husband passed away in 2009.

"She's always been a regular member of the Women's Auxiliary at her church," says Lynda. "She's extremely sociable and loved going out for lunch with friends. Unfortunately, most of her friends have passed on but she still goes on trips with a pensioner group. Her favourite destination is Madikwe in the North West, near the Botswana border. She's passionate about wildlife – especially fish eagles."

Isobel has three children, two grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. "We're a very close family and we meet every Saturday morning," says Lynda.

**WINNING
PHOTOS**

Olwyn Kustner won the recently held 'Spring at Thornhill Manor' photo competition. Olwyn submitted photos of two garden birds and the judges said her photos were a good representation of spring at Thornhill Manor as it is a time when the gardens are full of flowers and the birdlife is prolific. For the full story and to see the photos, visit www.randaid.co.za and click on the NEWS tab.

CEO's end-of-year message



While every year has a few defining moments, 2020 has been one for the record books, with world-changing, mindset-shifting developments that have left no one untouched.

Looking back with 2020 vision, we can see how wrong our early coronavirus (COVID-19) predictions and beliefs may have been and how very differently we view the potential and possibilities of 2021, now that the seemingly unbelievable has happened. The advent of various vaccines will hopefully be a game changer.

For me, it has been a year of growth in many aspects. Joining Rand Aid as CEO earlier this year was a very different career move for me. Arriving here, I found an exceptional, caring culture amongst the management and staff and felt the warmth of the residents.

My arrival was closely followed by the advent of COVID-19, with the uncertainty, the fear and concerns and the daily COVID-19 meetings as the world sought to understand the many facets of this virus. We all became amateur virologists, with nearly every conversation being about the disease.

The Rand Aid team – across all levels and functions, from the frontline to those in support – collectively rose to the challenge to protect our residents and to prevent the spread of the virus as best we knew how. It was a learning journey, with new information forcing us to think on our feet and adapt.

The executive sought to protect all at Rand Aid but sadly we could not. We feel deeply for the families who lost loved ones and also for those who went through the painful symptoms as their

bodies fought the virus.

In the broader economy, the counter-measures that were taken to contain the spread of the disease, through the various lockdown levels, drained the coffers across all levels of society, from government and business to civic organisations and individuals. The burden on the poor was increased and new pockets of poverty were created.

The isolation and vulnerability people experienced gave rise to a time of great introspection and reflection. People grew internally and possibly spiritually.

In grappling with the past 12 months, there are many words of wisdom upon which we can draw.

**Everything has its wonders,
even darkness and silence, and
I learn, whatever state I may be
in, therein to be content - Hel-
len Keller, author and political
activist (1880-1968)**

We adapted and life in the villages continued (with masks on, of course).

Ron Smith Care Centre experienced the pain of loss when some residents succumbed to the virus but also took quiet pride in becoming the first organisation in Africa to achieve Milestone 2 on the Eden Alternative® Registry. This achievement recognises the personalised care given to residents, which takes into account their holistic wellbeing and not just their physical care.

The care centre's Jerusalema video was another highlight. The lively performance included residents and all levels of staff and is one of the best I have seen.

Rand Aid's finance team had an unusual and challenging audit, with no auditors on site and all matters handled digitally. The Board meetings 'zoomed' by – we all became more tech savvy as we were pushed further into the digital world. We said goodbye to the 'cheque' – with it being determined that they have

no future in modern payment systems.

Face-to-face contact will never be totally replaced by remote interactions, however, and recently, after months of being unable to do so because of the virus, I could meet some of the committees and residents. What a pleasure!

Please stay aware of the COVID-19 threat. We cannot let our guard down until it has been effectively defeated, which will still be months away. We are still having cases every now and then within Rand Aid – fortunately none have been fatal. Please, please look after yourself.

**Reality is that which, when you
stop believing in it, doesn't go
away - Philip K. Dick, science
fiction writer (1928-1982)**

When will COVID-19 come to an end?

**I refuse to answer that ques-
tion on the grounds that I don't
know the answer - Douglas
Adams, author (1952-2001)**

Thank you to everyone who, in their own way, contributed to us overcoming the challenges of 2020: The residents and their families for their understanding and concern, our staff and their families at home and those who supported us in 2020.

We thank the President for his leadership through this period and wish him strength for the challenges that still need to be faced.

We await the new year with strength and determination of the human spirit and with providence and blessings.

May this be a blessed Christmas and may Hanukkah light your path ahead.

To end, a quote and thought from one of the world's greatest electric guitarists, Jimi Hendrix (1942-1970): When the power of love overcomes the love of power, the world will know peace.

**Peter Quinn
Rand Aid Association CEO**

Thornhill Manor snooker champs decided

Thursday, October 5, saw the culmination of the Thornhill Manor Snooker Club's two championship competitions, with village chairman Dave Webster running out as winner of the club championship and Robbie Vermont taking the top spot in the handicap championship.

Andy Tasker and Rudi Waage were runners-up in the respective championships. Overall, 17 members of the club took part in the competitions.

After a layoff of several months during the COVID-19 restrictions, the snooker club was revived when Level 1 was announced. The club still operates under strict protocols, with only two players allowed in the snooker room at one time, masks are worn and social distancing observed. All snooker equipment is sanitised after each game, using a fogger to achieve full coverage.

RIGHT: Robbie Vermont and Dave Webster, winners of Thornhill Manor's snooker competitions. The white cues do not indicate any deficiency in their sight, as evidenced by their success.



Armchair Travel whisks residents to China

An Armchair Travel series was launched as a new programme at Rand Aid's Ron Smith Care Centre on Friday, October 2.

"The idea behind the travel series is that it will take our residents to faraway places in the comfort of their own home," says Debbie Christen, manager: recreational programmes. "It will provide an opportunity for us to learn about the people, food, culture, history, music, language, customs and landmarks of various countries and to explore what makes each country so unique and special. Each armchair travel session can bring back fond memories of personal travels in the past, when elders were young and fit enough to have active travel adventures."

The programme was held on different days on each care centre wing, rather than one combined event being held, given the existing coronavirus restrictions.

The journey kicked off with the gathering practising some gentle Tai Chi movements to relaxing Chinese music, followed by several short videos on the highlights of China, raising panda bears and the beautiful Chinese Umbrella Dance.

Also included was a language session, during which residents and staff learnt simple Chinese words and phrases. Jasmine tea and freshly-cooked spring rolls were enjoyed and a video was shown on the Terracotta Warriors (the greatest archaeological find of the 20th Century), followed by a lesson on how to use chopsticks. Residents and staff then participated in a 'Chopstick Challenge' – they had to transfer five sweets into a bowl as quickly as possible using their chopsticks. The first person to get all their sweets in the bowl was the winner.

The last item on the travel itinerary was a fun slide-show quiz, which tested the participants on their newfound knowledge of China.



Maureen Morrow and Marie Richards doing the Qigong movements to beautiful Chinese music.

After the Travel Series on her wing, resident Jill Jones sent this email: 'This is a letter of great appreciation for the interesting, varied and fun Chinese morning we enjoyed today at Woodlands.

'So much planning, hard work and attention to detail were put into this event, which really paid dividends. We all enjoyed it so much and it was a wonderful start to the gradual easing of strict lockdown.

'Please continue with your wonderful, imaginative work. It makes a huge difference to our lives and daily enjoyment.'

WATER BABES KEEP FIT AND HEALTHY

Thornhill Manor resident Jenny Cruickshank gives interested villagers a total body workout twice a week.

Physiotherapist Jenny says water aerobics is gentle on joints while providing resistance to muscles.

After the long months of the coronavirus lockdown, some village activities are once again taking place, including Jenny's water aerobics.

"The class is very popular and the residents who attend reap the benefits of cardiovascular exercise and muscle strengthening. Water aerobics is especially beneficial to those living with mobility, weight and pain challenges – but is also a great way for everyone to keep fit," says Thornhill Manor deputy manager Jackie Scott.

Lessons are held twice a week in the village pool.



Jenny Cruickshank (front) puts Shirley Gooch, Kay Spence, Dale Cherrington, Maryke Ewen, Jenny Carliell, Maria Gschnaidtner and Erna Bird through their paces.

PENDANTS FOR EDEN ASSOCIATES

Rand Aid employees who earned Eden Associate status after attending a three-day intensive workshop last year were recently awarded specially designed pendants imprinted with the Eden Alternative logo.

Due to various circumstances, the receipt of the pendants from Cape Town was delayed, but the new Associates finally received their Eden pendants from Matron Avril Maltman on October 14 and October 16, at two special teas given in their honour. She congratulated the new Associates and reminded them to put the Eden philosophy and principles into practice every day.

The Eden Alternative is a philosophy that seeks to change the culture of today's old age homes, long-term care facilities

and other residential care settings from sterile medical institutions to human habitats – environments where residents want to live and carers enjoy working. Rand Aid is an Eden Alternative pioneer in Africa.

The Eden Associates who received their pendants are:

Alice Molepo, Brenda Ratema, Catherine Mphahlele, Debbie Beech, Florah Tshonisa, Forget Khoza, Grace Tshikalange, Johannes Mojela, Juliet Malatji, Knowledge Mabunda, Lehlo Manaka, Lucy Kgafela, Martha Mabuyela, Merium Netshifhefhe, Noma Malevu, Rosemary Khoza, Selina Shiviri, Shaka Mahlangu, Sue Prior, Thili Sibiya, Tinyiko Nkwinika and Ulricka Beukman.

Social worker and dementia expert Debbie Beech explained how emotionally charged the decision is to place a loved one in a care centre, when she took part in a panel discussion on aging on September 17, as part of eNCA's health and science focus hosted by Uveka Rangappa.

The programme was aired to raise awareness of dementia ahead of World Alzheimer's Day, marked annually on September 21.

Beech is a social worker at Ron Smith Care Centre. In May, the care centre became the first organisation in Africa to achieve Milestone Two on the Eden Alternative Registry. Eden Alternative is a global movement towards recognising aging as a continued stage of development and growth and not as a period of decline.

"People should not feel guilty when a loved one is relocated to a care centre," says Debbie. "The reality is that family members feel guilty for wanting to have a life. When you are caring for someone who is ailing, that becomes your life – your existence revolves around ensuring that their needs are met. This often leads to carer fatigue or burn-out," she says.

"Usually, families are in crisis when they come to us. There has inevitably been an incident, such as a fall or fracture, that made them arrive at the point where they finally acknowledged they are no longer able to care for their loved ones without professional assistance."

Families often feel they are abandoning their loved ones when, in fact, the relationships between the person living with dementia or needing full-time care and their loved ones usually improve when the elder is settled in a care centre.

"This is because both parties' stress levels are reduced. Instead of worrying if their loved one has, for instance, eaten or bathed, they can come and visit and spend quality time together, creating treasured moments, comforted that their loved one is being taken care of in the best possible way," says Debbie.

She explains that Ron Smith Care Centre has over 130 residents and, in addition to general frail care, offers specialised dementia care. The care centre has beautiful lounge and outdoor areas and a coffee shop that enables family members and friends to visit with residents in comfortable and inviting spaces. "Do not think that because your loved one is frail or has dementia, you cannot sustain a positive relationship.

Life-affirming care

"As an Eden Alternative-registered care centre, we work from an individual point of view, catering for the individual needs and wants of each resident, rather than using an institutional, one-size-fits-all approach.

"It is important that we know the likes, dislikes, habits and histories of our residents because this information can explain certain of their behaviours and enable us to tailor a care approach that best suits them. This knowledge is particularly helpful when the speech of a resident is affected."

Debbie says that knowing the preferred routines of a resident also goes a long way to making them relaxed and comfortable. "You may have a person living with dementia who

Dementia expert's comforting words for loved ones



battles to communicate and fights you every bath-time because you bath her first thing in the morning when throughout her life, she has bathed in the evening.

"It is crucial to try and find out why a resident is being 'difficult' because there is usually a reason and once you understand that, you can adapt their care routine and will generally find the resident becomes much more content."

There is a perception that people in care centres are bedridden when, in fact, they are often up and about. "People living with dementia are physically quite healthy but mentally, dementia has taken its toll and they no longer have executive function, which means they are no longer able to make reasonable decisions. We have residents living with dementia who stay with us for a number of years and do very well within the structure and flexible routine we offer."

While on the eNCA show, Debbie spoke about the reluctance of society to talk about the death of loved ones and what to expect.

"There is a stigma attached to talking about end of life and end-of-life care. At Ron Smith Care Centre, we have those difficult conversations with the families, to prepare them and make sure their loved one is comfortable and dies with dignity.

"Dementia is a terminal illness and at the end, the brain starts shutting down."

The important thing is palliative care, she says, which involves providing relief from pain and other distressing symptoms; affirming life; acknowledging dying as a normal process; and integrating the psychological and spiritual care of the resident.

"It is about helping the person die with dignity. A good life deserves a good death," she says.

Debbie's dementia care journey

Debbie started working at Alzheimer's SA in 2015 as their regional manager for Gauteng. During this time, she did the Wits Certificate Course on Nursing and Dementia. She also completed the online course Preventing Dementia, through Wicking University in Tasmania.

In 2018, Debbie represented South Africa at a workshop on advocacy in London, through Alzheimer's Disease International. Ten countries were represented.

"Dementia is definitely not addressed enough in South Africa. One of the results of attending the London workshop was starting the process of developing a National Dementia Action Plan.

"Unfortunately, South Africa sees dementia as a mental health issue and illness but it is actually defined as a non-communicable disease in most other countries of the world. The end result is that there is no defined department within the Health Department that deals with dementia, which is one of the five leading causes of deaths in the world and the leading cause of death in the United Kingdom."

■ **For more information about Ron Smith Care Centre, which offers a variety of accommodation options for frail, dementia and recuperative care, visit www.randaid.co.za**

Rand Aid is abuzz with variety of activities and pastimes



Thembalami resident Elizabeth Andrews with a selection of her knitted goods.

GOODWILL ALL STITCHED UP AT THEMBALAMI

The goodwill that abounds at Thembalami Care Centre is as comforting as a snuggly blanket or familiar pair of socks.

And it is bed socks, as well as beanies, scarves, baby jerseys and booties that have helped keep the kindness flowing!

Resident Elizabeth Andrews can often be found with a pair of knitting needles or a crochet hook in hand and happily churns out knitted goods for those who can do with some warmth and comfort.

Employee Connie Machebela was taught to knit in her lunch break by former resident Yvonne Jacobsen, who recently passed away. Connie has paid it forward by making

beanies, bed socks and scarves.

"Not only have the ladies produced some beautiful and much-needed items, but they kept themselves busy during the lockdown," says social worker Lara Hurwitz.

In addition, Karyne Brokenshire, a resident from Inyoni Creek, a nearby Rand Aid retirement village, crocheted eight blankets for the care centre, which were handed over to new residents to make them feel warmly welcome.

Some of the items – including a blanket made by Elizabeth – will be raffled to raise funds for Thembalami, while other items will be donated to residents as needed.

A CELEBRATION OF CREATIVE CRAFT

Tarentaal Village is blessed with several creative residents who have exciting hobbies and excellent crafting skills.

"We decided to host a craft market at the village on November 27 to celebrate the artistry of these residents," says Tarentaal deputy manager Laetitia Goosen.

"Residents had the opportunity to display their crafts. The only criteria for participating in the exhibition was that residents had to have crafted the products themselves.

"It was very well attended and we followed all the coronavirus protocols to protect people attending. A number of residents expressed their gratitude for the opportunity to interact with their neighbours once again," says Laetitia.



Carla Fasold is so enthusiastic about her hobby that she took her crochet needles along to the recently held craft market.



Diego Sella is a Men's Shed frequenter who assists in organising the industrious group of villagers who love getting down and dirty in the Rand Aid workshop. He displayed a boxed pull-along toy.

Elphin Lodge showcases its many village activities

Rand Aid retirement village Elphin Lodge residents were as busy as bees in a blooming garden on Saturday, October 10, when they held a spring morning gathering to showcase the many activities undertaken at the village.

People set up in the hall, with each display serving to attract residents to join the various groups or incite their own creativity.

"It was an opportunity for residents to enjoy a morning in our lovely gardens, meet and greet fellow residents and find out what activities are available for villagers. They were able to sign up as a volunteer, join a committee or indicate their desire to participate in a village activity or service," says Elphin Lodge manager Helen Petrie.



Heather brushes away boredom

Thembalami resident Heather Abram is not one to sit idle. A resident of the Rand Aid care centre for five years, she kept herself busy during lockdown doing an activity she has always loved – painting! The result is a number of bright canvases, two of which she has framed. Thembalami's manager Esme van der Walt says Heather has given the care centre two paintings to be raffled to raise funds. Heather, who married fellow Thembalami resident Edward in 2015 after a whirlwind romance, is always one of the first to put her name down for activities and social events, where her quick smile and deep dimples help keep the fun going.

Walking and dancing to celebrate spring at Inyoni

A jolly atmosphere reigned at Rand Aid's Inyoni Creek retirement village on September 16 when a spring walk was held and the village staff did the Jerusalem dance.

Forty-four walkers took part, including Brian Stevens, Doris Ferri and Beryl O'Donnell, who are in their 90s.

Four routes were offered: A 750m walk, mainly for those using a walking aid; and 1km, 2km and 4km options. The 4km was by far the most popular.

"Walkers were encouraged to practise social distancing and after burning some calories, everyone enjoyed a prego roll," says Inyoni Creek manager Jenny Tonkin.

To add to the fun, residents were encouraged to dress up and prizes were awarded to Marcelle Kadish (best dressed lady) and Clive Cubitt (best dressed man).

"Our residents are pleasingly fit," says Jenny, "probably because of the walking they did during lockdown to counteract their cabin fever."

Inyoni Creek's 20 hectares offers wonderful walks, with river frontage, pretty views over a green belt area and large dams. A bridge that can accommodate walking aids spans the Jukskei River, linking Inyoni Creek with its sister village, Elphin Lodge.

The Jerusalem dance was done in response to a challenge made by Rand Aid's Ron Smith Care Centre, which urged other Rand Aid care centres and retirement villages to join the global craze started by local artist Master KG's catchy song Jerusalem. It has become a global sensation and videos of people dancing to the hit are spreading smiles far and wide.



Pertunia Shabalala and Merrios Maluleke.

Wedge Gardens celebrates unity within diversity

Heritage Day on September 24 recognises and celebrates the cultural wealth of our nation and this year, the day provided the staff at SANCA Wedge Gardens rehab centre a chance to share their traditions with each other.

"We all dressed up and brought different dishes from our cultures to enjoy at a staff lunch. There was samp, chicken livers, milk tart and koeksisters," says deputy manager Estelle Raath.

"Staff at Wedge Gardens represent many cultures and on this day, we are all reminded that South Africa belongs to all its people and that we need to build our nation and consolidate our national identity as one of unity within diversity."



Mel and Anna Stamelman with Clive and Jenny Cubitt at the spring walk.

GALLOPING GRANNY IS NO RUNAWAY BRIDE

Their hands may tell the story of decades well lived but when Geoff Gearing (86) asked Thornhill Manor resident Jill du Toit (83) to marry him, their hearts fluttered like teenagers'.

Geoff popped the question on 5 September, in England, where they found themselves when the coronavirus lockdown was implemented.

England is Geoff's home but for the past six years, the pair has been switching between South Africa and

England and enjoying many holidays at exciting destinations in between.

Jill has lived at Thornhill Manor since 2003 and quickly gained the nickname 'Galloping Granny' because she was always on the move, loved running and was quite the jetsetter.

Geoff is a triathlon champion and intends competing in the World Triathlon Championship event, age group 85+, next year. He was meant to compete this year but the coronavirus pandemic

put paid to those plans.

Fellow Thornhill Manor residents Brian and Dawn Burls have been friends with Jill for the past 25 years and say Geoff is the ideal partner for her because he is able to match her abundant energy and active lifestyle.

Jill had this to say on her upcoming nuptials: "Despite the rumours that are making the rounds, there is no truth in the story that I am getting married because I am pregnant."

Son in primary school, dad (65) doing matric

When Frans Mpete was 15 years old, hard times forced him to leave school. Fast forward 50 years and Frans, now 65, is close to ending his years-long regret of not having matriculated.

The resident of Lombardy East in Johannesburg says he always felt he was missing out because 'without matric you are less able to earn a good income'.

"If you lack skills, your chances of being employed are limited," he says.

A keen newspaper reader, Frans had read many articles over the years about people obtaining a qualification despite all odds and decided if they could do it, so could he.

In 2018, he registered with the Gauteng Community Education and Training College and completed Grade 11, attending classes part-time at Realogile High School in Alexandra. He now has two subjects left to write before obtaining his senior certificate.

"Unfortunately, the coronavirus has delayed my studies and I think I will only complete the course next year," Frans says.

Because he does not have access to a computer, Frans has found the work very challenging but remains determined to succeed.

After helping his family at home for a number of years, Frans found a job as a gardener at Rand Aid Association in 1975, when he was 20. Rand Aid was then 72 years old and in the years since, has entrenched its position as a provider of quality care and accommodation for older persons, as well as men with substance abuse challenges – and Frans remains a loyal and dedicated employee.

Two years after starting work at Rand Aid, he was promoted to garden supervisor and five years after that, he took responsibility for the mail and other deliveries, using a bicycle to do his rounds. In 1989, when Frans was in his early 30s, Rand Aid helped him get his driver's licence and he has been a driver for the organisation ever since. In 1998, he was transferred to head office, where he is still based.

Born in Brits and raised in Rustenburg, Frans had a rural upbringing and looked after his grandfather's cattle.

In 1988, he married Thandi. They have two children, daughter Dimakatso and son Kgotso, a laatlammietjie who is only nine. Dimakatso works for Sun International as an assistant hotel manager. She has also given Frans and Thandi two grandsons, Katlego (13) and Kgosi (4).

Retirement is on Frans's horizon and he hopes to follow in his wife's footsteps and become a motivational speaker.

Frans says the achievement in life he is most proud of is buying a vacant piece of land in Lombardy East, paying off his bank loan and building his own home.



Frans Mpete, who – at the age of 65 – is working towards achieving his matric certificate.



Louise Newman and Knowledge Ngobeni at **Ron Smith Care Centre's Heritage Day celebration** held on September 23. The event featured a display of the nation's many traditional dances. Instead of one get-together, celebrations took place on all the wings to prevent overcrowding. Staff and residents were treated to fresh strawberries and ice cream and special goodie packs. As always, it was glorious to see staff representing the diversity of South Africa, coming together in a beautiful melange of music, dance and costumes.

TARENTAAL TREASURES ALL THINGS TRADITIONAL

A cultural exchange characterised Rand Aid retirement village Tarentaal's Heritage Day celebration on September 25. Members of the housekeeping staff dressed in beautiful cultural clothing and entertained residents with traditional songs and dances.

"Although it was organised at short notice, around 130 people attended, showing just how keen our residents are to have the opportunity to socialise and attend village activities," says village deputy manager Laetitia Goosen.

"Staff members also did the Jerusalem dance, which the residents enjoyed very much. We served koeksisters, a traditional Dutch/Afrikaans sweet treat, and cold drinks, which were sponsored by the Tarentaal residents committee," says Laetitia.

Lidia Beukman, daughter of Tarentaal social worker Ulricka Beukman, helped serve the koeksisters.



Our mission: To provide the best possible care on a holistic basis to all people accommodated in our facilities — focusing primarily on less advantaged senior citizens, both ambulant and frail, as well as men suffering from substance abuse.

Visit www.randaid.co.za or phone Erica Woodward at 011 882 2510.

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