

Rand Aid **review**

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Vaccination victory

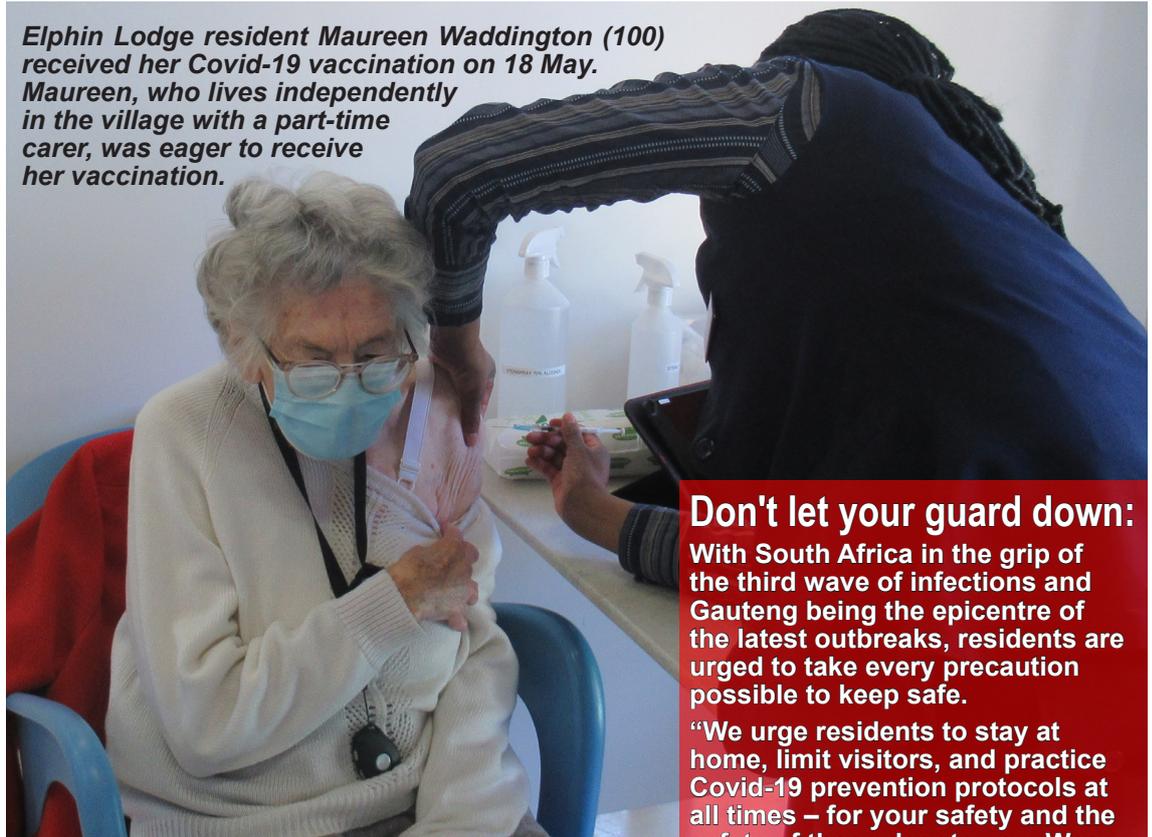
South Africa's Phase Two of its Covid-19 vaccination programme, targeting people over the age of 60, kicked off on 17 May – with Rand Aid Association leading the way for other retirement organisations.

Ahead of the roll-out of Phase Two, Rand Aid – which runs various independent living retirement villages, frail care centres and a substance abuse treatment centre for men – assisted its residents to register for their vaccine and setup various Covid-19 vaccination stations, in line with regulations from the Department of Health.

Rand Aid was one of the first two retirement organisations in the area to receive its supply of Covid-19 vaccines from the Department of Health.

As such, Rand Aid's roll-out of Phase Two of the vaccination programme also commenced on 17 May at Ron Smith Care Centre and Elphin Lodge retirement village, with 144 residents being vaccinated that day despite a delay in receiving the vaccines.

Elphin Lodge resident Maureen Waddington (100) received her Covid-19 vaccination on 18 May. Maureen, who lives independently in the village with a part-time carer, was eager to receive her vaccination.



Don't let your guard down:

With South Africa in the grip of the third wave of infections and Gauteng being the epicentre of the latest outbreaks, residents are urged to take every precaution possible to keep safe.

"We urge residents to stay at home, limit visitors, and practice Covid-19 prevention protocols at all times – for your safety and the safety of those dear to you. Wear a mask, sanitise, and practice social distancing. If we do the right things for a little longer, we will overcome this virus!" says Peter Quinn, Rand Aid's CEO.

What Rand Aid's residents had to say

"Congratulations to the team on a well organised vaccine roll-out! It was super-efficient... well done to all involved," said Peter and Shirley from Inyoni Creek retirement village.

"We really do want to congratulate the entire Rand Aid team on your balanced and effective response to the entire Covid-19 pandemic, and especially for the incredibly effective roll-out of the vaccination plan," said John and Jen Cruickshank from Thornhill Manor.

Liebe Meyer from Elphin Lodge said: "Each and every person involved – from the entrance to the exit – was so meticulous and friendly. Well done and highest compliments to everyone. And the cupcake at the exit was the cherry on the top!"

Rand Aid was visited by various dignitaries on its first roll-out day, including Gauteng Education MEC Panyaza Lesufi, representatives from the Gauteng Premier's office and representatives from the Department of Health (DoH). Gloria Serobe, the chairperson of President Cyril Ramaphosa's Solidarity Fund, was also directed to Rand Aid for vaccination.

On 18 May, a further 150 residents from Rand Aid's Elphin Lodge and Thornhill Manor were vaccinated, with the balance of Thornhill Manor's 280 residents vaccinated within two days.

On 21 May, 228 Rand Aid's Tarentaal residents received their vaccine, followed by 138 residents from Tarentaal and Inyoni Creek on 22 May.

"By mid-June, 1 490 Rand Aid residents had received their first Covid-19 vaccine," says Zabeth Zühlsdorff, Rand Aid's general manager of services and the advance division.

Subsequently, the DOH agreed that Rand Aid could vaccinate its staff at the Rand Aid vaccination site and by 8 June, 287 Rand Aid staff members had been vaccinated at Elphin Lodge. The focus was then switched to vaccinating residents' private care workers. "Following the roll-out of vaccines, we have been inundated with positive comments from a number of our residents, which we truly appreciate," Zabeth says.

RSCC adds a new dimension to dementia care

Ron Smith Care Centre has installed Snoezelen multi-sensory equipment at River Lodge 3, its residential care wing for people living with dementia, to create relaxing spaces that help reduce agitation and anxiety, engage and delight residents and encourage communication.

"The Snoezelen philosophy and concept was originally developed in the 1970s in the Netherlands and has been used all over the world to help improve the quality of life for people with disabilities and other limiting conditions," says Rand Aid's senior nursing manager Avril Maltman.

She explains that studies have shown that the use of such multi-sensory equipment can have a positive effect on behaviour, mood, communication and functionality. The equipment has also proven to be therapeutic for staff as it improves their relationships with residents and increases job satisfaction.

Two special areas have been created on River Lodge 3.

"One area has been set up as a relaxing space, to calm the body and mind, while the other creates the opportunity to engage residents in appropriate and stimulating activities, taking into consideration their level of functioning and interests," says Avril.

The 'relaxation' area is equipped with a tall, Perspex bubble tube; fibre optic light strands; and a beautiful nature scene.



Dave Scott and Nanna Roberts enjoying the relaxation area.

The bubble tube is filled with water and, when switched on, is illuminated with LED lights which automatically cycle through eight bright colours as bubbles and plastic fish rush to the top of the tube.

The tube also vibrates gently, which is comforting to touch and sets off a therapeutic 'white noise'. The visual effect is calming and soothing, while also stimulating. The interactive fibre optic strands provide light that residents can safely touch, handle and hold. The lights are stimulating and hold attention, but are gentle on the eye. This can be a very comforting experience for residents.

The 'stimulation' area is equipped with an interactive projector, which projects images onto a specially made table. As the resident moves to touch an image on the table, the projector senses movement and triggers a response from the projected image. For example, when a resident touches a projected image of a fish swimming in a pond, the fish may swim away, colours may change and different images in the underwater scene may appear.

"The interactive projector provides an experience of cause and effect and can be used for stimulation, fun and reminiscence," says Avril.

"River Lodge 3 residents and staff are enjoying the multi-sensory areas for relaxation and stimulation and they have made a significant difference on the wing," she adds.

Tarentaal residents rejoice in chapel reopening

There was much happiness when Tarentaal retirement village reopened its chapel over a year after it closed as a result of the strict Covid-19 lockdown regulations imposed last year.

"We got a cleaning team in, five of our male residents helped us with maintenance and beautiful new flowers were arranged. Everything was spruced up," says Tarentaal's manager Tammy Neilson.

"It was a lot of hard work, but the day the chapel opened was so rewarding. All of the residents who attended the first service came to the office to thank us," she adds.

When open, the chapel complies with all Covid-19 regulations, including sanitising, social distancing and mask wearing, and only 20 residents are allowed entry per service.



Wini Dean (left) and Judy Pearse (right), members of the Chapel Committee.

Thornhill Manor welcomes new residents

Due to Covid-19 restrictions and social distancing, Rand Aid's Thornhill Manor retirement village was not able to host its usual functions to welcome new residents to the village.

With the easing of restrictions, Thornhill Manor was recently able to welcome new residents and celebrate with them. To restrict the number of people and ensure residents' safety, three separate functions were held with new residents, who were welcomed by village chairman Dave Webster, village committee member Carol Gaynham and village manager Esme Erasmus.

Guests enjoyed a glass of wine and individual snack platters, while Dave and Esme spoke about Thornhill Manor, including the upcoming nominations for a new village committee for the next two years. The new residents were also encouraged to participate in a discussion about their experience of the village so far, and to offer suggestions.



Back, from left to right: John Sator, Dave Webster, Gavin Kendall and Rick John. Front, from left to right: Marina Sartor, Sue Carlin, Marian Cole, Esme Erasmus, Lynda Hopkins, Evelyn Kendall, Vicky John and Carol Gaynham.



Special thanks to Jean and Len

Elphin Lodge, its residents and Residents' Committee extend a grateful vote of thanks to Jean Johnson (ABOVE) and Len Segal (BELOW) for their tireless roles as volunteers on the Elphin Lodge Residents' Committee for the past 10 years.

Both Jean and Len retired from the committee at the end of May.

Len, who served as the treasurer of the committee since its inception, always guided the committee on responsible financial decision making. He was also a valued member of Rand Aid's Board of Management from 2014.

During her time on the Residents' Committee, Jean served four two-year terms as chair, until 2018, and then a further two years as an 'ordinary' committee member. In July 2010, she introduced a monthly newsletter – the Elphinews – to ensure more effective communication between residents.

"Elphin Lodge is extremely grateful for Len's and Jean's tireless efforts, commitment and dedication to our residents over the years. Thank you for everything you have done for the village and our residents," says Zabeth Zühlendorf, Rand Aid's general manager: services and advance division.



Meet Board chairman Paul Carter

Parktown North resident Paul Carter, a long-standing member of Rand Aid Association's Board of Management, was elected as board chairman on 13 April 2021.

Paul officially joined the board on 14 April 2014, and served as deputy chairman since late 2019.

"In 2014, I was approached to join the board by Pat Abrahams, a former chairman. In addition, I worked many years with the late Peter Clucas, who served on the board for decades. "After telling me the long history of the great work that Rand Aid has delivered to the community, and then seeing it for myself after a day-long tour with former CEO Rae Brown, it felt right to commit to giving my service to an organisation that strives to uplift the welfare of those in need," says Paul.

Paul sees Rand Aid as a well-run organisation, led by a highly experienced and long-serving executive team, and says the board's role is wholly strategic in nature.

"The model of the organisation is such that the net revenue generated from the reselling of life right homes, from our three retirement villages, can be directed towards the substantial welfare side of the business," he says.

Rand Aid recently acquired a substantial piece of land adjoining the Glendower golf course.

"Our plan is to build a fourth life right village to sustain and enhance the revenue side of the model. The board has already spent many hours analysing this future investment and I'm sure there will be many more to come. I would think this would form a key time and mind space for me over the next few years," he says.

When it comes to his leadership philosophy, Paul strives to 'come to a conclusion, preferably with everyone onboard' above all else. "As consensus is not always achievable, an ability to listen and adapt is key. I'm not sure if humour can be described as a leadership quality, but I do subscribe to it in abundance," he laughs.

To Rand Aid's residents, Paul says the first and most important priority is



that their time in their village is fulfilling and happy!

"Rand Aid Association's team strives to ensure that operations are run smoothly, but of course hiccups may occur. I urge all residents to be active in engaging with village representatives,

to ensure appropriate communication reaches the board when required. I have been privileged to serve on the board alongside passionate and astute village representatives, who bring a great deal of skill and empathy when it comes to delivering on the diverse needs of the greater Rand Aid group," he adds.

As for Rand Aid's employees, Paul would like to meet you all!

"A job at Rand Aid earns you a salary, but it also gives you the chance (daily) to make a difference in the lives of people who really need and appreciate it. I look forward to sustaining and continuing to build an organisation that grows in stature and health, thus providing a solid foundation for your own chance to grow. Your service is hugely appreciated," he says.

A business and family man

Paul graduated from Rhodes University in 1989. He then spent a year in the army, followed by a few years at AECI, before moving into a stockbroking career as an analyst of resource companies in South Africa.

In 2005, he co-founded ClucasGray, a boutique asset management operation, with three colleagues. He is married to Susan and they have two wonderful girls, Genna and Maddie, who are both in their fourth year of university in the Western Cape.

Rand Aid's CEO Peter Quinn says: "Congratulations to Paul on his new role as chairman of the board. Paul has worked with the organisation for numerous years and as such has a wealth of knowledge about Rand Aid and our vision, mission and values. The board, executive management and I look forward to taking Rand Aid into the future with Paul at the helm."

RAND AID COMPLIES WITH NEW POPI ACT

The Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA in short), has been in operation for some time and will be in full effect from 1 July 2021.

This Act also applies to Rand Aid and means that we have to ensure that when we process residents' personal information it is done securely. A policy on the protection of this information is in place and will be supplemented by a procedures manual.

Walking group gets creative

Thornhill Manor retirement village's resident occupational therapist Vicky Keenan is very involved with the village's Eden Alternative philosophy, which teaches us to see places where elders live as habitats for human beings rather than facilities for the frail and elderly.

Eden Alternative sees aging as a continued stage of development and growth and not as a period of decline.

As such, Vicky heads up the Rand Aid retirement village's walking group for frail residents – those who have carers and walkers – every Monday. The walkers enjoy tea and biscuits after their walk and get together in the community centre to play games that Vicky made herself.

"The games are emotionally, physically and therapeutically beneficial to those who attend. They are geared to improve motor skills and co-ordination and assist residents to socialise to alleviate loneliness and boredom," says Thornhill Manor manager Esme Erasmus.

The walkers recently made a beautiful bottle filled with battery-operated flashing lights, and a Mother's Day tag for each one. They were pleased with their handiwork.



Pictured from left to right (standing) are Vicky Keenan, Nancy Thembu (carer), Valry Tyrteos (assists Vicky each week) and Lee Schierenberg. Sitting from left to right are Angela Webster, Anna Ramsay, Inge Kinzig and Margot Tavner-Smith.

SANCA Wedge Gardens welcomes OT Caryn Berman

Glenhazel resident Caryn Berman joined SANCA Wedge Gardens Treatment Centre as a part-time occupational therapist in February 2021.

Berman, who works at SANCA Wedge Gardens four mornings a week, believes that occupational therapy (OT) has a huge role to play in substance use disorder rehabilitation. She works with men at the rehab centre who are in the process of recovering from various addictions.

"I am fortunate to have a lovely big therapy department which enables me to run groups, while some individuals work quietly on their own.

"I generally screen people to evaluate their level of functioning and socialisation, before dividing them into groups. The groups are aimed at recovery, to help individuals develop the skills they will need after leaving the rehabilitation centre, good work habits and life skills," says Berman.

Creative groups introduce leisure activities and skills that can be emotionally meaningful and financially rewarding, and consist of activities such as bead work, cooking, leather work, woodwork, decoupage, drawing, adult colouring in, chocolate making and baking, among others.

"Many patients got involved in the creative activities and have been following through with them in their own time in the evenings and on weekends, which helps to fill the long hours when no therapy takes place. This is a realistic

training process for life outside of rehabilitation," says Berman, explaining that OT plays an essential part in rehabilitation as it provides a tool for leaving and functioning in the outside world.

"Patients find it easier to discuss matters affecting them – whether these are their emotions, skills or work requirements – when they are busy with a practical activity.

It is less threatening when performing activities and often more enjoyable, as one gets involved in the game or task that reflects the skills or attitudes required in life.

"Groups can become quite heated and competitive, and life skills become apparent as one plays the game! While doing crafts, one learns valuable skills, such as following instructions, correcting errors and trying again until you master a skill. The patients love taking home items that they have made and giving them to their families as reflections of how far they have progressed. This also helps to improve self-esteem," says Berman.

For more information about SANCA Wedge Gardens and the Full Circle Recovery Programme, visit www.wedgegardens.co.za



Reverend Jaco and his wife Santie van Wyk enjoy their meal.

■ Remember to like Rand Aid's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/RandAidAssociation>

Memorial braai for MODA resident

The life of Chris Dormehl was celebrated around a braai fire by fellow residents of the Max Ordman Deaf Association (MODA) in Lombardy East on March 26.

Born Christiaan Frederick Dormehl, Chris was a resident of MODA, which is situated at Thembalami Care Centre, since May 2018. In that time, he made many good friends who were keen to bid him a proper farewell after he passed away on March 10, shortly after his 85th birthday on January 10.

Reverend Jaco van Wyk of Effata for the Deaf conducted a beautiful memorial service for 'Oom Chris', who had been a long-time friend of his. The service was streamed live, which allowed friends and family from afar to participate.

Chris's son Andre and a close family friend, Sharron Richards, donated meat and enough was prepared that all Thembalami and MODA residents could enjoy braai meat, pap and tomato and onion sauce for their lunch.

"The residents loved it – they always enjoy a break from the routine of their regular menu. Sharron also organised Easter eggs for all the residents of MODA because Chris had so loved these chocolate treats!" says Elize.

Rand Aid social workers: Lightning the load

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the important role of social workers in society. Gone are the days of social stigma attached to the involvement of social workers.

Rand Aid social workers Sue Prior, Debbie Beech and Ulricka Beukman fulfill the role of community care co-ordinators in the retirement villages at Rand Aid Association. It is the job of the social workers to co-ordinate the follow-up of any issues that may affect the quality of life and general well-being of residents in all the facilities run by the 118-year-old non-profit organisation. Both Wedge Gardens and Thembalami Care Centre also have their own specialised social work staff.

“Today, social workers are recognised as important role players in managed care, private practices and all areas of industry. They work tirelessly towards long-term social solutions and are recognised for their abilities to rebuild better, more inclusive and more stable societies.

“During the COVID crisis, the role of the social worker was recognised anew, with many hospitals and healthcare professionals appointing social workers or referring patients to them. This is because social workers have been trained for just these conditions – they are professionally equipped for a rapid response in times of crisis and to navigate emotional chaos, offering their skills to support people’s own coping processes.

“Good psychosocial care, in the midst of a pandemic, can help people identify and build on their natural resilience. Core features of a social worker’s assistance include access to information and emotional support as well as linking people to resources to aid existing coping skills. Social workers at every level have the skills and capability to not only address safety for today but to address grief and loss, build awareness and combat myths about the pandemic,” says Sue.

She explains that any disease outbreak or pandemic brings with it not only physical suffering for those infected, but also feelings of panic, shock, loss, grief, shame and suspicion in the community at large.

“With COVID, the enemy is invisible, making it even harder to cope. One is also vicariously affected through the losses that family and friends may have experienced – such as loss of life, loss of family income, loss of identity, interruptions in schooling and access to healthcare. Everyone has been affected on some level and the world will never be the same as before.”

She says that many people find it difficult to acknowledge their fears and losses. When asked what was lost in the past year of pandemic life, the answer often starts the same way: “I can’t complain.” “I’m one of the lucky ones.” “I know I should count my blessings.”

“People are, of course, comparing their losses to the loss of life of 2.6 million people around the world during this pandemic, which makes it harder to talk about smaller losses. Losses such as the loss of precious time with family and

friends, cancelled travel plans and missed family milestone events. These may not sound like much, but mental health experts agree that all loss needs to be acknowledged and grieved for future well-being.

“A core function of the social workers at Rand Aid has always been to anticipate, assess and address psychosocial needs. Many hardships can be minimised or averted by frequent, open and supportive communication.

“Social workers use skills such as active listening, crisis management, anger de-escalation, problem solving, decision-making support, boundary setting assistance, advance care planning, validation of family connectedness, role affirmation, clarifying, reflecting, interpreting and reassuring. Moreover, they can help a person to make sense of the many questions and tribulations that life brings,” says Sue.

“Social workers provide a safe space for people because they are committed to upholding human rights and dignity, which includes the basic right to privacy, self-determination and, above all, to confidentiality,” she says.

At Rand Aid and other care facilities, social workers also advocate on behalf of residents and families and provide information and reference on a wide range of topics, including medical aids, resident rights and how to connect with local resources.

Furthermore, they are instrumental in empowering residents to mitigate isolation, boredom and loneliness. In a culture that typically views aging as a period of decline, the Eden Alternative philosophy adopted by Rand Aid in the last few years, asserts that no matter how old we are or what challenges we live with, life is about continuing to grow.

“It is well accepted that care facilities and retirement villages with social workers are in a much better position to deal with and also to prevent crises. Thus, at Rand Aid, the social workers form part of a multi-disciplinary team and work alongside the medical staff to improve quality of life.

“They realise they work with people in physically, emotionally and socially vulnerable circumstances, many of whom are approaching the last chapter of their life. Alongside the doctors, the nurses and allied therapists, the social worker is not only part of a team examining ways to prevent and minimise physical pain, but also to work tirelessly to prevent, soothe and facilitate the healing of emotional pain.

“The social worker also has an important role in promoting personal change and growth. Every person learns, grows and changes until they come to the end of their life path. Social workers understand the need for each person to remain active and involved citizens, not to stagnate and to experience a life worth living. They can coach and guide to make life more rewarding and to find one’s purpose in life.

“When asking: ‘What does a social worker do?’ you will hear that the most satisfying and rewarding part of the work is to be a force for positive change and to be able to make a difference,” says Sue.

Proposed Glendower development

The town planning process for Rand Aid’s new Glendower development is still underway.

“We will be in contact with all interested people to update them on the progress as soon as we have new information to share,” says Zabeth Zühlsdorff, Rand Aid’s GM: services and advance division.

While interest in the new retirement estate remains high, the Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in ongoing delays in the various municipal processes.

Should you want to find out more about this exciting development, please contact Erica Woodward at 011 882 2510 (mornings only).

Railway enthusiast's **MODEL** hobby

Stan Steiner's life has been on track since he was just a little boy, when he began conducting a life-long love affair with model trains.

His home at Tarentaal retirement village has lost the battle to his obsession, with his open plan living area given almost totally over to the enormous table-height train display, which uses both analogue and digital controls.

Stan (81) has created a wonderworld filled with miniature people, buildings, streets, trees, cars, trucks, outdoor advertising, stations and, of course, locomotives, coaches, freight trains and railway tracks. Hoots and whistles sound out and working lights twinkle when Stan flicks a switch or two and brings the golden age of the railroad back to life.

Many of the buildings and other models were painstakingly made by Stan's own hand. The former motor mechanic, who retired in 2005, says with his train hobby and love of social activities, he has no time to be bored.

His current model took over four years to build and is far from finished. He is currently expanding the surface area, adding more track and even mountains. After that, he will no doubt find something else to tweak. Such is the nature of those addicted to railway modelling.

His previous display was considerably larger than his current one, although the locomotives were smaller, because of the N gauge scale he used. It was housed at the Eastern Model Railway Interest Group's club in Benoni. "I had invested around 20 years in creating that display but when the club had to vacate the premises, I had little choice but to find a new home for it," says Stan.

He had so much interest from buyers, says Stan, that he eventually sold it for double the original asking price.

Stan's interest in trains was sparked when he was 11 years old and saw a large O-gauge train in a shop window. "It was a big, heavy steam engine and I had to have it but it cost a whopping 10 pounds."

Determined, he paid the shop keeper a deposit and then paid the engine off in instalments. "When I had that locomotive in my hands, and knew it was mine to keep, I was delighted. Sadly though, I did not have any tracks and had the mammoth task of saving to buy them next," he recalls.

Today, Stan owns over 80 locos in addition to his collection of passenger coaches and freight trains.



Stan Steiner, Tarentaal retirement village's train man, with his impressive railway model.

A story of hope: Drug addict turns his life around



Randburg resident Jean-Pierre Devilliers Anderson (33), fondly known as JP, has been clean and sober for over 18 months, thanks to his full commitment to taking his life back and SANCA Wedge Gardens Treatment Centre's Full Circle Recovery Programme.

JP, who grew up in Thabazimbi, Florida and Roodepoort, says while he had a normal childhood, he had a few demons in his closet.

"At 19, when I was offered khat, I went for it... I wanted to be cool. I wanted to fit in. I wanted to be part of something. I wanted an experience to escape the reality of life.

"Once the addiction took hold of me, I needed to explore more and try stronger drugs. I moved on to crystal meth and ecstasy. In the beginning, it was good and fun, I felt fine," he says.

As the years of addiction passed, JP says he reached a point of no turning back.

"Sadly, instead of getting the help I needed, I carried on. I hit absolute rock bottom a few times. I was completely alone. I lost my family and friends, as they all rejected me. I lost my job. I was not getting

anywhere in life. I was going backwards. This lasted for nine years.

"I was filled with hate and anger and blamed everyone and everything around me for what I was going through. In my mind, I thought that I didn't need anyone or anything. I thought I was good... I could still get a fix," says JP.

Luckily, JP realised he needed help before it was too late.

"I was frail, skinny and daunting to the eye. This image frightened me. My family tried to help and had me admitted to SANCA Wedge Gardens," says JP.

He was initially admitted in December 2019, but sadly relapsed.

"I no longer wanted to be a failure to myself, my son, my family and to God. I prayed. I tried so hard on my own to fix my life, but it was not enough. Eventually, I realised that I needed help and guidance. That's when I called Wedge Gardens and begged to come back. By the grace of God I was allowed back there months later."

Thanks to Wedge Gardens' Full Circle Recovery Programme, JP now has his life back. "The programme was truly interesting, helpful and helped me to succeed. I found my true self again... A man that I am proud to be," says JP.

"I want so say a very special thank you to my psychologist and all the 'sisters' at Wedge Gardens. Without them, I don't think that I would be where I am today. Their belief in me helped me to believe in myself again. It helped me to choose to turn my life around and I will be forever grateful to all of them," he adds.

JP has been clean since 26 August 2019. "That's 589 days and counting. I still struggle every day, but with faith and the love and the support of my family and true friends around me, I choose me and I will not go backwards again," he says.

Come relax and unwind at Café on the Creek

Covid-19 had devastating effects on lives, livelihoods and businesses, including Lyn Duarte and Thali Rogolsky's six-year-old events business which came to a grinding halt.

Thali often visited her grandmother, who was at Ron Smith Care Centre recovering from a fall, and identified the need to buy groceries for and support other residents.

When she realised the potential of starting a coffee shop at Inyoni Creek retirement village, she approached management with a proposal.

"Inyoni Creek jumped at the opportunity as a coffee shop at our clubhouse, overlooking the stunning dam, has been on our bucket list for some time," says Inyoni Creek manager Jenny Tonkin.

Café on the Creek took shape quickly and officially opened its doors to Inyoni Creek residents and their guests, and all other Rand Aid retirement village residents on 15 April.

While Lynn runs the kitchen, Thali takes care of the frontline! "Residents and their families are very excited about the new venture and are so happy to be able to meet their families in such a beautiful environment, without even having to leave the village. It's so good to go down to the clubhouse, enjoy the vibe and share in the laughter and fellowship at Café on the Creek," says Jenny.



Lorraine van Zijl, Marie van der Merwe, Sheena Beauchamp and Hans Miekautch.

Meals can be eaten at the café or Inyoni Creek residents can order takeaways which will be delivered directly to their door. To place a takeaway order call 011 882 9138 by noon the previous day.

As for the future, the dynamic duo hope to introduce 'cocktail hour' and other activities soon.

The coffee shop has an a la carte menu and a 'meal of the day'. The menu will change every month, to keep delighting customers.

Congratulations to Inyoni Creek resident Sue Benjamin who took part in the competition to name Café on the Creek. Sue enjoyed a free lunch at the coffee shop as a tasty reward.

■ Operating hours and conditions remain Covid-dependant.

Holy Rosary learners write to Ron Smith Care Centre residents

Holy Rosary School teacher Barbara Cooper gave her Grade 7 girls a project... To write a letter to a grandparent. The aim was for them to learn how to write and correctly format a friendly letter.

Barbara hoped the letters would provide enjoyment to some of the residents at Rand Aid Association's Ron Smith Care Centre, but they did not expect any replies – of which they received a few!

Ron Smith Care Centre sent the names of 58 of its care centre residents to Barbara, who tasked the girls to write a personal letter to each of them.

Strict Covid-19 protocols were observed in terms of sanitising the girls' desks, pens and other stationery and envelopes, and the letters were delivered to the care centre on 6 April.

"I personally delivered the letters to each resident with an Easter chocolate, which everyone enjoyed. I wanted to explain who had written their letter and to witness and record our residents' reactions," says Debbie Christen, Rand Aid's manager of recreational services.

"It was a fascinating project to see 12- and 13-year-olds writing to elderly people, mostly in their 80s and 90s, as there's a large generation

gap," she adds.

"There is potential for developing the project to involve students and residents becoming pen friends and possibly visiting with each other after Covid-19," says Debbie.

"We have several former school teachers who received letters and said it was most interesting to see their responses," she adds.

Many of the residents commented on the students' lovely, neat print handwriting, which led to the observation that chil-

Some special responses

Marie Roberts from River Lodge 1 received a letter from Shac Lee du Plessis. "How sweet," said Marie. "She wouldn't believe all the things I've been through in my life. At 98, I've seen two World Wars, political and economic upheaval and I've had Covid-19, but I'm still here. My niece said they'd have to feed me arsenic to get rid of me," she laughs.

Sylvia Kree from River Lodge 1 received a letter from Raquel De Matos. "This letter makes me feel all shivery because she took the time to write such a caring letter. I want to cry. She's brought me such joy today," said Sylvia.



Joy Smith reads her letter.

dren don't seem to learn cursive writing these days – they all print. "This led to residents having memories of how they had to learn cursive writing in their school days and they remembered the pen strokes they had to learn in their writing class," says Debbie.

"Residents were asked if they wanted to read the letter out loud or if they preferred to be read to. This was a good opportunity for me to assess their reading ability and comprehension," says Debbie.

Dogs make life oh so sweet

Certain pets are welcome at some Rand Aid villages. Read more at www.randaid.co.za Click on the NEWS tab and scroll down to find the story.

Technology brings families together at Thembalami

The coronavirus pandemic has had a devastating effect on elderly residents living in care centres, especially during strict lockdown, as they were not able to see their family and friends and thus felt isolated.

"They were lonely and depressed, less interested in participating in organised events and activities and tended to keep to themselves. This just perpetuated the cycle. Some of our residents also showed a decline, not only emotionally, but mentally too," says Thembalami Care Centre social worker Lara Hurwitz.

To turn the situation around, Thembalami put measures in place to enable its residents to connect with family members via WhatsApp video calls.

This made a significant difference for many residents, including Maureen Wigoder



Maureen Wigoder speaking to her daughter Debbie Mendel in Israel via WhatsApp video call.

(85) who is now able to better communicate with her family in Israel via WhatsApp video call every Friday.

Previously a resident of Rand Aid Association's Elphin Lodge retirement village,

Maureen moved to Thembalami in 2020.

"While video calls are not the same as physical contact, they enable residents to actually see their family members and know that they have not been forgotten. They feel a connection with their family and have something else to focus on. Seeing someone physically has a bigger impact than talking to them over the phone. It is more personal and forms a greater connection," says Lara.

Debbie Mendel, Maureen's daughter, relocated to Israel for better study and work opportunities for her children.

"We decided to leave as a family unit, but my mother decided not to join us, even though she could have stayed with us and she was able to get access to Israel. Just as I respected her decision, she respected our reasons for making a new start,"

says Debbie.

While Debbie was able to speak to her mom on the phone, Maureen battled with video calls and sometimes didn't hear her phone ring.

"We used to call her every day, hoping she would hear the phone and answer. She also does not read her WhatsApp messages regularly. The staff at Thembalami reached out to me and suggested that they use their tablet for us to video call her. We set a day and time and ensure that the whole family is together. Then we speak to her one at a time. Our WhatsApp video calls are now about an hour long and it is a huge comfort.

"She always tells us how she loves seeing us on a larger screen, and appreciates the care and thought that was put into this new way of helping her to communicate with us," says Debbie.



Front: Ann Hooper and Joan Scott-Hayward. Back: Mel Stamelman and Lyn Taitz.

Inyoni artists celebrate their creativity

As Inyoni Creek retirement village is full of artists and aspiring painters, an art and painting group has been set up for artists to meet, exchange ideas, and paint together.

The group's first art and painting session was held recently and thoroughly enjoyed by all who took part.

The group, which meets at Inyoni Creek's clubhouse every Thursday from 2:30pm to 5pm (Covid-19 dependant), is being co-ordinated by Inyoni resident Mel Stamelman.

Participants supply their own materials and equipment. Rand Aid supplies trestle tables, chairs and sanitiser. All Covid-19 protocols are observed.

For more info or to book a spot, contact Mel at 082 454 4043.



Doreen Calder and Betty Ross delight in their Easter eggs.

Cracking Easter at Thembalami

An Easter egg hunt and a gift of additional chocolate goodies made Easter extra special for the residents of Rand Aid's Thembalami Care Centre, which incorporates the Max Ordman Deaf Association.

On 30 March, occupational therapy technician Neo Sefuthi hid marshmallow eggs in the garden, transporting residents to their childhoods and adding some magic to the day.

Two days later, on 1 April, 120 red and white bags filled with Easter eggs – which were donated by a good Samaritan – were handed out by Thembalami deputy manager Elize Raath to all residents.

"They loved the gesture," says Elize.

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.

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