

# Rand Aid RAND AID review

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Transparent and consultative:  
From the CEO's pen

3



Residents' holistic well-being:  
Here for your health

4 & 5



**CATCH US IF YOU CAN!** Who says retirement slows you down? Most of Rand Aid's residents strode the 1.5km route of the Busamed Prime Walk in under 20 minutes – leaving the breakfast caterers scrambling. Read all about this heart-pumping, friendship-kindling, belly-filling morning on page 8.

June Robinson  
and the HEARTS  
banner she  
created.



## This quilt is all heart

Handcrafted by June Robinson, this heartfelt banner brings Rand Aid's HEARTS values to life. Read more on page 11 »



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## Rand Aid powers ahead with smart solar and water solutions

In the face of mounting service delivery challenges, Rand Aid Association is turning adversity into innovation.

Regular power and water outages continue to affect daily life across South Africa. In response, Rand Aid has begun implementing large-scale, integrated alternative energy and water systems at selected sites, as part of a phased pilot project. Building on earlier initiatives, this broader approach aims to improve self-sufficiency, reduce utility costs and ensure more reliable access to essential services for residents.

"We realised by mid-2023 that we had to act," says Wim Pieterse, Rand Aid's GM of finance and services. "The added bonus is that we're not only protecting our residents from the inconvenience of outages, but we're saving on water and electricity bills too."

### New water system in place

Frequent water cuts as a result of prolonged load-shedding and failing municipal infrastructure had made the water supply at Rand Aid's villages and care centres unreliable. Though the organisation had water tanks, expecting elderly residents to cart containers around was neither practical nor safe.

A long-term solution was needed. After site visits and careful testing, a robust water system was installed and completed by the end of March 2025. It now serves Rand Aid's head office, as well as Inyoni Creek and Tarentaal villages.

At the heart of the system is a nine-metre-high tank with a 425 000-litre capacity, ensuring residents have access to water for up to a week during outages – at reduced pressure and with a temporary ban on garden watering. Water is pumped from the borehole to a central watering station and into the tank, passing through four filters to ensure it's 100% potable. The system is flexible too; it can switch between municipal water and borehole supply, depending on availability and need.

"The wonderful rains in late summer ensured there's plenty of groundwater," says Wim. "Since the system was ac-



**PHOTOS ON THIS PAGE:**  
The solar and water tank installations at Tarentaal, and Inyoni Creek deputy manager Marina da Looyen and social worker Michelle Matsolo in front of the huge water storage tank.



tivated, we've used over 2 665 kilolitres of borehole water."

Notably, residents at these villages have not experienced a single water outage since the system went live.

With this success, Rand Aid is now preparing to roll the project out to Thornhill Manor and, thereafter, Elphin Lodge.

### Solar brings relief and savings

Power issues, from cable theft to load-shedding and ageing infrastructure, also prompted Rand Aid to act. While security systems had long been backed up by generators, and some residents had installed solar water heaters, 2023 marked the beginning of a broader move toward solar energy.

Solar panels and inverters, though without batteries for now, have already been installed and are operational at

Tarentaal, with work at Ron Smith Care Centre 85% complete. Even though load-shedding is currently less severe, the shift to solar continues to deliver significant savings on electricity costs.

### A legacy of sustainability

Rand Aid's commitment to sustainability isn't new. Back in 2010, the organi-

sation adopted a green energy management programme. By 2012, they had reduced electricity consumption across all services by over 10%. Other initiatives over the years have included individual electricity metering and monitoring and the promotion of solar water heaters for residents – all part of Rand Aid's ongoing effort to reduce environmental impact and operating costs.

### Living the Rand Aid Way

These improvements speak directly to The Rand Aid Way, an ethos launched in early 2025 that encourages compassionate living and community empowerment. "This is exactly what the Rand Aid Way is all about," says Wim. "It's about proactive solutions, residents' well-being and creating a safe, supportive environment."

## Men toasted and 101-year-old celebrated

Inyoni Creek was filled with warmth and laughter on June 12, when residents gathered in the clubhouse for their monthly birthday bash.

Themed in honour of Father's Day, the event paid tribute to all the wonderful men of the village, complete with Irish coffees to take the chill off the winter day. But it was resident Billie Sack who stole the spotlight, marking her incredible 101st birthday on

June 9. Billie has called Inyoni Creek home for the past 16 years.

Born in Vereeniging in 1924, Billie has lived a rich and accomplished life. A former shorthand and typing teacher, she holds a music diploma from Trinity College London, has competed in national bowls tournaments, and is a skilled artist and bridge player. Known for her positive outlook and wit, Billie's zest for life remains as strong as ever.



**Billie Sack (right) celebrates her 101st birthday with friends.**

# FROM THE CEO'S PEN: SHAPING THE ROAD AHEAD – WITH TRANSPARENCY AND CARE

Dear residents of Rand Aid,

It's hard to believe that 11 months have passed since I became part of the Rand Aid family. I continue to be inspired and deeply impressed by all that has been built and achieved over the past 120-plus years.

The responsibility of maintaining and building on this legacy is something that the board and the management team take very seriously. From the outset, I committed to a new approach at Rand Aid, one that is both transparent and consultative. In keeping with that promise, I would like to clarify a few potential changes that have been proposed and are currently being considered by the management team.

I would like to emphasise that these strategic changes are being investigated to determine

their viability, cost-effectiveness, logistics, and, where applicable, how residents would receive them. Once this process is complete, the proposals will be shared with residents for input, and only thereafter will they be submitted to the board for approval.

The overarching goal is to ensure the sustainability of Rand Aid and to safeguard the investment and interests of each of you in this organisation during these ever-changing times. To achieve this, we have identified several short- and long-term strategies.

The purpose of this information piece is to discuss some of the shorter-term strategies that could be implemented either during the current financial year or at the start of the new year.



## Catering services

For many years, Rand Aid has operated a cook-chill kitchen where meals are prepared, blast chilled and sent to the two care centre kitchens and the Wedge Gardens kitchen to be reheated and served to residents on the allocated day. Some of the independent living residents have also ordered meals from the kitchen regularly, and they received the meal prepared on that day.

We are currently investigating whether to retain the current system, move to three individual kitchens (at each of the care centres and Wedge Gardens), or outsource to a catering service provider to operate either a centralised kitchen or three satellite kitchens. We have approached three of the most prominent catering companies in the retirement industry for proposals. Should the outsourcing option be chosen, it will include arrangements concerning the affected staff.



## Relocation of recuperative care

Currently, residents in independent living units are allocated 24 days of recuperative care – a service designed for those recovering from surgery or serious illness. In practice, the average stay for this service is only a few days at a time. To provide this care, part of a wing at Ron Smith is reserved and staffed. We are exploring the possibility of relocating this service to Thembalami, which would free up space at Ron Smith and, if implemented, could also positively impact the levies charged.



## Home-based care services

We currently have several residents in the independent living villages making use of private carers in their units. This has been identified as an area of concern. Rand Aid is responsible for the well-being of all its residents and must ensure that they receive the care they need, delivered to the same high

standard upheld throughout the organisation. By taking control of home-based care, we will be able to uphold this standard, protect residents from potential exploitation, and ensure their care is appropriate to their needs. In addition, this service could become an additional revenue source for Rand Aid.



## Assisted living

Rand Aid has traditionally offered only independent living and frail care to residents. In response to growing needs, we are now exploring the introduction of a service for residents who do not require frail care but would benefit from assistance with meals, medication, and daily living activities. Various options are being considered for this service, including incorporating it into the care centres and creating a 'supportive living' section at Tarentaal Village for those residents who wish to retain their independence while receiving some support with meals and other needs. This would enable us to offer a complete service across the full care and cost spectrum.

## Levy composition and the Levy Stabilisation Fund

We are reviewing the expenses included in the determination of levies for the life right villages, as well as the application of the Levy Stabilisation Fund. This fund was created to help alleviate the impact of extraordinary increases in costs that could affect levies. It was decided to allocate a percentage of the proceeds from the sale of life right units – after deducting the cost of upgrading the unit – to a discretionary fund held by The RA Welfare Development Trust. These funds were intended to subsidise and protect residents from exorbitant levy increases.

Having completed my first budgeting process at Rand Aid, I believe the fund is not being utilised as originally intended and has been a significant contributor to the high levy increases experienced this year. The levy increases have been exacerbated by various contributions from the fund over the past few years. We are currently investigating ways to use the fund differently to benefit residents more effectively and keep levy increases at a more sustainable level.



■ In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that none of these plans are a foregone conclusion but are merely being investigated for their viability before putting them forward for consideration by the board.

Please stay warm and safe – I look forward to engaging with you once we have more clarity on the way forward.

**KIND REGARDS,  
GERT COETZEE**



## HERE IS TO YOUR HEALTH

### Biokinetics: Supporting mobility and quality of life of residents

Since 2014, Rand Aid residents have benefited from the specialised care of biokinetics professionals, originally under the practice of Hannah Raath Biokineticists and now led by Julia Wright of Raath & Wright Biokineticists.

Julia, who took over the practice in 2023, brings with her nearly two decades of experience, having earned her BSc (Hons) in Biokinetics from the University of Johannesburg in 2006. With a strong focus on geriatrics and fall prevention, Julia and her team have played an integral role in helping older adults remain active, independent and confident.



**Julia Wright works with a patient.**

The biokinetics services are currently offered by appointment at three Rand Aid villages – Elphin Lodge, Inyoni Creek and Thornhill Manor. Individual sessions are held at designated on-site locations: a shared room at Elphin Lodge's Ron Smith Care Centre, the gym at Inyoni Creek, and the hall at Thornhill Manor.

While residents are encouraged to attend sessions in these dedicated spaces, ensuring access to equipment and the added benefit of movement and routine, the team also assists frail care residents

at Elphin Lodge who are unable to leave their rooms.

Julia is supported by biokineticist Tyra Haskell, who works across the villages during scheduled times, as well as a locum biokineticist at Inyoni Creek. The team is centrally managed from their Saxonwold practice, providing consistent communication and booking procedures regardless of location.

"Pre-Covid, group fall prevention classes were held at Inyoni Creek and Elphin Lodge, and there is a willingness to reinstate these if resident interest allows.

#### Benefits of biokinetics

According to Julia, biokinetics offers several key benefits for older adults, including improved muscle strength and endurance, better mobility, decreased pain, enhanced gait and co-ordination, and most crucially, a reduced risk of falling.

For those preparing for surgery, such as hip replacements, she stresses the importance of pre-operative conditioning and post-operative rehabilitation, explaining, "The stronger and more mobile you are before an operation, the quicker your recovery. Biokineticists help return patients to their pre-operative strength and function in the final phase of rehab."

Reflecting on her work, Julia shares a guiding principle: "Biokinetics isn't a quick fix – it takes work and commitment. But our aim is simple: to help residents achieve the best possible quality of life. Exercise done right is one of the most powerful tools for preserving independence and preventing falls."



**Tyra Haskell with Inyoni Creek resident Brian Berry.**

#### Hours of operation:

**Elphin Lodge:** Monday and Wednesday: 8am-12pm

**Inyoni Creek:** Monday and Wednesday: 8am-12:45pm, Tuesday and Thursday: 8am-5pm

**Thornhill Manor:** 12pm-4:30pm.



**Rand Aid resident Johann Miekautsch with physiotherapist Danny Joelson.**

### Veteran physio brings four decades of healing to residents

Physiotherapist Danny Joelson brings over four decades of expertise to Rand Aid's retirement villages, where she provides personalised treatment to help residents regain mobility, manage pain, and stay independent for longer.

Danny qualified with a BSc in Physiotherapy from the University of the Witwatersrand in 1979 and has completed numerous postgraduate courses, including neurodevelopmental therapy, electrotherapy, and pain management. She worked in spinal, sports, and general practices before joining Life Healthcare Rehab in 2004, where she managed adult neuro-rehabilitation until 2023.

Danny began treating Rand Aid residents more than 10 years ago and since 2019, has dedicated herself to serving the residents of Rand Aid. Today, she works with residents from Elphin Lodge, Tarentaal, Inyoni Creek, and Thornhill Manor, based in the physiotherapy and biokinetics rooms at Elphin Lodge. House calls are available for those who are unable to travel.

Danny treats a range of conditions common in older adults, such as spinal issues (like scoliosis and kyphosis), weakness from prolonged sitting, and pain linked to reduced mobility. Treatments are tailored to each person's needs and may involve equipment like the seated cyclemoto for wheelchair users, parallel bars for balance training and resistance tools like dumbbells and therabands for more independent patients.

#### Quality of life improved

A standout success story for Danny involved an Elphin Lodge resident who was still actively playing hockey when he developed pulmonary emboli and was hospitalised. He returned with a severely swollen left leg and drop-foot. Multiple specialists, including a neurosurgeon, prescribed a drop-foot splint and told him he would have to live with the paralysis.

"I had been treating him for other conditions during this time and suggested a treatment plan to try to restore strength in the foot," says Danny. "After four to five months of intensive lymphoedema massage and non-invasive pulsed radio frequency therapy, he regained full strength and mobility, without ever needing the splint."

This remarkable recovery is just one example of how targeted, consistent therapy can dramatically improve outcomes for older adults.

"Fewer falls mean fewer hospital visits," she says. "A good falls prevention programme includes balance and strength training. I also like to incorporate vestibular and eye-gaze exercises. It's important to help people understand their environment and make small changes, like removing rugs or rearranging furniture."

Danny's expertise in neuro-rehabilitation has equipped her to work with residents experiencing cognitive decline or low mood.

**Hours:** Monday–Saturday from 8am (closing time is dependent on bookings).



## HERE IS TO YOUR HEALTH

### Meet Dr Robyn Fyvie: Holistic and compassionate care

The doctor's rooms at Elphin Lodge have long been a cornerstone of care for residents – and since January 2025, they have been home to Dr Robyn Fyvie, a warm, approachable and skilled GP who brings a wealth of experience and a deep commitment to person-centred care.

Dr Robyn, as she is fondly known by her patients, treats residents from all of Rand Aid's villages, assists Dr Nadia Loewke at Ron Smith Care Centre when needed, and sees people from neighbouring retirement communities and the broader public.



Dr Robyn Fyvie.

Holding a medical degree with distinction from the University of the Witwatersrand, Dr Robyn has built a well-rounded clinical foundation through work in both the public and private health-care sectors. Her background includes emergency medicine and paediatrics, for which she holds a diploma, and more recently, a focused interest in geriatric and palliative care, with ongoing postgraduate study in these fields.

"I chose to specialise in the care of older persons because it's an area of medicine that requires both clinical skill and a holistic, thoughtful approach. It's deeply rewarding to help patients maintain their quality of life and independence as they age."

She works closely with the on-site physiotherapist and biokineticist at Rand Aid, forming part of a collaborative, multidisciplinary team. "Their expertise is invaluable in helping residents maintain strength, mobility, balance and overall well-being, all of which are essential to preserving independence and quality of life."

#### Holistic care

Caring for older adults, she explains, is very different from treating younger patients. "It often involves managing multiple chronic conditions, minimising medication side effects and prioritising functional ability and quality of life. It's about seeing the whole person, not just the diagnosis."

Common health challenges among residents include mobility issues, memory concerns, chronic conditions such as hypertension and diabetes, and mental health concerns like social isolation or grief. "Regular monitoring is so important – it allows us to intervene early and help prevent complications."

Over the past decade, Dr Robyn notes, there have been significant advancements in the early detection of conditions like dementia. "Improved diagnostic tools and imaging allow us to identify changes even before symptoms appear. New treatments are emerging that aim to slow disease progression rather than just manage symptoms."

"Beyond pharmacology, innovations such as cognitive stimulation therapy, music therapy, and structured physical activity have shown great promise in enhancing quality of life. Assistive technologies, including GPS trackers, electronic reminders and smart monitoring devices, now support safer, more independent living. Importantly, there is also greater recognition of the need to support caregivers and families, with more resources and integrated care models becoming available."

For Dr Robyn, it all comes down to connection. "I care about building strong, trusting relationships with my patients and their families," she says. "My goal is to make sure every person feels heard, respected and well looked after. And that they know they have someone on their side when it comes to their health and well-being."

**Practice hours:** Monday–Friday, 8am–2pm, with possible extension of hours to 4pm and on weekends in the future. Appointments: Hayley on 063 656 0203.



Screen legend Tobie Cronje during filming.

### Afrikaans rom-com filmed at Elphin Lodge

Lights, camera, action! There was plenty of excitement when film production company Rous House took over parts of Elphin Lodge in late June to shoot scenes for an Afrikaans romantic comedy.

While the title of the made-for-TV movie remains under wraps, what we can reveal is that it stars celebrated South African actor Tobie Cronjé, along with Carine Rous (*Elke Skewe Pot, High Rollers, Getroud met Rugby, Isidingo*) and singer-actor Bouwer Bosch (*Narratief, Hunting Emma, Beurkrag, Thys & Trix*).

Filming wrapped up at the village's clubhouse on Friday, June 20. Production trucks and trailers were tucked away along the road leading to the clubhouse, while the surrounding lawns buzzed with activity. Crew members with clipboards and walkie-talkies moved between catering tables and mobile monitor stations, weaving through cables, pop-up tents, and lavishly costumed extras relaxing in chairs between takes.

When the last of the day's filming started, the sun was setting and winter was biting. The cast shed their warm jackets at the last minute, while make-up artists fussed around the stars. Then, as the director called 'Action', Elphin Lodge's cameo came to a close – its familiar clubhouse now forever part of a romantic comedy South Africans will soon see on screen.



**Cheers to Tarentaal's mothers and fathers!** The retirement village held a combined celebration on May 29 to celebrate both **Mother's Day and Father's Day**. The entertainment committee organised a tea, and the ever-polished Matt Stern performed a variety of light classics and golden oldies, which were a hit.



## COMINGS &amp; GOINGS

## Ulricka Beukman leads with heart at RSCC

With a passion for people-centred care and a career rooted in social work, Ulricka Beukman has stepped into the role of manager at Rand Aid's Ron Smith Care Centre (RSCC).

Previously deputy manager at Tarentaal village, Ulricka brings both frontline experience and a compassionate leadership style to her new role, where she oversees the day-to-day operations of the 160-bed centre.

"My goal is to create a space where residents feel truly at home and their families trust that their loved ones are in capable, caring hands," she says. "This chapter of life should be one of dignity, meaning and connection."

A qualified social worker who joined Rand Aid in 2019, Ulricka is no stranger to the challenges and opportunities of elder care. Her time at Tarentaal, combined with experience caring for her own parents, has deepened her belief that ageing is not a decline but a time of continued growth and reflection.

"My background has taught me that every person holds inherent value," she says. "I see our care centre as a beehive,



**Ulricka Beukman.**

where every staff member plays a vital role in supporting the well-being of the whole. I believe in accessibility, dignity and an open-door approach to leadership."

In addition to overseeing logistics, administration and support services, Ulricka guides new residents through the admissions process and helps ease their transition into care. She is committed to breaking outdated perceptions of frail care and promoting a culture where residents feel empowered to live purposefully, regardless of their health or age.

During her time at Rand Aid, Ulricka has completed a palliative care diploma through the University of Cape Town, as well as a geriatric management qualification from Kennesaw State University in the United States. She also continues her training in the Eden Alternative's philosophy of person-directed care.

"Working across different Rand Aid villages has shown me how ageing can be a time of joy and discovery. At RSCC, I want to help create the kind of environment where those moments are possible."

## Leanie Bessinger appointed as RSCC nursing services manager

Following the passing of much-loved nursing services manager Avril Maltman in April, Ron Smith Care Centre (RSCC) has announced the appointment of Leanie Bessinger to the role. With a wealth of experience and a passion for geriatric care, Leanie steps into the position with deep respect for the legacy she inherits.

A registered professional nurse with nearly three decades in the healthcare field, Leanie brings a blend of clinical expertise and compassionate leadership to the post. She first joined Rand Aid Association in 2014 as the charge nurse for Riverlodge 1, RSCC's recuperative care wing, where she quickly distinguished herself through her calm competence and dedication to person-centred care.

"In 2020, when the Covid-19 pandemic hit, Avril took me under her wing and taught me everything about nursing management," Leanie reflects. "She helped shape who I am as a leader. To now carry her legacy forward is both a privilege and a responsibility I hold close to my heart."

Leanie's immediate priorities include strengthening person-centred care practices, supporting and mentoring the nursing team and maintaining high clinical standards. She aims to bolster communication between staff, residents and families to ensure transparent and trust-filled care.

"My focus is on quality, both in care and in relationships," she says. "Continuous staff training and open communication will be central to enhancing the well-being of every resident."

Since joining the Ron Smith Care Centre, Leanie witnessed several transformative developments, most notably the adoption of the Eden Alternative, a care philosophy that seeks to eliminate the loneliness, helplessness, and boredom often associated with institutional care.

"The Eden Alternative has shifted our culture entirely," she says. "It's created a space where residents feel truly seen and valued. That change has had a profound impact on me as a nurse and as a leader."

Before her time at Rand Aid, Leanie held positions at Medicross, NHC Healthcare, and in private general practice. From 2011 to 2014, she served as deputy nursing manager at Sandringham Gardens.

In her personal life, Leanie is an outdoor enthusiast who enjoys camping, fishing, and spending quality time with her family and pets.



**Leanie Bessinger with resident Mia Milburn.**

## Dancing departure for Ron Smith's recreation queen

Laughter and music filled Ron Smith Care Centre (RSCC) as residents, staff, and volunteers came together to bid farewell to Debbie Christen, who retired at the end of April as facilitator: recreational and training services.

True to her joyful spirit, Debbie danced from her office to the recreation centre, joined by staff she had taught to dance over the years. Her final procession reflected the happiness and connection she brought to RSCC through music and movement.

Throughout her years of service, Debbie used dance to unite teams and uplift residents, embodying the Eden Alternative philosophy of person-centred care. Simoné Botha, manager: occupational therapy and recreation, praised Debbie's commitment, calling her a mentor and teacher who inspired the team. Sr Leanie Bessinger thanked Debbie for her role in helping RSCC become the first African organisation to achieve Milestone 2 on the Eden Alternative® Registry, while Elphin Lodge manager Debbie Beech described her as 'dynamite in a small package'. Residents, including Irvine Sinnett, Charles Power, and Maureen Wollenschlaeger, shared touching tributes. Later, staff joined Debbie on the dance floor for a final spin to *One Way Ticket*, a routine she had taught them.

In her farewell, Debbie described her time at RSCC as 'a joy and a privilege', reflecting on the growth, joy, and deep meaning she found in championing the Eden Alternative and enriching lives through recreation.

**RIGHT: Resident Irvine Sinnett with Debbie Christen.**





## COMINGS &amp; GOINGS

## From struggle to service: Paulina bids Rand Aid farewell

After 41 years of dedicated service, Paulina Namo, head of nursing at Thembalami Care Centre, is retiring at the end of July, leaving behind a legacy shaped by resilience and compassion.

Paulina began her journey in Alexandra township, raised in a home rooted in faith and community service. Her father, Ranthite Namo, a teacher turned Anglican priest, believed deeply in the power of education and second chances. Her mother sheltered victims of domestic violence. It was a household where service was not a job, but a way of life.

When the 1976 Soweto uprising shut down schools, Paulina's uncle, Canon Leo Rakale, stepped in. Through church connections in the UK, Paulina was offered a rare opportunity: To continue her education at an Anglican convent school in Norwich, England.

"I was just 17, alone in a new country," she recalls. "British immigration interrogated me when I arrived, until my guardian, Hannah Stanton, who had been deported from South Africa for her activism, stormed in and demanded they stop. She made sure I was safe."

Despite having been in matric in South Africa, Paulina had to restart at Grade 10. She had never studied science, but a teacher encouraged her to take on maths, physics and chemistry. She passed her O-levels through the Oxford and Cambridge Schools Examination Board.

She trained as a nurse at Norfolk and Norwich Hospital. When she returned to South Africa in 1984, she was met with harsh realities. "I applied at Johannesburg Hospital and was told, 'Blacks are not allowed here.' They said I could apply as a cleaner."

Then she discovered Rand Aid, and what followed was a four-decade journey defined by purpose. Paulina began work at the Bramley Complex in November 1984. "The grounds were beautiful, the team was kind, and our house doctor assured me I was never alone. That inspired me."

She rose through the ranks, becoming night superintendent, and later led Thembalami's nursing team. Her compassion extended beyond duty: She ensured residents never died alone, mentored colleagues, and helped build a culture of dignity and professionalism.

Now settling in Highlands North, Paulina is looking forward to reading biographies, gardening, and spending time with her grandson.

"I've run my race with Rand Aid. Now it's time for my family – but being entrusted with Rand Aid's was an honour."

**Paulina Namo with Mahlatse Mokoana, a former care worker later trained as a paramedic and firefighter.**



## Remembering Avril: A life that touched Rand Aid deeply

Avril Maltman (64) will be remembered for her no-nonsense yet deeply caring approach to life.

The senior nursing services manager at Rand Aid, Avril passed away on April 20 after a battle with lung cancer.

Her dedication, compassion and strength left a lasting legacy at Ron Smith Care Centre (RSCC), where she



**Avril Maltman loved interacting with residents.**

was based. She was respected and loved by all who knew her, and her reputation for excellence was felt throughout Rand Aid.

"For 13 years, Matron Avril was more than a nursing manager – she was the steady hand that guided us and a true embodiment of care and leadership," says her colleague and friend, Matron Leanie Bessinger. "Her presence in the wings of Ron Smith brought comfort not only to the residents she served, but also to the colleagues who worked beside her. Her professionalism was matched only by her deep empathy – a rare combination that made all the difference to those in her care."

Avril joined Rand Aid in 2012, taking charge of medical interventions and nursing practices, initially at RSCC, but later extending to the organisation's retirement villages.

At the time, she was already known to staff and residents, having provided wound care services at Rand Aid while working for healthcare company Hartmann South Africa, which she joined in 1999. As Hartmann's national sales manager, she worked with care facilities countrywide, offering education and developing solutions for incontinence and wound management. She had extensive experience in public and private sector healthcare, including managing operating theatres in large hospitals.

### Matron in a million

"Matron Avril's work went beyond the clinical. She saw each resident not as a patient, but as a person – with stories, histories and dignity that deserved to be honoured," says Leanie.

Avril played a pivotal role in implementing the Eden Alternative at RSCC, helping it become a registered Eden Alternative home and a leader in people-centred care. During the Covid-19 pandemic, she was key to many of Rand Aid's successful interventions throughout the crisis.

"She took the time to listen and to notice the little things. For the families of our residents, she was a source of trust and reassurance. For the staff, she was a matron, a mother and a mentor and a role model. She was strict when it came to the quality of nursing in the care centre, but she wanted only the best for her residents," says Leanie.

Avril was a great animal lover, known for feeding the ducks at RSCC every morning. "Whenever one was sick, it was carted off to the vet by Avril. Candy, our office cat, loved her to bits and was always in her office," says Leanie.

"Thank you for your unwavering commitment to the values that make RSCC a place of true care. You will be deeply missed, but you will live on in the hearts of all you have helped."

■ After running Rand Aid's central kitchen for 25 years, **Steve Burton will be retiring** on August 31. Steve grew up in the UK and moved to South Africa in 1981. He spent nearly two decades overseeing the catering for the Kenridge hospital in Parktown before joining Rand Aid, where he was responsible for the preparation of more than 35 000 meals a month. We wish Steve all the best for his retirement.



## COMINGS & GOINGS

### Elizabeth retires after 38 years of service to MODA

After nearly four decades of unwavering dedication, Elizabeth Nomasonto Binda retired from the Max Ordman Deaf Association (MODA) at the end of May.

Born in Volksrust on April 25, 1965, Elizabeth was the eldest of five children. She began working at the age of 16 on a local farm before relocating to Johannesburg at 18, where she took up domestic work. Her journey with MODA began in 1987 in Bedfordview, where she served in various roles, including laundry assistant, cleaner, and escort for residents visiting clinics and hospitals.

Over the years, her dedication and compassion saw her rise to the role of housekeeper. When MODA relocated to Thembalami Care Centre in Lombardy East in June 2016, her presence proved invaluable. "She was an asset to Thembalami as none of the staff at that time could communicate with the residents. As she was able to communicate in sign language, it was a huge help. She was self-taught and already familiar with the residents, which helped with the transition," says Thembalami manager Esme van der Walt.

Beyond her housekeeping duties, Elizabeth played a vital role in supporting the deaf community, assisting during mealtimes, translating at resident meetings, and celebrating birthdays.

A mother of four and grandmother to eight, Elizabeth is known for her humble, quiet nature and love for gardening. As she enters retirement, she looks forward to spending more time at home and with her family.

MODA and Thembalami have expressed their heartfelt gratitude for her years of dedicated service and wish her all the best in this next chapter. "She will be dearly missed," say the team.



Elizabeth Binda with MODA resident Gail Lester.



**Pictured: Diane Reid and Margaret McFadden enjoy their time together at Tarentaal Retirement Village's Easter tea on April 22, where the spirit of the season was as vibrant as the bonnets on display. Twenty-eight residents went all out to create colourful, whimsical and often humorous hats for the annual celebration, reflecting the village's strong sense of community and fun. The well-attended event was filled with laughter, conversation and a delicious spread of cakes and sandwiches, making for a warm and memorable afternoon.**



**Pictured: Wendy Ridley (middle), her husband Christopher (right), and her sister June Bates display their homegrown produce at Tarentaal Village's monthly market on April 11. The event, held every second Friday of the month, draws residents and visitors alike with its mix of hand-made goods, clothing, curios and tasty treats. A white elephant stall and refreshments like scones and flapjacks raise funds for the central residents' fund, while music and an ice cream van add to the festive atmosphere. The market is a beloved tradition that fosters community spirit and connection.**

### Boerie rolls for a cause: Thornhill Manor serves up support for Alzheimer's awareness

Who can resist a boerie roll – especially for a good cause? On May 2, Thornhill Manor hosted a food market to raise funds and awareness for Alzheimer's. Residents enjoyed boerewors rolls and pancakes, with proceeds supporting the village's annual World Alzheimer's Month efforts.

While the mood was light, social worker Karen Griessel used the event to raise awareness about the communication challenges faced by people with dementia. "It's the disease, not the person, causing the change," she explained.

#### To help make communication easier, you can:

- Speak calmly, listen patiently, and reassure the person. Acknowledge their feelings and help them feel heard.
- Allow the person to keep as much control in his or her life as possible.
- Respect the person's personal space.
- Build quiet times into the day, along with activities.
- Keep familiar objects and photos nearby for comfort and security.
- Remind the person who you are if he or she doesn't remember, but try not to say, "Don't you remember?"
- Encourage a two-way conversation for as long as possible.
- Try distracting the person with an activity, such as a familiar book or photo album, if you are having trouble communicating with words.



The boerie bandits: Kathy Waage, Esther Brain and Dale Cherrington. Purchasing is Ken l'Ons.



## Foodie fun that kept guests guessing

They didn't know where they were going. They didn't know who they'd be dining with. But they did know one thing – it was going to be fun.

Held on a chilly evening on May 21, the Fun Food Fundies progressive dinner warmed hearts and appetites as 27 Thornhill Manor residents took part in what can only be described as a delicious adventure, organised by Brenda Bromfield – and it turned out to be an unforgettable evening.

Strict rules of secrecy kept everyone guessing, with locations revealed only moments before each course. This element of mystery added to the excitement throughout the evening.

While the full format of the evening remains a closely guarded secret (we wouldn't want to spoil the fun for next time), one thing is certain: Good food, good company, and a good dose of suspense make for a winning recipe. Brenda hopes the event will become a regular part of the Thornhill calendar.



Ian Buchanan, Val Tyrteos and Mary Davidson.

## Sweet Easter for RSCC residents

Laughter, music and chocolate filled the halls of Ron Smith Care Centre as residents celebrated Easter in style.



Big smiles from Sanele Ndlovu and Frank Kantor.

Wearing colourful bonnets, residents rolled giant dice in a fun-filled Easter egg hunt, with each roll leading them to a hidden prize. Handmade goodie bags – crafted the week before – were filled with chocolate treats and shared throughout the centre.

"The fun continued all week," says Simoné Botha, the manager, occupational therapy and recreation. "Residents decorated Easter-themed biscuits with pastel icing, which they enjoyed during recreation sessions."

The week wrapped up with a nostalgic screening of Easter Parade, adding a final festive touch to a memorable celebration.



Shirley and John Sandison, residents of Inyoni Creek, and a friend, Eileen Halpern of Tarentaal village, enjoyed a lively card game after a leisurely lunch prepared by Good2Go at the village's waterfront clubhouse recently. If the game looks unfamiliar, that's because it was brought back by the Sandisons from a recent trip to France.

## Watch out ladies, Len has thrown his hat in the ring

Thornhill Manor's Easter Bonnet Parade, held during the village's monthly tea, was a joyful celebration of creativity and community spirit. Organised by the entertainment committee and led by Maggie Bold, the April event featured 12 enthusiastic contestants showing off everything from delicate floral designs to over-the-top creations.

A festive atmosphere was created with beautifully decorated tables and lively support from fellow residents.

In a fun twist, Len Larson became the parade's first male entrant – and won the prize for the Funniest Hat.

Other winners included Enid Dixon (Prettiest Hat) and Vicky Keenan (Most Appropriate Hat).

"This event reflected the Rand Aid Way – encouraging participation, connection and joy at every age," said deputy manager Jackie Scott.

## Bridging the generations with bingo and laughter

Thembalami Care Centre and MODA welcomed members of the Johannesburg Junior Council's sports and recreation committee for a morning of bingo, tea and heartwarming connection on April 13.

The visit bridged generations, blending youthful energy with the wisdom of experience. "Intergenerational connections spark joy and purpose for both age groups," said deputy manager Elize Raath.

Five games of bingo were played, with residents teaching their young visitors how to play. "It was great mixing with those lovely, intelligent young people," said resident Heather Abrams.

"Our residents' hearts were warmed and reminded that their generation is still cherished," said recreation assistant Babalwa Gadala.



Tumi Maepe and Ben Gorton with Dorah Mapekula and Sarah Richards.



The winners were Len Larson, Vicky Keenan and Enid Dixon.



# Make Rand Aid rock!

If you've spotted a colourful rock tucked into a tree, peeking from a flower bed, or hiding in the clubhouse at Elphin Lodge, you're not alone – and you're in for a delightful surprise!

What started as a mystery has blossomed into a village-wide movement of creativity and connection. Inspired by the popular 'Cape Town Rocks' initiative, an anonymous Elphin Lodge resident began placing brightly painted rocks around the retirement village earlier this year. Each rock features cheerful art and a sticker that reads: 'Elphin Rocks – keep me or re-hide me'.

The idea is simple but powerful: Paint a rock, place it somewhere around the village, and wait for someone to discover it. The lucky finder can either keep the rock as a memento or re-hide it for someone else to enjoy. It is a little treasure hunt with a big heart!

Soon after the first few rocks appeared, the Elphin Lodge Art and Craft Group jumped in with paintbrushes at the ready. Jenny Sella, the group's co-ordinator, was thrilled by the response.

"We were all enchanted by the idea," Jenny shares. "Even the guys are loving it! Usually, people start fidgeting toward the end of a session, but when we painted rocks, I had to tell everyone it was time to pack up because no one wanted to stop!"

Armed with acrylic paints and Sharpies, the group transformed ordinary rocks into colourful works of art, from cartoon sheep and playful ducks to whimsical flowers, butterflies, and joyful splashes of colour. The rocks are first painted with a base coat, which needs to dry before decorating. Impatient artists found a clever solution: Drying the rocks in the microwave. "Let's just say we've discovered the secret of hot rocks!" laughs Jenny.

The ripple effect has been felt across the village. One day, a staff member discovered a painted rock in reception and, thinking it had been left behind, went looking for its owner. Instead, she uncovered a beautiful act of anonymous goodwill.

Now, painted rocks are popping up everywhere – in the library, at the clubhouse, even nestled in unexpected corners of the gardens. "It brightens your day when you find one," Jenny says with a smile. "It's such a simple way to spread happiness."



Jenny Sella with one of the painted rocks.

**Residents across Rand Aid are encouraged to get involved and make this a Rand Aid Rocks initiative.** "Whether you're a painter, a seeker, or someone who simply loves a surprise, join in the fun! Grab a rock, get creative, and add your art to the growing collection – let's 'cross-pollinate' the rocks across the various villages," says Elphin Lodge manager Debbie Beech.

"Paint whatever you like and remember to add the wording: 'Keep me or re-hide me'."

## It's The Rand Aid way!

This joyful initiative perfectly complements The Rand Aid Way, an ethos officially launched by the Rand Aid Association earlier this year. Elphin Lodge deputy manager, Hlumela Anderson, explains that this campaign is about more than just values. It is about creating a fulfilling way of life. "The Rand Aid Way encourages strong relationships, personal growth and a sense of belonging," says Hlumela. "Projects like Elphin Rocks show how residents are living these values, bringing colour, joy, and connection into everyday life."

## A SONG, A SMILE AND A DANCE AT THORNHILL MANOR



Dawn and Brian Burls on the dance floor shortly after he shared that they would soon be celebrating their 60th wedding anniversary.

Thornhill Manor resident Brian Burls took his wife of nearly 60 years, Dawn, for a spontaneous dance during a sing-along held at the village on April 14.

The event was organised by fellow resident and retired occupational therapist Vicky Keenan, who runs the Happy Chatters group. The group meets weekly for games, movement, and brain-boosting fun.

Brian and Gavin Standing provided the entertainment, singing old favourites that took residents on a trip down memory lane. A slideshow preceded each song, with guests guessing the next tune from visual clues.

"Music is powerful," says social worker Karen Griessel. "It brings back memories, boosts mood, and promotes well-being. Singing releases feel-good hormones that reduce stress, anxiety and depression."

The nostalgic afternoon ended with tea, cookies and Easter eggs from Vicky. Residents from Thembalami Care Centre and the Max Ordman Deaf Association also joined in the fun, continuing the tradition

of shared activities across Rand Aid's villages.

"Thembalami residents had a fantastic time," said Elize Raath, deputy manager. "They especially loved the sing-along and sweet treats."



Back: Maureen Otnes (Thornhill Manor resident) with Peggy Kupa and Shirley Sibeko (Thembalami Care Centre staff members). Front: MODA residents Cathy Turpin and Cecilia Röttcher.



# Rand Aid's HEARTS campaign reflects global standards for elder rights and care

A colourful, hand-crafted quilted banner now greets visitors at the Thornhill Manor office – a heartfelt contribution from June Robinson, a talented resident known for her quilting skills.

This beautiful gift displays a series of hearts that represent the core values of Rand Aid Association's HEARTS campaign and reflects the organisation's alignment with international and national standards on the rights and responsibilities of older persons.

Shaun Victor, Thornhill Manor's manager, says the HEARTS campaign promotes honesty, empathy, accountability, respect, trust and sensitivity. "It encourages teamwork and support while emphasising the importance of creating a safe and inclusive environment. We aim to make these principles part of everyday life at Thornhill, and June's banner

gives them a visible form."

Unveiled as part of The Rand Aid Way, officially launched in February, the HEARTS campaign reinforces a shared commitment to these core values across all Rand Aid villages and care centres.

**Building on this initiative, the campaign reflects the foundational principles outlined in the United Nations Principles for Older Persons, including that:**

- Older persons should be able to live in environments that are safe and adaptable to personal preferences and changing capacities,

- Older persons should be able to pursue opportunities for the full development of their potential, and

- Older persons should be treated fairly regardless of age, gender, racial or ethnic background, disability or other

status, and be valued independently of their economic contribution.

It's also aligned with the Declaration on the Rights of Older Persons (independence, participation, care, self-fulfilment and dignity) and with South Africa's Older Persons Act 13 of 2006 and its supporting regulations, which recognise that older persons are vital members of society, with both rights and responsibilities.

"June's contribution captures the spirit of our community," says Jackie Scott, deputy manager at Thornhill Manor. "Her banner makes our shared values visible and vibrant, reminding us daily of the compassionate environment we are building together. The HEARTS pledge lays out the responsibility each resident can take to help create a supportive and enriching environment at Rand Aid."



## A framework of rights and responsibilities

The HEARTS values are not only a vision for interpersonal relationships, but they also echo statutory regulations under South Africa's Older Persons Act, specifically those governing support services. These regulations place equal importance on rights and responsibilities – a balance that ensures older persons live in dignity and safety while actively contributing to their well-being and that of the wider community.

**Key principles** include the right to be treated with dignity and respect, protection from abuse and exploitation, and the right to participate in the planning and delivery of services. Just as importantly, older persons and their families are expected to remain as self-reliant as possible, engage positively in community life and avoid actions that may endanger others.

"The Rand Aid Way is about embracing a culture of mutual respect and empowerment," says Amanda Diener, Rand Aid's GM: commercial and compliance. "We encourage residents and their families to take an active role in shaping their community, echoing the legislation and the global call to uphold older persons' rights."



## Living by the values of community care

Launch events held in February at Thornhill Manor, Elphin Lodge, Thembalami Care Centre and SANCA Wedge Gardens treatment centre saw residents and staff come together in celebration of the campaign. The events were marked by the unveiling of coloured hearts across villages, inspiring curiosity and discussion. Participants were invited to sign the HEARTS Pledge, a public commitment to embodying the campaign's values in their daily interactions.

"By committing to these principles, we create **an environment where older persons can flourish**," says Ayanda Matthews, GM of care and human resources. "The Rand Aid Way not only ensures that elders are supported and respected, but it also encourages staff and families to uphold these standards in their roles."

"Residents, staff and families all have a part to play," adds Shaun. "Whether it's through creative expression like June's quilt or everyday acts of kindness, we are all responsible for making Thornhill Manor – and Rand Aid – a place where people feel safe, seen and supported."

## Wedge Gardens clients look back – and forward – in Youth Month

Youth Month was commemorated with thoughtful reflection at SANCA Wedge Gardens treatment centre, where clients were invited to pause, look back – and look ahead.

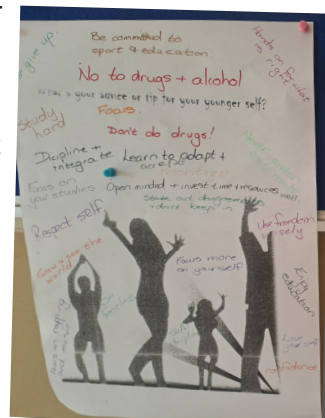
Caryn Berman, the centre's occupational therapist, led the session and noted that only a handful of participants were even born in 1976, the year of the Soweto Uprising that Youth Day honours. "It was interesting to hear why the younger generation thought it important to have a Youth Day," she said. "But first, a quick history lesson was necessary – very few of the men knew what the day commemorates."

Once up to speed on the historical context, each participant was asked to write down a message of advice to their younger selves. The responses, now pinned to the centre's noticeboard in bright colours, paint a picture of regret, growth and hard-won wisdom.

**Some of the advice offered was heartfelt and deeply personal:** 'Don't do drugs!', 'Be committed to sport and education', and 'Respect yourself'. Others encouraged discipline, open-mindedness and self-love. A few cautioned against bottling up emotions: 'State out disagreements – don't keep them in'.

Next came the flip side of the exercise: What can we learn from today's youth? Here, the answers were varied and sometimes surprising. Participants admired the younger generation's confidence, their embrace of technology and their ability to break away from mainstream thinking.

"The charts now serve as a visual reminder of how important it is to learn from both our past and present," says Caryn. Two of the charts that show SANCA Wedge Gardens' clients' Youth Day reflections.







**Nurses and care workers were celebrated at Thembalami Care Centre in commemoration of International Nurses Day.**

## Thembalami and MODA celebrate nurses with candlelight and gratitude

Staff at Thembalami Care Centre and the Max Ordman Deaf Association (MODA) were honoured during a heartfelt belated celebration of International Nurses Day on June 4.

International Nurses Day is officially commemorated on May 12, Florence Nightingale's birthday.

The delayed celebration didn't dampen the spirit of appreciation as the nursing staff and care workers were all recognised for their dedication and compassion.

Each staff member received a thoughtful gift bag as a token of gratitude.

Thembalami's management also contributed small gifts to round off the surprise, while tea and cake made for a celebratory close. The programme included the lighting of a symbolic candle, representing Florence Nightingale, the iconic 'Lady with the Lamp', who brought comfort and care to injured soldiers by lamplight during the Crimean War.

"The candlelight ceremony paid tribute to her enduring legacy and to the spirit of care that continues to burn brightly in today's healthcare professionals.

"In a gesture of inclusion, both nurses registered with the South African Nursing Council and care workers at Thembalami and MODA were honoured. Two pledges were read aloud – one for care workers, and another for professional nursing staff – reaffirming the values that define their profession: honesty, integrity, ethics, loyalty, compassion and trust," says Thembalami's manager, Esme van der Walt.

"As the flickering flames were passed from one to another, staff were reminded of the passion and purpose that brought them to this calling. My prayer today is that by saying the pledge and lighting the candles, we will once again ignite the passion and commitment in our hearts to remember why we chose this profession," she adds.

## Stories told through hoodie art

In a creative exercise, clients at SANCA Wedge Gardens took part in a unique occupational therapy session in June, one that asked them not only to express who they are, but also to colour their identities.

Led by occupational therapist Caryn Berman, the 'Design a hoodie' activity gave each participant a drawing of a hoodie with prompts like 'A word I would use to describe myself', 'Something I love', and 'My dream holiday destination'.

Once the questions were thoughtfully answered, the real fun began: Colouring and decorating their hoodie designs to reflect their personalities, dreams and inner journeys.

"The men embraced this activity," said Caryn. "It was amazing to see how creative they became once they started engaging with the exercise. Some of the answers were funny, some touching – but all were honest."

The centre now showcases a colourful gallery of hoodies, each one telling a unique story. There are tributes to family, aspirations to be motivational speakers, dreams of visiting faraway places and reminders of the simple joys of life – from pizza and music to self-respect and helping others.

Each hoodie offers a glimpse into a life in recovery, a life filled with both challenge and hope. "It would be wonderful to have these made into real hoodies one day," Caryn said. "They are so much more than artwork – they're personal roadmaps that reflect courage and creativity."



## No coffee as Wedge kicked the habit for a week

From June 23 to 29, SANCA Wedge Gardens took part in the national Kick Your Habit campaign – a week-long challenge encouraging people to give up a daily habit to understand substance use disorders better.

The goal? To raise awareness about the difficulties faced by those living with substance use disorders.

"Addiction isn't a lack of willpower – it's a chronic brain disease," said Wedge Gardens' Adél Grobbelaar. "Giving up something like coffee, which the Wedge team did, or social media helps people grasp just how tough recovery can be."

## BRING THE FAMILY FOR THORNHILL'S FAMILY FUN DAY AND FETE IN OCTOBER

Thornhill Manor retirement village invites the community to its much-loved family fun day and fete taking place on Saturday, October 4, from 9am to 1pm.

Expect a bustling morning filled with irresistible bargains, delicious eats and entertainment for all ages. Visitors can browse a wide range of stalls offering everything from baked goods, pickles and preserves to handcrafted items, books, jewellery, kids' clothing, deli treats, and home décor.

Families will be delighted with the jumping castle, while food lovers can enjoy favourites such as boerewors rolls, egg and bacon rolls, curry and rice, pancakes, German food and re-

freshments in the tea garden.

Shoppers can also look out for recycled cards, handmade Christmas tags and crowns, perfumes, honey and bee products, leather goods, handbags, and pampering treats. Live music by the popular Rudi van Niekerk will set the tone for a lively, feel-good atmosphere.

All funds raised will go directly to the Thornhill Manor Village Fund, where residents themselves decide on projects that will enhance the quality of life in the village.

For more information, contact Jackie on 011 608 2480 or email [jscott@randaid.co.za](mailto:jscott@randaid.co.za).