

THEMBALAMI & MODA

CARE CENTRE

RAND AID
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Place of hope

JAN 2026



FESTIVE

JOY

Laughter, music and heartfelt tributes set the tone at the Thembalami and Max Ordman Deaf Association (MODA) Christmas party on December 12, as residents, staff and volunteers came together to celebrate the season.

Social worker Lara Hurwitz says each resident received a placemat featuring their photo and name, captured by a professional photographer who also took individual portraits. "Residents were thrilled to see themselves on the placemats and can't wait to hang their welcome signs – featuring their portrait and name – on their doors," she says.

Manager Esme van der Walt opened the festivities with a warm speech. "Today is a day filled with gratitude, togetherness and a reminder of what truly matters. Each of you carries a lifetime of memories, wisdom, and stories that enrich this home every day. Your presence is a gift," she said.

Bags filled with toiletry items were gifted to residents by Hotel Amenities Suppliers, a division of Bidvest Services, at the annual Christmas party. Pictured are Elize Raath (Thembalami deputy manager), Takalani Ndou (Thembalami receptionist), Olga Ngobeni (Hotel Amenities Suppliers), and Esme van der Walt (Thembalami manager).

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MUSIC, TREATS AND GOOD COMPANY



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CHRISTMAS WISH LIST BRINGS JOY



JAN BIRTHDAYS

Residents:

- 04 Theunis de Bruin
13 Marianne Venter
17 Bettie Nieuwoudt

Staff:

- 01 Agnes Ngobeni
02 Glory Ndlovu
03 JT Ndou
03 Pamela Langa
06 Prudence Teme
18 Lizzy Ratema
21 Fortune Makhuvele
26 Lydia Pitsi
30 Maria Lephallala

WELCOME TO:

Jeanette Green
Dolfie Koekemoer
Johanna Waldeck

REST IN PEACE:

Pauline Jaros



ABOVE, LEFT TO RIGHT: Barry Waldeck (MODA). Nellie and Terence Green dancing. Entertainer Juan Jacq Oosthuizen.

December-born residents honoured at birthday bash

Entertainer Juan Jacq Oosthuizen filled the hearts of residents at Thembalami Care Centre and Max Ordman Deaf Association (MODA) with music on December 17, during the monthly birthday celebration.

As is tradition, everyone with a birthday in the month was honoured, wearing

birthday hats and enjoying the spotlight as guests of honour.

Boksburg resident Juan has been performing for more than a decade and ascribes his talent to his faith.

His music, coupled with the treats and warm company, made the event as fun as always.



With the countdown to Christmas in full swing, three Thornhill Manor residents – Gavin Standing and Trevor and Val Corin – arrived at Thembalami Care Centre on December 18 to lead the residents in **carol singing**. “Gavin recited the story of Jesus’ birth, weaving the carols together through the Christmas narrative,” says Thembalami occupational therapist Tsakani Shihlomule. Pictured are Trevor, Val, resident Amanda Brown and Gavin.

“Beautiful young people are accidents of nature, but beautiful old people are works of art.”

– Eleanor Roosevelt



ABOVE: Basil McIntyre (MODA).

LEFT: Ben Matthee.



Gertrude Xabanisa.



Maureen Henstock.

Joy as residents and staff celebrate Christmas

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Esme also acknowledged the MODA residents. "We may communicate differently, but your joy, energy and spirit light up this home. You are an important part of our family, and we celebrate you today with love and gratitude."

She thanked staff for their dedication, volunteers for their generosity, and everyone who helps create a place of dignity and warmth.

Entertainment was provided by Ruan Tennant, a regular at Thembalami events. "Your music brings joy, energy and a festive spirit to our residents," Esme said.

A delicious Christmas lunch was served, followed by the presentation of 110 gift bags, donated by Hotel Amenities Suppliers, a division of Bidvest Services, each filled with personal toiletries.

In a touching tribute, a ribbon bearing the names of residents who passed away this year was displayed on a Christmas tree, allowing their memory to be celebrated alongside the festive cheer.

Esme concluded the day with gratitude: "May today remind us that this centre is more than a facility – it is a home built by all of us. A place where every person matters, and where we celebrate life in all its stages, with dignity, respect and love."



Deputy manager Elize Raath with entertainer Ruan Tennant.



Anette Verskin (MODA resident).



Merle and Errol Townsend.



Gone but not forgotten. The names of residents who passed away this year were printed on a ribbon and hung in a Christmas tree as a heartfelt tribute, ensuring their memory shines brightly during the festive season.



Thembalami manager Esme van der Walt and Matron Violet Ngobenl loaded with gift bags for the residents.



Jo Bayliss and Maureen Wigoder.



Deputy manager Elize Raath and MODA resident Lesley Nuyten.

Wishes come true for residents

Christmas is often described as a season of joy and generosity. Yet, for many older persons living in care settings, particularly those without family support, the festive season can be a time of quiet loneliness and unmet need. It was with this awareness that Karen Griessel, the social worker at Rand Aid's Thornhill Manor retirement village, initiated a Christmas outreach to Thembalami Care Centre, also run by Rand Aid.

The outreach was centred around a simple but powerful idea: A Wish Tree created to support residents of Thembalami and the Max Ordman Deaf Association (MODA).

"A Christmas tree was placed in the reception area at Thornhill Manor. Each tag on the tree represented a resident from Thembalami or MODA, including their name along with a small, meaningful wish idea for gifts.

Our residents responded with heartfelt generosity. Many expressed how meaningful it felt to know exactly who they were buying for, transforming gift-giving into a personal act of kindness rather than an abstract donation," says Karen. "The Wish Tree also sparked conversations about gratitude, empathy and shared humanity, reinforcing the understanding that ageing is a journey we all share," she adds.

To ensure that no resident was left out, part of the funds that Vicky Keenan, a Thornhill Manor resident and trained social worker, had raised throughout the year for her occupational therapy (OT) group was used to help subsidise some of the wishes. "Vicky needs to be praised for her ongoing heartfelt approach in life to be kind, giving and caring," says Karen.

She adds that the Christmas outreach was more than a charitable initiative; it was a reminder that dignity does not depend on circumstance, and that community care extends beyond the boundaries of one's own village."



Thornhill Manor and Thembalami Care Centre staff members with Thembalami residents. On the left: Refilwe Phoshoko (Thembalami OT student), Esme van der Walt (Thembalami Care Centre manager) and Tommy Woest, with Rebecca Sithole seated in front of him. On the right, back: Lara Swanepoel (Thembalami OT), Peggy Kupa (Thembalami OT assistant), Christine Human (Thornhill frontline staff member), Karen Griessel (Thornhill social worker), Vicky Keenan (Thornhill Manor resident and an OT expert) and Shirley Sibeko (Thembalami OT assistant); front: Regina Ratshosana, Robbie Webster, Nellie Dlamini (Thembalami staff member) and Mary Mathurine.



Resident Jeanette Green with her gift.

Wooden Christmas tree a sparkling example of festive goodwill

The spirit of paying it forward is alive and well at Thornhill Manor retirement village, where a group of dedicated residents have taken a simple act of generosity and turned it into a ripple effect of goodwill.

What began as the donation of a two-metre wooden Christmas tree by a former Thornhill Manor resident who recently immigrated to the United Kingdom has blossomed into a heart-warming project that now brings joy across the Rand Aid community.

With creativity and teamwork, several Thornhill Manor ladies lovingly restored, decorated and painted the wooden tree, giving it new life and renewed purpose. And in keeping with the festive season's true meaning, the beautifully transformed tree will now be donated to Thembalami Care Centre – located just 6.5km from Thornhill Manor.

Karen Griessel, Thornhill Manor's social worker, said



Thanyani Nevari (driver, Thembalami Care Centre), Jerry Mofokeng (groundsman, Thembalami Care Centre), Karen Griessel (social worker, Thornhill Manor) and Tony Peters (Thembalami resident and helper).

the project perfectly reflects the long-standing bond between the two Rand Aid-run facilities. "Thornhill and Thembalami share a caring relationship built over many years, supporting each other through outreach and companionship. This thoughtful gesture is a beautiful reminder that the Christmas spirit is not found in grand gestures, but in communities caring for communities," she said.

"For many, this time of year can be emotionally difficult, but the colourful, handcrafted tree promises to brighten their living space and lift spirits," says Karen.

Esme van der Walt, the manager of Thembalami Care Centre, expressed gratitude for the gesture. "The gift embodies the spirit of giving and goodwill that characterises the festive season, and its

cheerful presence truly lifts the spirits of both residents and staff," she said.