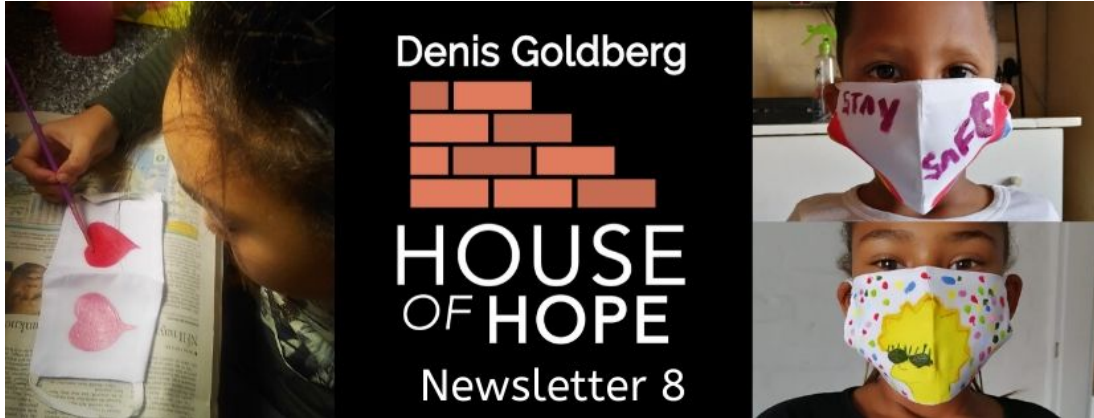


NEWSLETTER ISSUE 8

June 2020



In this newsletter you will find:

- A tribute to Denis Goldberg from our chairperson, Andre Oosthuizen
- A summary of completed activities
- Our plans during the lockdown
- The excellent news and photos showing that construction of the Denis Goldberg House of Hope has started at last!

DENIS GOLDBERG – A FIGHTER TO THE END

by ANDRÉ OOSTHUIZEN S.C.



The passing away of Denis Goldberg on 29 April 2020 generated a flood of tributes and condolences. These came from persons in positions of leadership, from ordinary citizens, from friends. Many of them contain an eloquence and beauty which I cannot match. These paragraphs are, therefore, my own tribute, brief and humble, to this great South African.

I first met Denis Goldberg five years ago. I have an extensive involvement in community upliftment projects in the Hout Bay Valley where I live, and was vaguely aware of his role in the political struggle, in the doings of Umkhonto we Sizwe in the early 1960s, and of his tireless efforts on behalf of the ANC during his years of exile. I approached that first meeting uncertain and perhaps apprehensive, expecting to meet a firebrand, a devoted-to-the-cause politician, someone with whom I'd probably have little in common.

I was surprised. What struck me the most, in those early days of my friendship with Denis, was his gentleness. He was the grandfather each of us wish for – always available to listen, self-deprecating, unusually wise, tolerant. It was, initially, difficult for me to reconcile the Denis that I learnt to know with the image of a bomb maker, underground activist, campaigner for the overthrow of governments.

But then I grew to understand that Denis's involvement in the struggle of the 1950s and 1960s was but another facet of the kind, compassionate nature he constantly manifested, as a community upliftment activist. I grew to know that his core value, throughout his life, was the refusal to accept injustice, in any form, and a determination to combat oppression whenever and wherever it manifested itself.

I was honoured when, in 2016, Denis invited me to join the Board of Trustees of the Denis Goldberg Legacy Foundation Trust. It was his dream that the Trust would raise the funds and commission the building of the House of Hope, an arts and culture education centre which would play an ever-increasing role in empowering and enriching the lives of the children and youth in Hout Bay, the broader Cape Town area, and elsewhere. It is with great pride that I reflect on the fact that, due to the efforts of Denis, a suitable site was made available and sufficient money raised. The soil-breaking ceremony, at the site where the House of Hope will be erected, took place in March 2019. Denis attended.

Over the years I learnt to understand and value other facets of Denis's character. For present purposes, I highlight four of them. Firstly, he had an ability to listen, to allow others to state their views. In discussions relating to the affairs of the Trust, he disagreed, at times forcefully, but he was always prepared to allow others the opportunity to speak their minds, and was willing to be guided by opposing views if those views were based on fact or logic. That said, it is also true that Denis never did suffer fools gladly, and it was necessary to assemble facts and muster cogent arguments before you could get him to change his stance.

The second very prominent feature of his make-up was his sense of humour. It was a dry, often indirect type of humour and you had to do a bit of thinking to grasp the joke, but it was always there. Shortly after his initial cancer diagnosis, he suggested to me that he should send a letter to all House of Hope supporters and well-wishers, reading "*The doctors have told me I've got terminal cancer. I'm dying. Don't send flowers. Send money. House of Hope bank details below*". Having told me about his proposed message, Denis laughed. Heartily. That message (which was never sent) illustrates the Denis Goldberg sense of humour.

The next attribute of Denis which I want to mention was his persistence. Denis did not give up. The Denis Goldberg House of Hope will be erected on land belonging to the Hout Bay Museum Trust, and the donation of the land required approval from the Western Cape

Provincial Government and the Hout Bay Museum controlling authorities. Obtaining that approval involved an 18-month negotiation process. The die-hard and dogged persistence of Denis, throughout that period, was phenomenal. His skill at emailing, phoning and badgering the various functionaries who had to sign off on the project was a lesson to all of us on the practical application of the slogan, “*Never give up*”.

That brings me to the last of the Goldberg personal traits which I’d like to mention. Courage. The life of Denis Goldberg exemplified the type of courage towards which we should all aspire. It took great courage to join the underground liberation struggle; to face the possibility of a death sentence during the Rivonia trial; to spend 22 years in prison because of the political and humanitarian beliefs he held; to stand up, often exercising influence behind the scenes, to the corruption which scarred the political leadership of the country under the previous president; and to fight the growing cancerous tumours in his body.

Denis faced these and many other challenges which arose during his lifetime. He did so unflinchingly, unwaveringly.

He was a fighter to the end.

THE LOCKDOWN ACTIVITIES

Before lockdown

Newsletter 6, which we issued in January, reported on our plans for 2020.

On the positive side, the concert on 13 February took place as planned in a large marquee on the tennis court of the Hout Bay Museum. It was a very special event – and included Denis’s last public address. We will be posting a 40-minute video of the event on our website very soon.

Together with experienced art teacher Ruth Sack, we also held the planned two days of workshops with art teachers from Hout Bay schools and organisations to introduce them to the Imbali set of art books. At least one of the teachers implemented what she had learned very soon afterwards – and sent us photos of the children’s products to show off about what her learners produced.



Unfortunately, we have not been able to get as far with other planned activities as we would have liked.

We held the first few weekly sessions of the book-sharing programme with a new group of parents of preschool-age children. As before the parents welcomed learning new ways of engaging with their children and enjoyed the time spent sharing experiences with others. They also appreciated the Snoekies fish and chips! We could not finish the sessions once the lockdown was in place, but were able to share the four books that Mikhulu Trust made available online over four consecutive weeks.

We kicked off the regular hip hop classes. On the first Saturdays, Jazzart students and our teacher, Liam Smith, demonstrated their skills to an audience of admiring children and their parents. The next few Saturday saw two age-based classes of children honing their own skills under Liam's guidance. But all this had to be suspended as the lockdown took hold.

A similar fate befell other children who, through the Denis Goldberg House of Hope's partnership with the Cape Cultural Collective, join children from other areas in weekly practices for the Rosa Junior Choir. We also had to cancel the holiday programme and pottery classes we had planned for the March holidays.

We are determined that all these planned activities will still happen – but not right now.

Linking Up during Lock Down

After the lockdown was announced, we were determined to do our best to retain some contact with the children and families who have participated in our previous activities.

Just before the lockdown started, we packed two boxes full of children's books. One box went to Noma Matiwane, our regular volunteer in Imizamo Yethu. The second went to Hangberg-based Kaylee Farmer, an EPWP worker seconded by the Hout Bay Museum to assist with our activities. We contacted all the parents for whom we have whatsapp numbers to tell them that each child could choose one book. We included some sanitiser for the families, and sanitiser and gloves for Noma and Kaylee.

Some weeks into the lockdown we distributed 50 art packs provided by the Butterfly Art Project in the same way. And in late May, Lavinia sewed 66 (!) plain white child-sized cloth masks, which she made up into packs containing a mask, small amounts of basic colours in fabric paint, a paintbrush, and instructions on how to decorate the masks. Each family received three of these packs.



We have quite a few further ideas brewing, and plan to deliver packs on a weekly basis from now on.

On the more practical side, we have partnered with Ingoma Choir to participate in the monitoring of government's delivery of basic services – water, toilets, refuse collection and soap and sanitiser – in informal settlements that is being coordinated by the International Budget Partnership (IBP). The Asivikelane project (<https://www.internationalbudget.org/covid-monitoring/>) has – for Imizamo Yethu in particular – contributed to some important improvements in availability of clean water.

All the above prove that you can place the Denis Goldberg House of Hope in lockdown, but you cannot dampen our enthusiasm, drive and commitment to the cause of taking Denis's work forward.



DIY - Paint-your-own-mask

With Denis no longer with us, we will be working twice as hard to ensure that a strong legacy endures. And with the builders having started digging on the site of the Hout Bay Museum, the physical structure of the Denis Goldberg House of Hope is on the near horizon. **Now, more than ever, we hope that we can count on your support so that we can offer more and ever-better opportunities for the children and youth of Hout Bay.**



Donate to the Denis Goldberg House of Hope

If you are donating from **outside South Africa** you may find it convenient to send your donation by credit card to our **UK website GoFundMe**.

GoFundMe

If you wish to donate directly:

Denis Goldberg Legacy Foundation Trust

Nedbank

Account Number: 1146197411

Branch Code/Sort Code: 167609

SWIFT Code: NEDSZAJJ

If donations are paid into our bank account in cash or via EFT please email your name, the amount, and date to dglftrust@gmail.com.

If you are in **Germany** you can support us via **Community Heart e.V**

Details:

Community HEART e.V.

Sparkasse Essen – IBAN: DE60 3605 0105 0001 8002 00 – BIC: SPESDE33XXX

Stichwort: Denis Goldberg Stiftung

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#lifeiswonderful

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