



Denis Goldberg House of Hope

Newsletter no. 28

May 2025

FULL SPEED AHEAD AFTER A DISRUPTIVE APRIL

April was a chaotic month for everyone. It started in the middle of the short school holiday, and then was full of public holidays, long weekends, and the extra three days that the public schools were closed between Freedom Day and the weekend following May Day.

Very few of our child beneficiaries come from families with the means to go on holiday over these periods. We therefore tried to continue with our activities whenever feasible. And while we did not have activities on the extra three holiday days, five of the Hout Bay Hoppers joined us on their usual Wednesday afternoon for an informal knitting lesson! We also continued uninterrupted with our scheduled Saturday hip hop and ScienceMakesArt sessions.

Since 5 May it has been all systems go again! Holidays can be fun, but so – we hope – are sessions at the Denis Goldberg House of Hope.

A SLITHERY HOLIDAY PROGRAMME



Our holiday programme ran from 31 March to 2 April. The topic was snakes. The focus expanded a bit on the first morning when we had a visit from Bjorn of the Reptile Garden. Bjorn brought with him brown house snake Tequila, Andean milksnake Andy, gargoyle gecko Chunky, Dumerils boa Zeraph, albino reticulated python Snuggles, rock monitor Lazass, and tortoises Speedy and Rocket "Slowpoke". We got to touch and hold all the visitors for whom it was safe for them and us. And we had to guess whether Speedy or Slowpoke would win their race. Most of us guessed incorrectly because Bjorn had lied to us and called Slowpoke Rocket.

During the programme, the children made a range of different craft snakes as well as a finger-knitted snakes. You will see some of the craft snakes on display if you visit the DGHOH. They had a dance session with Ricardo Koopman. They learned and tried to mimic the four different ways in which snakes move, and learnt a snake dance. They listened to and read David Walliams "There's a Snake in my School". And they played many physical and other games.

At the start of the programme some children were hesitant about having snakes as a topic for the three days. Some were openly frightened about the idea of having snakes and other reptiles coming to visit, let alone touching them. We hope that the three days left them more knowledgeable about and admiring of these creatures, while remaining respectful and careful when appropriate.

Many thanks to Mr and Mrs Johnson, Snoekies and Massimos for assisting with the meals. And thank you to the Scott Estate and Baviaanskloof Community Improvement District for telling us about snake shows and paying for Reptile Garden's visit.



GETTING STARTED ON COMPUTERS

Middle-class parents might worry about their children spending too much time on their cellphones. Meanwhile relatively few of our beneficiaries have cellphones, and some also do not have cellphones in their homes. When they do have cellphones, they may well not have data or airtime. And even if there is a cellphone, they will usually have had little, if any, exposure to computers. The transition from cellphone to computer is also not seamless.

It is therefore not surprising that our basic computer courses have proved popular. Our programme assistants Caitlyn Johnson and Nikita Blouw facilitate the course, which consists of four consecutive sessions on a Friday afternoon. Over the period the participants are taken through the basics. They start from learning how to turn the computer on and off, and then progress through the basics of word-processing, spreadsheets and presentations. By the end of the four sessions they are certainly not experts. But they do know the basic concepts and skills that will help them move beyond whatsapp and Tiktok.

So far this year all the participants in our computer courses have been local high school students. However, unemployed youth have also expressed interest in the course, and we will be organising a course for them in the near future.

After an hour hunching over the keyboard and concentrating, participants are welcome to join Friday afternoon's session of China's Fitness Club.

CHINA'S FITNESS CLUB

In our February newsletter we reported on a new activity – China's Fitness Club. The activity targets high school learners. It includes a range of different fitness exercises led by Sivuyile "China" Somniso, together with piloxing – a combination of Pilates and boxing movements – led by our coordinator and ex-sports coach, Chamaine Solomons. The sessions are on a Friday afternoon. They allow learners to "work off" the tensions of the school week and bounce into the weekend with energy and movement.

China worked with us as a programme assistant under an Expanded Public Works Programme contract in 2023. He is now studying through the University of South Africa (UNISA) for an accountancy degree. In between studying, he works with us as well as local youth development organisation Sakhisizwe. In addition to facilitating the Fitness Club, China also assists with Saturday hip hop sessions and with our holiday programmes.

China became interested in fitness during his high school years. He grew increasingly dedicated to it after realising how it positively impacted his physical and mental well-being. He believes that fitness is about more than just physical health; it's about building resilience, discipline, and confidence. He explains: "That is why I'm passionate about helping others reach their goals."



GUITAR WITH LARRY

Another new addition to our 2025 repertoire is weekly guitar lessons facilitated by Larry Strelitz, assisted by Lynette Steenveld. The participants are children who previously participated in our Thursday group music-making sessions with Mulalo Mphulaphuli.

The children's interest can be seen in the way they hold their instruments, the concentration on their faces, and the seriousness with which they watch what Larry shows them. They have some way to go before they will be able to perform for others, but seem keen to conquer this "grown-up" instrument.

SCIENCE MAKES ART

Our ScienceMakesArt sessions take place every third Saturday afternoon during term times. So far this year we have had sessions on magnets, eggs, Moebius strips, and water magic. Our session this Friday will tackle balance and gravity.

Each two-hour session includes a series of experiments followed by a related art activity. We choose experiments that use everyday and inexpensive materials. We hope this will allow at least some of the learners to repeat the experiments themselves and demonstrate them to others. In the session which had eggs as a topic, the children painted the shells of boiled eggs with vinegar mixed with food colouring. This way they had the fun of painting, and could also eat the egg afterwards.

The learners are from different schools and from grades 5 through 7. Our intention is not to follow any set school syllabus, but instead to stimulate interest in and fascination with our everyday world. We hope also to encourage the question WHY and possible answers.

Sometimes the experiments work well first time. Sometimes they don't! When they don't, we try to find reasons and, where possible, try again. And where one table of learners succeeds and others have not yet done so, the success of the first table serves as a model and as encouragement that the experiment really CAN work! And then the excitement when your own experiment works.

Because the combination of science and art in this way is still relatively unusual, we are compiling a manual to which we add a description of each session as we plan it. A community-based organisation in Madagascar was the first excited recipient of our manual.

Big thanks to Jane-Claire Bester of the Cape Town Science Centre for offering ideas for experiments for whatever topic we have dreamed up for a session.

PAYING FORWARD

Please donate and help us continue what we are doing at the Denis Goldberg House of Hope

DONATE

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

US-based donors can donate through Omprakash.

UK-based donors can also contact Omprakash about how to make a donation that is eligible for Gift Aid.

OMPRAKASH

If you wish to donate directly, our bank details are:

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 send your name, the amount, and date to dglftrust@gmail.com. Please let us know if you would like us to send you a section 18A tax certificate.

We are fortunate to be among the many organisations that currently benefit from funding from the National Lotteries Commission (NLC).



The NLC relies on funds from the proceeds of the National Lottery. The Lotteries Act guides the way in which NLC funding may be allocated. The NLC wants the grants to make a difference to the lives of all South Africans, especially those more vulnerable and to improve the sustainability of the beneficiary organisations. Available funds are distributed to registered and qualifying non-profit organisations in the fields of charities; arts, culture and national heritage; and sport and recreation. By placing its emphasis on areas of greatest need and potential, the NLC contributes to South Africa's development.



#lifeiswonderful

Our mailing addresses are:

dghoh@goldberghouseofhope.co.za

dglfttrust@gmail.com

Denis Goldberg Legacy Foundation Trust

Newsletter no.28 May 2025

This email was sent to [Email]

why did I get this? [unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription](#)

Denis Goldberg House of Hope · 4 Andrews Road, Scott Estate, Hout Bay, 7806 Cape Town, South Africa