

Denis Goldberg



Denis Goldberg House of Hope

Newsletter no. 29

August 2025

The Goldberg brand is growing!

Two new Goldbergs have been added to the family over the last few years. Denis's first great-grandchild was Rafael, now 3½ years old. His second great-grandchild is Gwen, born on 31 July of this year. The picture shows proud granddad David with both Rafael and Gwen - the first produced by daughter Katy, and the second by daughter Jane.

July was also a busy month in Hout Bay. The first three weeks of the month were school holidays and we utilised the time well for special activities for our beneficiaries, as well as for staff.



Our Mystery Holiday Programme

As usual, we ran a three-day programme for 30 local 9-12 year olds in the first week of the holiday. The topic was inspired by a story-writing competition organised by City of Cape Town libraries. The competition asked that children write and illustrate stories related to finding a mystery box between the shelves of a library. The box was covered with strange symbols and made a humming sound...

Our programme activities revolved around mystery (and detectives), symbols, humming, and boxes. It included group and individual writing games and exercises, as well as arts and crafts, games, reading, dancing and movement, singing, and more. Some of the (humming!) bumble bees made by the children are now on display in the DGH0H gallery. The children took their jack-in-the-boxes, salt-dough mystery boxes and other artefacts home with them.

We were pleasantly surprised to see the children's willingness to write and to use their imaginations in "mysterious" ways. Unfortunately, we did not have enough time for the children to complete a 500-plus word story during the programme, and none of them have as yet completed a story to submit for the competition. But we and they were proud of what they produced.

Thanks are due to Mr and Mrs Johnson, Snoekies and Dario's for assisting with the meals, and to Ricardo and Roxy for facilitating the movement sessions.



Year Two with EBE Students

In the second week of the holiday we hosted two groups of students from the faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment (EBE) at the University of Cape Town (UCT). Close on 100 students visited the DGHOH to learn a bit about Denis Goldberg, who was a student of engineering at the same university three-quarters of a century ago, as well as to hear and see what the DGHOH was about.

The students visited as part of their course in social engineering. The course is facilitated by Alison Gwynne-Evans, who guides students in thinking up, designing and implementing short projects in poorer communities.

This is the second year the DGHOH has benefited. In 2024 one of the student groups designed and then delivered a three-day coding course using Scratch, a free visual programming language developed for children by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. We confirmed with Alison that we would welcome another such course this year. Students Lilitha, Nauthy, Tom, Sandile, Evans, Katlego and Tokelo used the materials and learnings from 2024. They succeeded in retaining 12 of the 13 young people through the three days of the programme. A definite success that we will be happy to repeat again next year.

This year we had a second group of UCT students who did their project at the DGHOH. During the second term we received a large plastic container of LEGO blocks from another organisation that, sadly, was forced to close. We asked if some of the students would be able to explore with staff how LEGO could be used with children and youth of different ages. Our request seemed especially appropriate given that they were studying in the EBE Faculty.

Dimpho, Michelle, Karabo, Busisiwe, Avuyile and Tokelo designed and facilitated a wonderful two-hour session with us. We as staff, together with a local primary school teacher and her husband, were the “learners”, and the students were both our facilitators and, at times, our playmates. We enjoyed a packed programme of different activities, and the students left us with a presentation that offered more ideas for using LEGO in group activities. One staff member who at the start said she did not really like LEGO, by the end of the session wanted to get some LEGO for herself.

Outings to Beyond Hout Bay

We organised four different outings for beneficiaries during the holidays, each targeting a different group of regular participants in our term-time sessions.

The first group to benefit was regular attenders of our drama sessions, who went to watch “Jack and the Beanstalk” at the Baxter Theatre.

The second group was made up of regular attendance in our weekly circus skills session. They saw “Chasing Dreams”. The performance included acts by Zip Zap’s Zappers. These are children, some of similar age to our beneficiaries, who attend three sessions each week at Zip Zap and whose commitment and skill makes them clearly performance-worthy. The Zappers performed alongside students in Zip Zap’s four-year post-school vocational programme, and Zip Zap’s world-class professional performers. Having performers on each of the three steps in the circus ladder could not but be inspirational for our circus kids.

The third and fourth group attended Saturday morning “Science of Cooking” (or “Hack the Kitchen”) sessions at the Cape Town Science Centre. The sessions were organised as part of Cape Town’s Food Indaba. During the session children were asked to identify five or six different substances, ranging from hibiscus to impepho. After each was identified, the children made and tasted tea, and then ice-cream, made with the different flavours. Big thanks are due to the SA Urban Food and Farming Trust for giving us complimentary tickets for these sessions, and to the Science Centre for suggesting us.

Dramatic Development

Since the beginning of the second term our weekly drama sessions have been facilitated by Zimasa Dyani. Zimasa grew in Imizamo Yethu. After completing her schooling, she studied drama and teaching at UCT, and she is now the full-time creative arts teacher at Imizamo Yethu's Disa Primary School.

After her first few sessions with the DGH OH children, Zimasa started workshopping with them a short performance piece inspired by a poem. The piece includes elements of drama, movement, and music. This means that alongside the acting, the children have created original choreography and musical moments that reflect their energy. Zimasa explains proudly that, while the piece is still a work in progress, "it's shaping up beautifully and is already showing real promise in terms of personal expression, collaboration, and performance growth." She notes further: "It's been a joy to facilitate them." Meanwhile it's a joy for the DGH OH and the children to have Zimasa as one of our facilitators.



Our Space

Over time our smaller, circular round activity room has effectively become the DGHOH “clubhouse”. The space has a small snooker table, a table football game, beanbags and chairs. For many of our beneficiaries, it is the go-to place when they have time before or after one of our sessions. If it is not raining, others prefer to trampoline. We recently purchased a second trampoline that is high enough to accommodate older - and larger - children, and helps us enforce the one-person-at-a-time rule.

Denis always envisaged the centre as a space of beanbags. He would surely be pleased with how it is now being used and “owned” by local young people.

We have some ideas for further improvements, including a wooden climbing frame-jungle gym for the upper-level space where we already have the two trampolines. ***Please do consider making a donation towards such improvements.*** You can mark such donations as “Our space”, or send an email to dghoh@goldberghouseofhope.co.za, so that we know to put the donation into this special pot. General donations are, of course, also always welcome!

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

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