



Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard

NEWS LETTER

No. 15

July 1998

Blessed Gérard's Care Centre and Hospice proves more and more to be the right project at the right time in the right area.

Reading the AIDS statistics of our days for our area is like a horror movie and there are still many who deny the facts, because they think this is the way to prevent panic.

- Six million South Africans will be infected with HIV by the year 2005.
- Most of them will come from kwaZulu/Natal.
- In the same year the number of people in the country living with full-blown AIDS will have reached a staggering 1,5 million.
- The HIV infection rate in kwaZulu/Natal is at 26,6 % (according to the National Department of Health).
- The national infection average is 16 % (according to the latest national HIV antenatal survey).
- Last year's figure was 14 %
- Already 150000 people have died from AIDS in kwaZulu/Natal in the past seven years.
- It will only take another two years for that figure to double.

- Research has shown that by the year 2014, when AIDS mortality is at its peak, 130000 people will be dying each year.
- Last year alone AIDS killed more people in the province than all other causes together.
- By 2006 the cumulative total of AIDS deaths in kwaZulu/Natal will have surpassed one million.
- And by 2016 the number will reach two million in absence of a cure.
- South Africa has grown from having one of the lowest infection rates a few years ago to currently having the fastest growing epidemic on the continent (according to Dr. Garth Japhet).
- It is estimated that between 40 and 50 million people globally will have the HIV virus by the year 2000.

(Source: Daily News, 4 June 1998)

- AIDS-tests at Empangeni (80 km from Mandeni) show, that 45% of the patients tested are HIV positive
- Sundumbili Clinic tested 60 % HIV positive in 1998
- An industrial nurse at a big factory in iSithebe estimated that 80 % of their employees are HIV positive and
- A nurse at Stanger Hospital told us, that she thinks, that 100% of the patients in her ward are HIV-positive.

We cannot prove these statistics or estimates right or wrong and we do not mention them to show off with our disaster. We also do not know why our area is considered the worst in South Africa as far as HIV infection is concerned.

When we planned and built Blessed Gérard's Care Centre and Hospice in Mandeni, we certainly were not aware of the real extent of these developments. Our main aim was to assist the many patients with all kinds of diseases who are not sufficiently cared for by their families. Now, as we are up and running for nearly two years we realise more and more, that we have just done the right thing, at the right time, in the right area.

Call it a lucky coincidence or divine providence: The AIDS wave is hitting with vengeance and we are ready and prepared with our staff and volunteers, in a very functional and well equipped building, to help those, who would otherwise suffer from neglect on top of AIDS.

It is our shocking experience that many families just want to get rid of their relative suffering from full-blown AIDS. This is a total contradiction to the good old tradition in Zulu society, that sick family members are normally looked after quite well. We found that it is mostly fear and lack of knowledge how to handle an AIDS patient without running the risk of getting infected oneself. Our home nursing care is therefore combined with counselling of the family members, teaching them where and how to be cautious and where there is no danger, so that they can care for their relative without fear and resentment.

AIDS and traditional healers

Another area of concern is, that most of the Zulu in our area will trust rather in their traditional healers than in modern medicine. This would not be a problem, if they would just be given herbal substances, which would at least make them feel better subjectively. But if the medicine-man makes multiple incisions with a razor blade in the skin of an HIV positive person, to rub "medicine" into the wounds (which is a very widely spread "treatment") and uses the same razor blade in the same way for the next patient, the "cure" of the one becomes the lethal side-effect for the next.

A further complication is that about half the AIDS patients have Tuberculosis of the lungs, but many refuse to take the appropriate medication, for lack of understanding, that this is indispensable to inactivate TB.

Other people's care is jeopardised by the traditional belief that inducing vomiting would "clean the system" and thus any oral medicine given by professionals is rendered useless by this practice.

Yet another difficulty in our care giving is the attitude of many people, who fear death and the inability to witness and cope with suffering and therefore ostracize their dying relative.

Far worse is the widespread rumour an HIV positive patient could rid himself from the deadly virus through having intercourse with a young virgin. Countless rapes of girls from as young as 3 years upwards are the sad consequence. Words cannot describe the horror for these children: The bodily mutilation, the psychological trauma and finally the HIV-infection.

There is a formidable amount of education and care to be given, as fears cannot be treated with threats or punishment, but information and reassurance.

The Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard was recognised as a training institution for the practical training of Social Workers.

It is with pride and joy to share the news that we have been recognised as an institution for the practical training of Social Workers by the Fachhochschule (Specialised University) of Coburg, Germany. This is a special acknowledgement of the holistic approach to the social needs of the people in our comprehensive system of care. We expect the first student – Mr. Niklas Rohlf – for his 40-weeks practical training in September this year. He is already learning Zulu and waits for his study visa.

May we introduce to you, our Volunteers from "Overseas"?



- **Sr. Barbara Saranac** and
- **Sr. Nayda Del Moral** from Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

The Federal Association of the Order of Malta in Washington sponsored the fares for both of these nurses, who worked in Blessed Gérard's Care Centre & Hospice for one month, but have already left for home.

- Sr. Barbara Sarenac wrote to us:

Well we are home at last and safe thanks for the prayers. The flights were all fine until we left Chicago to Milwaukee. That was a scary ride, a lot of dips and drops. When we got to the airport in J'Burg all the lights and computers went down for a short time, was hoping that we weren't going to get stuck there and we didn't. We had a lot of running around to do, ... My kids and husband, and yes the two babies were at the airport and I cried I was soooooo happy to see them. Father, ... my films are just great ... Sister Sophie and Stephan: I truly miss them a lot. If any or all of you have ringing ears its cuz

I talk about our good times to everyone. ... I'm still tired today, jetlag only I hope ... Well, it's very hot here, 90's (i.e. >30° C), and humid. You know the way I sweat. ... Please send my love and best to all,

I remain,



Sister Barbara



Sister Nayda Del Moral

- **Herr Stephan Killian** from Passau, Germany. Mr. Killian is a volunteer paramedic for Malteser-Hilfsdienst and has given up two months weeks of his time to help us.



He introduces himself:

Grüß Gott!

My name is Stephan Killian and I'm 22 years old. I've left Germany on June 20th and I'm going to stay in Mandini for 2 months. Why did I come to South Africa? Well, I've got to wait 'til April '99 when I will start training as a male nurse and so I've thought why should I wast this time. I've heard

about the Care Centre via the Internet and I've decided to take this chance and gain some experience in a foreign country. Besides I wanted to extend my knowledge as a paramedic and nursing assistant by helping needy people in a different environment than what I'm used to. My hobbies are jogging, making music and reading.

Stephan Killian

- **Marie-Sophie Freiin von Venningen** from Osterberg, Germany, a nursing assistant, will also work with us for eight weeks



She introduces herself:

My name is Sophie von Venningen. I am 21 years old and from the South of Germany. After I graduated from High School last year, I made an apprenticeship as a dressmaker this year and I attended a training as a nursing auxiliary at Malteser-Hilfsdienst to come here to South Africa, to Mandeni, to see the people and their needs and I hope I can help them where my help is needed.

Sophie von Venningen

- **Herr Björn Peters** from Heusweiler, Saar, Germany is a volunteer fire fighter and advanced first aider who has also given up three months of his time to come and help us before going home to begin his studies to become a medical doctor.



He introduces himself:

Hello!

I'm Björn Peters and I'm 20 years old. I come from Germany near of Saarbrücken. Until July 1997 I have attended a High School in Völklingen/Germany. From September 1997 until June 1998 I have had to do military service in the German Air Force. In October 1998, I will begin my studies at a medical school in Germany. I work as a volunteer helper in the Care Centre of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard in Mandeni, so that the time between the end of my military service and the beginning of my studies is not wasted. I have done First Aid training and I have worked for one month in a hospital in Germany to get practical training for my studies. I came to South Africa because I want to improve my knowledge. In addition to this, I want to get acquainted to other cultures and a different country.

Björn Peters

On behalf of our organisation and the people who we help, we would like to express our sincere appreciation for the time they have sacrificed and hard work which all the volunteers have done. It is very difficult to single anyone out for a special effort, as each and every one has his or her own special talent and contributes accordingly.

**David
Dempsey
Dunn**

**Politely
Pleads:
Please**

**Make
Me
Mobile!**



David Dempsey Dunn Was given ten days to live. His family had asked Blessed Gérard's Care Centre and Hospice to admit him, to spend his last days of life in the best possible care and enable him to have a dignified death.

But God had other plans for him –

His state of health improved day by day when he was in our care, so that after three weeks he was strong enough to undergo a life saving operation (amputation of both legs) in hospital and after some further days of recovery and rehabilitation in our centre he has gone home.

The medical staff at the hospital called him their „miracle baby“. Call it what you like, it is indeed amazing, to see Mr. Dunn looking so well.

The family have requested that we, the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard, help them to raise the funds needed to make Mr. Dunn not only well, but mobile again.

The funds will go towards buying Mr. Dunn a wheelchair. Should there be any balance, it will be used to reimburse Blessed Gérard's Care Centre and Hospice for the cost of three weeks of full-time intensive hospice care and various ambulance transports to and from Empangeni and Eshowe hospital.

If you like to help, please send your donation directly to:
Blessed Gérard's Care Centre and Hospice
Attn: „Dempsey-Dunn-Fund“
P O Box 440
4490 Mandini
(Cheques may be made out to: Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard)

Yes, it is true

- that Blessed Gérard's Care Centre and Hospice is on call 24 hours per day, 7 days a week.
- that we provide rehabilitation for people recuperating from illnesses.
- that we provide day care for sick people of any age.
- that we render home care for ill people in their homes.
- that we are a hospice.
- that we rely on donations of the patient and /or family or any other generous soul.



The Local Group of Active Members in Mandini/Mangete becomes even more active.

I am happy to share the news with you that many of our members expressed the wish to meet on a more frequent basis. During our monthly meeting for active members in June, it was unanimously decided that we would meet every Tuesday night at 19:00 hrs at Blessed Gérard's Care Centre & Hospice instead of the monthly Saturday meeting.

These meetings will have a triple function:

1. To discuss normal business and make decisions.
2. To undergo on-going training in the field of working in the care centre and hospice, including driving and manning the ambulance. (We have decided to begin first aid instructions for our active members).
3. To get to know each other on a social level, therefore becoming more a community (brotherhood) of people with a similar spirit.

The members themselves will supply a "finger supper". Should you have a problem with transport, please contact Clare Kalkwarf She will do her utmost to arrange a lift for you.

These gatherings will only be successful if each of our active members takes advantage of our invitation.

Notice to All Members

Please let us know,
if any of your circumstances change
i.e. residential address and postal address;
telephone number and fax number;
e-mail address;
or if you would like to change your membership status
or your pledge.



MEMBERS' NEWS



May God bless you on your Solemn Profession!

Our member, Sr. M. Veronica Krenn O.Cist., will pronounce her solemn monastic vows as a Cistercian nun on Sunday, 23rd August 1998, at Heart of Mary Convent in Grenaa, Denmark. May God reward you for your dedication with the fullness of his freedom, peace and love and may you deeply enjoy the privilege of being a handmaid of Christ like your patron saint helped Jesus on his final way to our redemption to reach the place of salvation.



We wish a blessed and very happy birthday to:

Wally Graf on her 91st
Margaret Hawthorn senior on her 90th
Br. Wolfgang Frieser O.S.B. on his 88th
Prälat Anton Maier on his 86th
Helene Gierl on her 85th

Johanna Freifrau von Aretin, Gertrud Lohr and Pfarrer Alfons Schmidt on their 75th

Constance Nzama, Louis Frank Lagleder, Hubertus Flegel, Cäcilia Jäger, Valentin Graf Ballestrem, Patricia Mary Thompson and Yvonne Joye Renaud on their 70th

Maria Peters, Mynah Christian, Joseph Beausang and Broos Stan on their 65th

Joan Rose Dunn, Gertrud Löser, Mildred Angeline Ntombi Zincume, Dr. Uwe Bernzen and Prof. Dr. Hilmar Krenn on their 60th

Christine Fehr, Dr. Richard Gordon Num and Alfons Kurz on their 50th
Rudolf Kolb, Sandra Janene Messenger and Garry James Forger on their 40th

Markus Mayer, Aine Beausang and Thembi Xulu on their 30th

Ilona Loganadhan, Ignatia Lindokuhle Dlamini and Neville Pillay on their 21st



Congratulations to

Dr. Heinrich Hirmer und Frau on the birth of their little boy, Andreas.



Welcome Home to

Mrs. Beryl Bouchier who has recently returned from a visit to her daughter and family in England.

Mr & Mrs. Ferdie Rouillon who have returned from a long holiday in Israel.



Sincere condolences to

The family of Mrs. Maria Theresia Schick of Petersberg, Germany, who passed away recently.

Mrs. Estelle Denner and family on the sudden loss of their husband & father.

Sr. Sanet van Zyl & family on the sudden loss of her father.



Best wishes to the following members who have not been well

Mr. Zan Pieters and Herrn Hans Lagleder.



Farewell and Good Luck to

Mrs. Sandy Messenger & Allistair who, together with Donna and Lucia, will be leaving for England in September. They will be sorely missed by our whole organisation.

Sandy was amongst the first active members to volunteer to become a caregiver. She has been a member since October 1994 and has proved to be one of the most consistent and valuable members in our organisation. Whenever she was asked to help somewhere she would try her utmost to assist, even though she holds down a full time job and has a family to look after, she still finds the time to give of herself to the needy.

Donna & Lucia, Sandy's daughters joined our cadets in April 1996 and have both done the junior home nursing and junior first aid courses. They were always willing to come and help when their mother was on duty. Sometimes the night shift in the care centre would be a mother and daughter team effort.

We thank Allistair Messenger for allowing his wife the time to help others and we wish the whole family a wonderful future in their new home. Hambani kahle!

**Would you like to be a volunteer in our
Care Centre and Hospice?**

If so, please contact Clare at 456-2743 You do not need any formal training. We will provide the necessary training.

If you are not interested in be-coming a caregiver, maybe you would like to give us a hand with cooking,
Cleaning or ironing.

St. John's Feast celebrated

All our Associate members were invited to celebrate St. John's Feast on the Saturday prior to the actual feast, with a festive Holy Mass followed by some entertainment by the students of Blessed Gérard's Community Development Centre and Blessed Gérard's Pre-primary School and Crèche.



Some of the children from Blessed Gérard's Pre-primary School and Crèche dancing and singing.



Dr. Paul Thabethe, our Medical Superintendent and Mr. Johannes Hlongwa, Local Group Leader for the Mangete area enjoying the festivities.



The students from Blessed Gérard's Community Development Centre (sewing school) and their families, modelling some of the clothes which they have sewn during their course.

Thank you to

The Federal Association of the Order of Malta & Mr. Daniel Meehan for sending yet another two volunteers

and

Sr. Barbara Saranac, Sr. Nayda Del Moral, Baroness Marie-Sophie von Venningen, Mr. Stephan Killian & Mr. Björn Peters for volunteering their time in our service,

and

our local volunteers who leave their husbands and children to help the needy,

and

Malteser-Hilfsdienst, München, Germany, for the donation of R9,000.00 for a decubitus mattress, steriliser and a dressing trolley.

and

the Lions Club, Neuburg, Germany, for a R15,000.00 donation towards the air-conditioning of the Care Centre and Hospice.

And a special thank you to

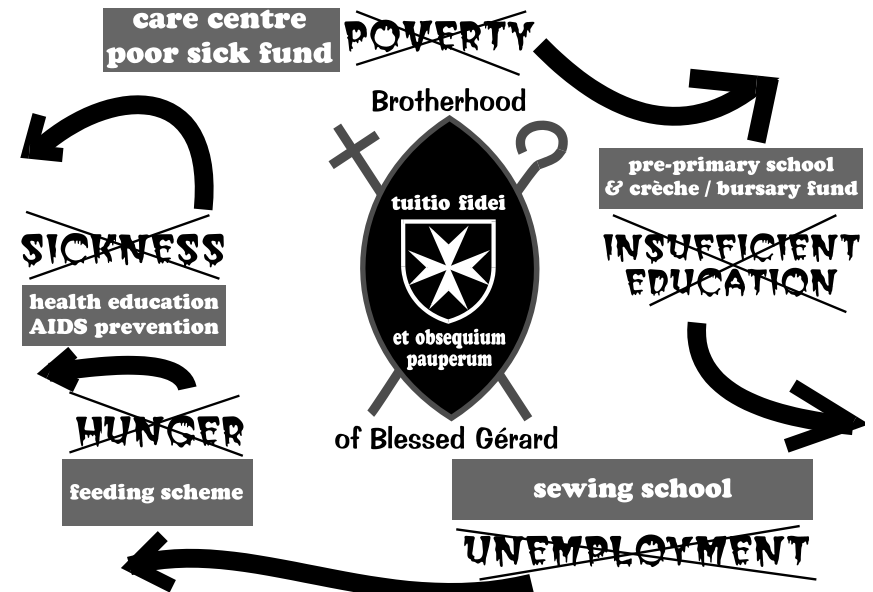
Dr. Rainer Tichy

Herrn Werner Schlereth and

Herrn Walter Ruhland

who all celebrated special birthdays recently. The commitment to helping people who are suffering is shown through the generous spirit of these three gentlemen, by requesting that their relatives and friends donate money towards the work of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gerard, in lieu of giving them personal gifts.

We thank you from the centre of our hearts and assure you, that the people in need will appreciate the assistance given us, when we help them to break the vicious circle of suffering:



To all our donors for the wonderful support which you give to our organisation. Without your membership fees and donations we could not function.

WELCOME to all our new members:

Mr Gerrit van Rooyen, Mr Mivuyo Mike Tabata, Marie-Sophie Freiin von Venningen, Mrs Barbara Ann Sarenac, Mrs Nayda Del Moral, Mrs Diane Beverley Hughes, Mr Zakhele Milton Mlangeni, Mr Bongani Patrick Nkosi, Mrs Phillis Thembekile Mkhize, Mrs Clair Cecile Sakir, Miss Ilona Loganadhan, Mr Joseph Kurtzman, Mrs Kay Samuel, Mrs Joyce Vijaylutchmee Moodley, Mrs Sperie Moodley, Mrs Shirley Harisingh, Miss Renuka Devi Moodley, Mr Peter Kurrild-Klitgaard, Herrn Stephan Markus Killian.

Vacancies

Before we advertise these positions to the public, we are offering them to you, our members or your relatives/friends.

1. Housekeeper

needed

for Blessed Gérard's Care Centre & Hospice

This position is available immediately.

The responsibilities of the housekeeper are to do the work in

- **The kitchen**, including preparation of menus, cooking normal food and special diets, cleaning and making shopping lists.
- **The laundry**, washing & ironing & mending, keeping an inventory.
- **The whole of the ground floor of the Care Centre**, (including all bathrooms, toilets, wards, lounge, diningroom, chapel, passages and administration wing) keeping it tidy, clean and hygienic. Reporting any breakage and/or damage.

Please note that this position is not just for a „maid“, but needs the talents of a person with a sense of responsibility and organisational abilities, as well as the will to learn and the empathy needed to work with sick people.

If you know of someone who could fill this position, please ask him or her to contact Mrs. Kalkwarf at Tel. 456-2743 for an appointment to interview.

Membership statistics on 22.07.98	Active Members	Donors	Spiritual Supporters	Total
South Africa	181	79	19	279
Tanzania	0	0	1	1
Austria	0	1	3	4
Belgium	0	0	1	1
Germany	13	153	71	237
Denmark	0	1	16	17
Finland	0	0	1	1
Great Britain	4	1	1	6
Italy	2	18	1	21
Ireland	2	6	1	9
Hungary	0	0	1	1
Malta	0	0	1	1
USA	7	20	10	37
Canada	0	2	1	3
El Salvador	0	0	2	2
Chile	0	0	1	1
UAE	0	0	1	1
Japan	0	0	1	1
Australia	0	2	2	4
Total	209	283	135	627

**A Crèche & Pre-primary School Teacher /
Day Care mother**

needed

For Blessed Gérard's Pre-primary School & Crèche

This position will become vacant from 12th **January 1999** and would suit a retired teacher who lives in the area. Fluency in Zulu is essential.

Blessed Gérard's Crèche & Pre-primary School is situated at Whebede (eNkanyezini), 14kms from Mandini, close to the coast, north of the Tugela River mouth.

If you know of someone who could fill this position, please ask her to contact Mrs. Kalkwarf at Tel. 456-2743 for an appointment to interview.

**Sidinga uthisha omunye eNkuliseni ka Gérard
obusisiweyo oWhebede ngomhlaka 12 January, 1999.
Uma unolwazi, ukuthi ukhona uthisha ufunayo
lomsebenzi, umtshela ukuthi uzomthintha iNkosikazi
uKalkwarf ngocingo 456 2743.**

Making your donation

It might help our **South African members** to know that you may pay your membership fees directly into our banking account. The most convenient solution for both sides would be if you organised a stop order on your account. Our banking details are as follows:

Name of Account:	Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard
Type of account:	Current Account
Bank:	First National Bank
Account number:	529 4004 0349
Branch:	Mandini
Branch code:	22-04-29-43

Please ensure that you put your personal details on the deposit or send the information directly to us, so that we can debit your membership fee account correctly.

The "Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard Newsletter" is the official mouthpiece of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard and is edited by the Management Committee of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard.

Our address is: 61 Anderson Road
P O Box 440
Mandeni

4490 Republic of South Africa

Phone 032-4562743 (national) +27-32-4562743 (international)

Fax 032-4567962 (national) +27-32-4567962 (international)

E-mail bbg@iafrica.com

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