



## NOAH'S LEGACIES UNTOLD



Home



Health



Happiness

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# Foreword

Facing Up is a UCT-affiliated occupational therapy initiative focused on developing and partnering with communities to bring and support social change. As final year Occupational therapists from the University of Cape Town's Division of Occupational Therapy, we recognised that storytelling has been in our lives for many generations and our intention was to create a platform where the residents of NOAH could tell the stories of their lives and share them with the NOAH community. It seemed like a natural fit because stories are powerful - they help us get to know ourselves, each other and reflect on both our similarities and differences. There is so much history, diversity and wisdom in the halls of NOAH. Leaving a legacy and creating a way for others to learn about life has been an integral part of our time here with the residents, where we sit with them for hours and just listen.

In occupational therapy, we believe that the everyday things we do that have meaning to us can help promote health and wellbeing. We call these everyday activities 'occupations'. Research shows that the occupation of storytelling has many health and wellbeing benefits for older persons, especially concerning mental health. Even though older people at NOAH live in communal homes, they still want to feel connected and feel like they belong. In older persons reflection plays a critical role in their health and development.

According to development theorist Erik Erikson, people go through psychosocial stages of development. Older people find themselves in the integrity vs despair stage, where people want to provide wisdom to others. In this stage of life, people often share stories to help them reflect on their life and make sense of the narrative of their life. When we give an older person a space to tell another person their life story, this can help create a reflective state of mind that stops them from despairing death. Storytelling offers the development of a sense of belonging and connection amongst potentially isolated individuals. It also allows a person to pass on their legacy to their family and friends, cope with the identity threats that aging brings and create understanding around the larger sociocultural we grew up and lived in. It's an important occupation to participate in to leave a legacy for family or friends but also to reach the 'milestones' of this stage of development.

The occupation of storytelling works as a means to offer multiple health and wellbeing benefits. However, the occupation of storytelling can also help in building the capacity of the organisation which can be an end. We hope that this storybook can celebrate the lives of NOAH's residents, document their perspectives and leave a legacy in the story of NOAH as an organisation. As additions are made to this book, we hope that reading each other stories becomes a part of the culture here at NOAH. Even though

we only captured stories according to three themes, we hope that those who take it forward will be brave enough to explore other territories. May NOAH continue to prosper!

*-Shika Ndhundhuma and Lu-Jaine Isaacs*

(original compilers of The Storytelling Project – 23 September 2020)

As 4<sup>th</sup> year OT students, we have taken over this project as project managers and furthered it by exploring new themes, such as work and school and recruiting more residents and staff to tell their story. We have also made changes to the design of the project by creating more opportunities for residents to not only reflect on their lives and tell their life story, but to also extract the lessons that they learnt in life, the wisdoms that came from those life lessons as well as reflect on any regrets they may have such as things they haven't achieved in life, things are proud of and not so proud of and anything they would have done differently. We believe that the storytelling project can be used as a means to enable residents to feel a sense of integrity when they reflect on their life and also feel content with how they have lived their life. Through intergenerational storytelling, we, as the next generation, have come to appreciate the lessons and wisdoms of this community and how it has shaped us as future health professionals. We also understand the value of this occupation in providing residents with the means by which to reflect on life events, identify life successes and regrets, impart wisdoms and lessons on the next generation and leave behind their legacy for their family. We acknowledge and thank the participants for sharing so vulnerably and authentically with us. Sharing aspects of our own identity in the same way has been extremely valuable in developing meaningful relationships which we have come to appreciate through working on this project. We are so excited for the development of this project!

*Cryzell Marco and Nicole Jutzen*

(project managers of the storytelling project: October 2020 – November 2020)





# Storytelling

This is a word cloud. Word clouds are useful in illustrating what people think when they hear a specific word. We asked the first 5 participants of the project what they thought of the occupation of storytelling that they had just participated in. These are some of the answers they came up with.



# WILFRED BARRET DAMON



One of his sharpest memories is carrying school desks from the school building in De Vlake to the new school building in Ides Valley

Wilfred is a celebrated teacher and musician from Stellenbosch. A few of his favourite pastimes are playing his classic guitar, Wilfreida, and writing essays on his upbringing in De Vlake, which he describes as a vibrant, brown community near Stellenbosch. De Vlake was demolished by the apartheid government during the Group Areas Act era in 1970. During his eighteenth year after the demolition, he and his family were relocated to Cloeteville, where he eventually worked for many years as an English teacher for Lückhoff High School. He considers preserving the memory of De Vlake one of his most important missions. His essays on the memory of De Vlake have been published in Klyntji Magazine and in UCT's research platforms.

## THOUGHTS ON RELATIONSHIPS:

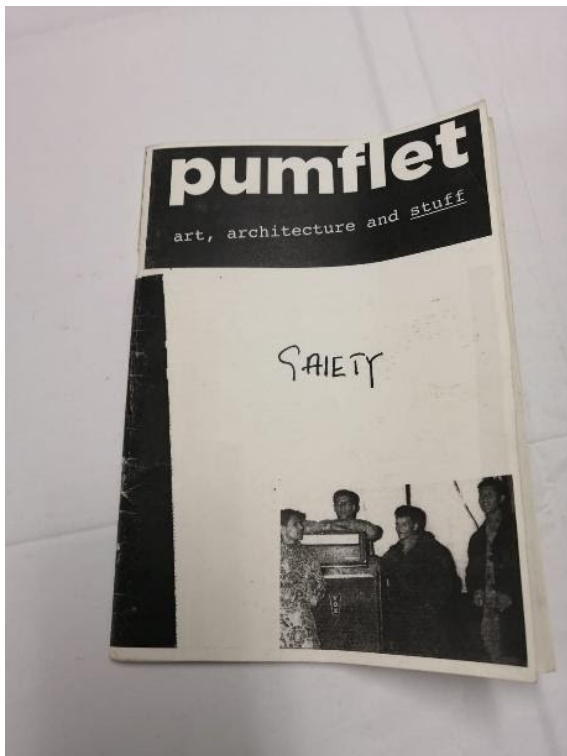
"I've learned that trust is an expensive commodity that must be handled carefully. It must also be earned." "Invest in [relationships] wisely – especially who to trust." "My best relationship is with my classical guitar. It makes lovely sounds." Wilfred has had Wilfreida, his classic guitar, for 25 years, and still plays to this day.

## THOUGHTS ON FAITH:

"One of the most important thought is that one born into a culture and one is born into a religion. One of three things happen with religion. Either it is kept and grows as one grows, or it diminishes, or it changes." Wilfred says he has explored his spirituality outside of Anglican church traditions. "When I pray to God, it's a very personal experience. I haven't experienced a Damascus Road conversion or anything – I mostly just pray."

"I have come to a realization that church doctrine only touches on God lightly; God is more than that." Then he went about to speak about the complexity of creation and how it points towards a Higher Power. However, Wilfred still appreciates church doctrine and church services. He says, "it's safe – [it is] a place of refuge." Lately he "[tries] to structure prayer to include everyone, not just moan and groan."

## THOUGHTS ON HERITAGE & CULTURE



*Pumflet – where one of his essays were published*

The community of De Vlakte had “corner shops.” He mentioned that even though the social class still existed, people had ubuntu before it was called ubuntu. The church and schools were a “leveller.”

There was poverty that was part of the normal social stratification, but it was a very safe area for children and the crime rates were low. He describes it as a community that had lots of compassion. In his opinion, family ties house some elements of brown culture after the Forced Removals. The families, mosques and churches would keep the community’s culture alive.

His thoughts on the Afrikaans language and literature at De Vlakte are outlined in the essay published in Klyntji magazine. He recalls where he grew up in De Vlakte. In his adult years, he would “very painfully pass by the old school building of Lückhoff High School which was used for other purposes [after the forced removals]. I tried to “preserve” the culture and traditions in the new school building, but there is no comparison.”

All the houses were demolished, except for one street block in Van Ryneveld Street. The remaining half were renovated in the apartheid years, however only the interiors were changed. The façades were the same. This is a “terrible reminder for those of us who knew.” Some of his friends still have reunions for De Vlaktes to commemorate the life that is now gone.

***“I tried to “preserve” the culture and traditions in the new school building, but there is no comparison.”***

“Our colonial and Dutch past has not given a brown person an opportunity to reflect on their loyalty to the country.” Their history was hijacked by the Afrikaner’s and English people who could be proud of South Africa and think of it as their own. He believes patriotism presents a “hard challenge, but one must be hopeful.” He is happy with multiracial schools as a positive because during his time, there was no social mixing amongst the races. He would always see Xhosa men around Khayamandi, who were hired by the local council to do work, but he laments the missed opportunity to communicate with them. Due to the complete separation, he says “there is a great gap in my linguistic make-up.” He believes that when we explore and learn each other’s languages, we can get to know each other as people. His final words for the youth were “Be loyal to the country – just stick it out.”

# KATHLEEN STANDER



Kathleen is a friendly 66-year-old woman, originally from the agricultural town of Laingsburg. She was raised on a farm, where she did some farm work, and eventually did domestic work within the farmhouse. She went on to change employers within the Western Cape until she ended up working for families in Cape Town. She never married and or had children.

***“Many people say how can there be a God if some people do not have food or a place to stay? But I believe in God.”***

## THOUGHTS ON RELATIONSHIPS:

“I don’t have a relationship now. The people here at NOAH are my friends. I don’t know where the rest of my family is. My friends are Charmaine, Vivienne, Bernie and Margaret and Des and her sister and others.” “Before I came here, I had a lot of relationships. I had also had lots of male friends. If I see people go on the wrong path, like drinking, I leave them. I let them go and live how they want to live.” Kathleen believes that a relationship that makes you laugh is a good relationship.

During her time at NOAH, she met someone special. “One day I told him I love him, then he left [NOAH]. I carried on telling him how I feel. Hy was baie life vir meisievriende. Een Vrydag is hy getroud. He could have told me he is sorry, and he is getting married.”

“Ons moet eerlik wees en die waarheid praat.” After that incident, she had to lift herself up. The one lesson she has learnt is that a person must not jump into relationships too quickly.

## THOUGHTS ON FAITH:

“I believe in God.” Since she was born, she has believed. “He is there for us all since we are born.” Since the lockdown, she has not been able to go to church. “I miss my church.” She usually attends church at Observatory, Jubilee.

“God means a lot to me. Many people say how can there be a God if some people do not have food or a place to stay? But I believe in God. When I am sick, God is with me. I pray to him. I speak to him. He answers my prayers.”

## THOUGHTS ON HERITAGE & CULTURE

When asked about where she comes from, Kathleen names her mother and her siblings as Coloured or “Kleurling”. They were raised on a farm owned by “wit mense” in Laingsburg, Western Cape. “I can’t say what my dad is, he didn’t live with us. I can’t remember if he is Kleurling or Xhosa.”

When asked what it means to her to be a South Africa, she says, “I like being a South African.”



*“I like being a South African.”*



# THELMA PEDERSON



Thelma is a loving and giving 67 year-old woman who has been at NOAH for one year. She moved to Cape Town in 2018 after living in Margate, Port Shepstone for years. She is a believer who describes herself as “a child of God.”

Before she retired, she was active in running business and later, taking care of the elderly - she was a nursing assistant for 5 years. It means a lot to Thelma to stay active and be busy – that’s why you will always see her running around the Centre doing something.

***“He is my Father, my healer, my teacher, my doctor, the air that I breathe. He is my everything.”***

## THOUGHTS ON RELATIONSHIPS:

“In relationships, I look for people I trust, people I connect with, people who are honest and people who have the same interests as me.” One of her most valued relationships is the one she shares with her long-time friend, Mrs Jones, who still lives in Port Shepstone. They are so close she says, “we are like one person. We are connected.” Thelma describes how the relationship grew out working side by side on many projects such as running Mrs Jones’ farm, taking care of the elderly and the sick in the community and their shared Christian faith. “I am very attached to her, and her to me. There is nothing she wouldn’t done for me.”

One of the biggest lessons she has learnt from relationships over the years she was taught by Mrs Jones. “She taught me never to give up. Just keep at it, one day it will come right.” Thelma’s relationship philosophy is that family relationships are important and must be protected, and at all times, Christ must be at the centre of relationships.

## THOUGHTS ON FAITH:

“Religion is various beliefs. Christianity is a way of life. You live it. I hold onto Jesus because he has done a lot for me.” When we asked Thelma what God means to her, these were her words. “He is my Father, my healer, my teacher, my doctor, the air that I breathe. He is my everything.”

She places all her faith and hope in God, and all her decisions are made based on what she has prayed about. She is constantly thinking about God, and praying in her spirit. She calls God “the only One I can trust and speak to. At 2 am, if I wake up, in my spirit, I [will] worship, I [will] praise, I [will] pray to God, until I fall asleep.”

When there is struggle in her life, she says she knows His “word will not turn to void. It will always achieve something.”

“I gave up my catering job to work in ministry for 10 years.” Thelma also says “I’ll never stop talking about Jesus.” She believes that if we were all true Christians, by actions and not just by words, the world would be a much better place.

## THOUGHTS ON HERITAGE & CULTURE

“I am one big, mixed masala.” Thelma went on to describe how multiracial her lineage is - all her grandparents were from different racial groups: White, Black and Coloured. She recalls growing up in Port Shepstone with her mother, however she spent a lot of time with her grandmother. “She was beautiful, my grandmother. She was an African. She was just a beautiful person.” Thelma’s grandmother taught her how to speak in isiZulu, and she has given Thelma some of her fondest memories.

One of her childhood memories is when Thelma and her schoolmates would wake up very early every morning - around 4.30 am - and walk very far to school.

Thelma describes that distance from about Woodstock to Stellenbosch.

“My toes were constantly bandaged.” At school, they would be fed, attend classes, and walk back home. “We were naughty,” she says, referring to how on the way home, they used to climb the trees in people’s homes and steal fruits such as guavas and sugar cane.

When we asked Thelma, what being a South African means to her, she laughingly said:

“I’m proud of being a South African. The white man can’t do anything to me. I am a mixed masala. The black man neither. I am their grandchild. They will always look after me. They can’t chase me away - where will I go?”

# ALISTER BOBBERT

Alister is a 70-year old man living in McNulty House. He has been at NOAH for about 7 years. He describes himself as someone who likes to be alone and does not like to worry. When he is not doing his cleaning duties for NOAH, you can find him relaxing in his room. Despite his quiet nature, he is a loving and generous person.



***“I want to be alone and I want to be happy.”***

## THOUGHTS ON RELATIONSHIPS:

Alister says he does “not understand relationships, but I love people.” He says he will sometimes go to the shops and buy chocolates, sweets and biscuits to share with others, but he does not expect anything in return. His signature phrase is “I like to be alone,” but he still enjoys friendships with some of the residents here at NOAH.

He spoke about his family relationships, and how his father left them when he was young. He had to leave school and find work to help support the family. He sometimes visits his niece for a couple of days. However, Alister maintains, “I want to be happy and I want to be alone.” He says this is why he never married or had a girlfriend.

Alister maintains, “I want to be happy and I want to be alone.” He says this is why he never married or had a girlfriend. Alister has 4 brothers and 3 sisters who live in Kuils River and Mitchells Plain. Alister says he doesn’t visit his family often due to family politics, which is why he likes to be alone. Alister had a close friend whom he lived with after his mom passed away. He lived with his friend and his wife until he came to NOAH 7 years ago. Alister didn’t have any friends growing up. He says there were many friends his age, but he couldn’t do what they were doing because if he got hurt, “kan ekkie na ‘n pa toe hardloop nie”.

## THOUGHTS ON FAITH:

“I love God. I cannot read, I don’t know how to pray, but I pray. But I got nice work. I learn how to do cables, driver’s licence, play golf. He gives me a lot of nice things. I can stand, I can come [to] clean, I can make my bed, I dance for people. I couldn’t read time. I asked God, please help me. Now I can read time.”

He grew up attending St Mark’s church, close to Red Cross Hospital, in the 60s. After the forced removals, his family was moved to Manenburg, where he attended New Apostolic. He says “I don’t belong there. When I’m here, I go to Church of God International in Parow.”

## THOUGHTS ON HERITAGE & CULTURE

“I didn’t learn about culture when I was small. No one told us about heritage. My brother and sister learnt at school. I am a Cape Coloured. I am a Khoisan.” We asked Alister where he grew up as a child. “Rondebosch – by Red Cross. Very, very lovely. Black River (Swartrivier) was a very lovely place to stay. There was food, there was work. If they didn’t get work, they [would] work for council. It was very nice [for] me – I can’t explain to you.”

The area had white sand where the children would play with bricks. They would swim in the vlei and pick fruit from the trees. Alister says there was every kind of fruit tree.

While other families could afford to buy homes, his family had to rent a house. There was “two or three families in the same house. Each family had its own room.” The families would share the kitchen. When it rained, they had to fetch wood barefoot from the vlei to make fire.

We asked Alister what it means to him to be a South African. “I know we stay here and everyone got a right to South Africa. I like being a South African. I don’t know if I am South Africa. My birth certificate says I am South African. I didn’t learn [about these things.] I look at TV – but I can see, there’s a Johannesburg. Then I know, there’s a Johannesburg. I know what I know, even if I didn’t go to school.”





## REFLECTIONS ON SCHOOL & WORK

Alister attended a church school in Athlone but left school in sub B to find work. The school he attended was Gardendale. When asked if he enjoyed school he said, “Ek kan nou nie se ek het school geniet, want dit was bietjie swar gewies, want ek kan nie lekker gedink het nie”. Alister couldn’t complete school as his family needed money. He grew up without a father and as the eldest child, Alister had to leave school to provide for his family. Alister is not ashamed to admit that he didn’t finish school. He did it for his family, to provide for his brothers and sisters. Alister thinks that if he didn’t leave school, he may have not been alive today. “Want da’s nie ‘n Pa nie, daars, niks nie, nou waar gaan ons die geld kry, dan gaan ek nou dinge gedoen en daars niemand om te se daai’s reg of verkeerd nie.” Alister says that for as long as he can remember, he had to decide what the good and right thing was to do.

As part of the training for his job at Telkom, Alister attended a training college in Belhar where he completed a practical course for his job. He really enjoyed this; he was at the training college for 6 weeks.

Alister’s recalls his first job at the age of 10 with great humility, where he worked at Rondebosch Golf Course as a caddy to South African Politician, John Vorster for 8 years and through this, was able to support his family. He also describes odd jobs that had as a child while working at Rondebosch Golf Course. “Ander tye, help ons vir ander mense miskien in die tuine, gaan winkel toe, ek het dit enjoy.” After this, Alister went on to work at Telkom at the age of 19 where he later retired at the age of 50. When asked about this, Alister says “By Telkom was dit baie swaer”. He was responsible for inserting internet routers in homes, inserting telephone lines and putting up network poles in the streets. Through Telkom, Alister was able to attend college in Belhar for 6 weeks where he learnt a lot of skills needed for work. “Daar het ek baie geleer, nomers geleer....daai werk was baie practise, dit was baie lekker”. At NOAH is responsible for many tasks that help in maintaining the centre. Alister is someone who has always, and continues to take pride in his work.



# RUSSELL BENNETT

Russell is a socially conscious and pleasant 69-year old man. Born in District Six, he moved to Athlone when he was 4. He later got married and moved to Strandfontein where he lived for 30 years with his family. He is currently a driver at NOAH, a job that means a lot to him. He enjoys staying active and being independent. He describes himself as being introverted but since he came to NOAH, four years ago, he has become more outgoing.



***“They are my flesh and blood, it is an instinctive thing.”***

## **THOUGHTS ON RELATIONSHIPS:**

“They are my flesh and blood, it is an instinctive thing” - Russel’s most valued relationships are with his children. He values the conversations he has with them and feels he can speak to them about anything.

When asked what the one thing he has learnt from relationships, he said they are “fragile”. He notes that many things can happen in life that can derail or strain a relationship. However, Russel still values them - “Deep down, I have this desire to have good relationships, as far that is possible. “Ideally, relationships should be good, something to strive for ”

Russel’s philosophy is “Try to have good relationships where you can. But no at all costs. People tend to misread you and think, ah, you're weak, you're a softie, they can walk all over you. That's what happens with me a lot. And then I lose it. That's when the Kewtown in me comes out.”

## **THOUGHTS ON FAITH:**

Russel says that “organised religion is a pain in the butt”. He makes mention of when religion was used wrongly like “ when it was used by Hitler, for his own superiority and the Crusades done in the name of religion.”

He also feels that “On the other hand, it serves a purpose and gives people a standard to strive for like the 10 commandments ”

When asked what God means to him he said “that is a difficult one.” He went on to say that “life is too complex to have started by accident, it could not have been evolution all the way.” Russel alluded to believing in a higher power/being but not conforming to an organised religion although he did grow up attending Church.



***“Our generation we told each other it is nothing to be ashamed of.”***

#### **THOUGHTS ON HERITAGE & CULTURE**

“I’m proud of my heritage and culture,” Russel says. “Western Cape Coloured people are unique.” Hailing from mixed ancestry such as European, Khoisan, Malay and Asian descent. His grandmother was a Khoisan - you could just see it on her face. During that time, older people were ashamed of having African Khoisan ancestry. However, in “our generation we told each other it is nothing to be ashamed of,” Russel says

He then went on to speak about unique Cape Town traditions. Pickle fish at Easter is one example he names when he speaks about food that is endemic to Cape Coloured culture. Although now it is common to the rest of South Africa, he says it used to be a “Cape Town thing.” “When I was a boy, we didn’t have a fridge.

People used to pickle fish to make it last long, to make it last over a couple of days” Russel spoke about the Malay side of his heritage when he mentions “koesisters”, and not commonplace pronunciation “koeksisters” that most people use.

With the rise of Black Consciousness in the 1960s, Russell and his friends grew afros. “This is what our hair was made for.” Russell remembers how it was around this time that his generation had started to assert their freedom, question the government and criticize conventions such as church going. His elders were reluctant to the rock the boat - ‘

We asked Russel what it means to a South African: “I consider myself a Western Cape citizen first, and then a citizen of South Africa. If they should make the Western Cape a republic tomorrow, I’d be all for it.”

# MARGARET JONKERS



Margaret is a decorated sportswoman whose passion and values lie deep in her family and faith. Her affinity for sport has helped her remain active throughout her life and to this day, still goes for daily runs in and around the area. Margaret's passion for community and people as well as constant willingness to serve those around her are a mere few indicators of her loving and kind-hearted nature. She is a strong and resilient woman who continues to embrace her challenges and accomplishments, placing God at the centre of it all. Margaret was born in District Six and shared a home with her parents and 5 siblings. Margaret moved to Primrose Park in the 90's to live with her sister. She then lived in Thornton until she moved to NOAH. Margaret is currently staying at Gill House and has been at NOAH for just shy of 1 year. She celebrated her 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday in October of 2020.

## THOUGHTS ON RELATIONSHIPS:

Margaret is most thankful for her family. She always had a good and close relationship with her parents and siblings. Margaret looked up to her parents and saw them as role models because of their healthy relationship and marriage. Margaret met her first boyfriend at a very young age. She later got married at the age of 29 whom she met through her brother. Margaret was married for 13 years and had 2 children, a son and a daughter. She separated from her husband after 13 years of marriage but always wonders what the marriage would've been like if they re-married. Margaret now has 4 grandsons and has good relationships with her children and grandchildren.

Margaret also has a best friend – her childhood friend who lives in Strand – whom she met in primary school as they played Netball together. She is also still in contact with her friends from District Six and attends regular gatherings at her friend's house.

"I know what it's like to have a loving mother and a loving father" says Margaret as she reflects on her relationship with her parents. Both Margaret's parents passed away when she was still young. This became difficult when she celebrated her milestones such as getting her teaching certificate and getting married.



## THOUGHTS ON FAITH:

Margaret grew up in a Christian home; her mom was very strong in her faith and influenced her walk with God. Margaret was 9-years old when she accepted Jesus as her Lord and Saviour and doesn't regret one moment of serving Him. The only church she knows and is acquainted with is the Baptist denomination as it is where she grew up in, got baptised at the age of 15 in, accepted Jesus as her Lord and Saviour and got married in.

"My faith is what gets me through every single day" "God is my everything, He is my everything" "I can't see myself without God, I can't, I really can't" shares Margaret as she reflects on what God means to her. Margaret also attends the Woodstock Baptist Church and is part of the Wednesday bible study for the ladies. She is also part of the outreach with the ladies at the church where they hand out food to the less fortunate. Margaret says she has never suffered from anxiety or depression because of her faith. The moment she goes into a time of prayer or starts praising God, she just feels a peace come over her.

"When they said we were going into lockdown, so I said to God I actually want to strengthen my walk with Him and my faith with Him. I don't want to go into lockdown and come out the same person" "I want to be changed in a positive way". Margaret says she can see the change in her life post lockdown, she is a stronger person now. During lockdown, she looked for all the verses in the Bible that says, 'do not be afraid'. She also wrote down a list of songs that speaks about not being afraid and not being anxious, that is what kept her, brought her through this, and helped strengthen her.

***"My faith is the only thing that gets me through this lockdown"***

## THOUGHTS ON HERITAGE & CULTURE

Margaret is proud to be South African and will never leave this country. She says we've got such a beautiful country. One of the reasons why she is proud to be a South African is because we won the 2019 Rugby World Cup. Margaret says she went crazy when we won, she wears her springbok T-shirt proudly. She also loves the mountains within South Africa, she is crazy about Table Mountain. Margaret says that she loves the people as the people of South Africa are very friendly.



Margaret grew up in District Six. She is the youngest of 6 children. Her parents passed away when she was only 19 years old. Her eldest brothers took the responsibility of caring for her and her other siblings so that they could remain in their childhood home. Margaret's parents passed away before the Group Areas Act was introduced. She is grateful for this as her parents were not subjected to the forced removals that occurred because she feels that her parents would not have been able to cope with the impact of the forced removal. Margaret says the apartheid years were the worst years of her childhood. She lost friends as a result of the forced removals and could never understand why. She also lost her aunt as she passed away due to the trauma of being forcibly removed from her home in District Six to Mitchells Plain.

Margaret's family traditions included a special Christmas day which her mom would make special for her and her siblings. The highlight of this family tradition is that all the family would come over to their house and their mom would make sure the children had nice outfits and toys. Margaret and her siblings still celebrate Christmas with each other and their children today.

Margaret's proudest moments in life was being able to represent South Africa in athletics in Australia and Brazil in the under 50 age group. She also travelled to Singapore during her time representing South Africa. Margaret grew up playing tennis, netball and was an athlete, she believes she inherited her athleticism from her dad.



Margaret wishes she had the opportunity to represent South Africa in the Olympics when she was young. As a person of colour, she was not able to because of the Apartheid laws. In 2008, Margaret achieved the award for sportsperson of the year. She has also achieved her western province and national colours.

## REFLECTIONS ON SCHOOL & WORK

Along with her siblings, Margaret attended St Phillips Primary School which was a 5-minute walk from her home in District Six. Thereafter, she went to Salt River High School until grade 11. Margaret describes herself as a mischievous student who always got into trouble and could never sit still in class. She laughs when recalling this. After leaving school in grade 11, Margaret realised her dream to become a teaching. In pursuit of this, she completed her matric through Harold Cressy night school and thereafter attended Athlone Training College for two and a half years before graduating in 1969 with a diploma in teaching.

Soon after graduating, Margaret started working. Margaret recalls her teaching days with joy and pride. Her first job was at the age of 19, where she taught Sub A, B and Standard 1 at Bonteheuwel Primary School. When asked why she decided to pursue a career in education, Margaret credited her brother, who was a teacher, as being someone she looked up to and was inspired by. After working at Bonteheuwel Primary School, Margaret worked at a creche for a couple of years before moving to The Old Mutual Greens'cool. She describes this as being the highlight of her career. It was here where she achieved her highest post as deputy principal and retired here after working at the school for 10 years. She is extremely loved by the school and describes a time where the school surprised her by raising funds for her trip overseas to represent South Africa in athletics.

## LESSONS LEARNT & WISDOMS TO IMPART

Through all her achievements and challenges, Margaret has learnt many lessons that she says has shaped and moulded her into the strong woman that she is today. She says that “were it not for those [difficult] times, I might have been a weaker Christian today”. Over the years she has learnt that every experience you go through is there to shape you. So, don’t let your circumstances get you down, but instead ask yourself the question of “What is this trying to teach me?” “What lesson can be learnt from this?”. Margaret says “If I had given up on my dreams of becoming something, then where would I be today?”. Based on this she has learnt the importance of striving for ones goals in life and never giving up.



***“We are always called to persevere”***



Margaret's advice to the younger generation is to never rely on your own strength. One should invite God into your marriage as it is something that she did. With God in the marriage, it is likely to be stronger. A principle that Margaret lived by is that 'whatever you do, do it unto God'. Don't work for your boss, work for God. Margaret's sister-in-law shared a quote with her that she still carries with her to this day. She said, "Mense sal altyd sê van jou wat hul wil, sorg jy net dat dit nie waar is nie". You should never try to prove yourself to people when you are accused of things that aren't true. Never get upset. As long as God knows what the truth is, people's opinions shouldn't matter.



***"Mense sal altyd sê van jou wat hul wil,  
sorg jy net dat dit nie waar is nie"***

Margaret's advice for teachers is to never label a child as the child will believe that and become that. Her advice to mothers is to love all your children the same and never have favourites. Margaret's advice for people who find themselves in difficult circumstances or time of trouble should look away from their circumstances and look to God. It is not about how big your problem is, but about how big your God is. Margaret's last pearl of wisdom for the younger generation is to speak to God about what you want in life, speak to Him about your desires.



# AUDREY CUPIDO



Audrey is a friendly and infectious positive 69-year old woman originally from Wynberg. She moved to Bridgetown as a baby where she lived with her aunt and cousins. Audrey has 3 children and grandchildren. She got married at the age of 19 and moved to Bonteheuwel where she lived for over 40 years. Audrey was well known in the community of Bonteheuwel and got along with everyone.

## THOUGHTS ON RELATIONSHIPS:

Audrey grew up with her Aunt and 7 cousins in Bridgetown. Although she never had much of a relationship with her parents and never really knew her mother, she would still visit her dad in Kensington. Audrey appreciates the role her Aunt played in her life. She took her to church and was with her when she got confirmed. "My antie, sy was a goeie vrou.....hul het my kos gegie, het my maniere gegie"

At the age of 19 Audrey met her husband. Were her husband to be alive today, they would've been married for over 50 years. Being married brought a lot of challenges and hardships, especially in the beginning. She says Ek het altyd gedink "ag dit moet maar so wies". As they grew older together, they came to better understand one another and so their relationship started to improve. Audrey describes herself as being well-known in the community and always managed to get along with everyone she came into contact with.

Audrey's closest relationship is with her siblings and church community, saying that her closest friends have come out of the catholic church. As her siblings are seventh day Adventist Church members, they fetch her on a Saturday for church. She particularly enjoys these days as they often have lunch together after church. "They take me with [to church], then we have lunch together with my siblings. They the only ones that care so much for me, even sometimes they a bit nasty, but I think I am too, hoe sal 'n mens se, vyngervoelig...and they did a lot for me...him and my sister". Audrey is extremely grateful for her brother who helped her find accommodation at NOAH and says that whenever she sees him the first thing she does is to thank him.

## THOUGHTS ON FAITH:

Audrey is a woman strong in her faith. Growing up with her Aunt, she attended church every Sunday. When asked what God means to her she said “My Creator means a lot. I get my strength, my everything from Him.” Being in the catholic church and surrounded by community in prayer is when she really feels connected to God. Audrey got confirmed at St George’s church in Silvertown and currently attends a catholic church within Woodstock. Audrey finds strength in God’s word and always leans on His promises. She finds encouragement in knowing that God is with her till the end of time, that He will never leave nor forsake her. When thinking about her faith, Audrey admits that even in the most challenging and difficult of circumstances, she never turned to substances and credits this to her faith saying, “I just focus on God, this is what kept me going.”

## THOUGHTS ON HERITAGE & CULTURE

Audrey spent the first few years of her childhood in Wynberg where she lived with her grandmother. As a baby, she moved to Bridgetown to be raised by her aunt (her mother’s sister). Audrey’s grandmother could no longer care for her and so her aunt became her guardian and raised her. Her aunt had 7 children and therefore she considers her aunt’s children as her siblings. Audrey enjoyed living in Bridgetown as she got along with everyone. However, she moved to Bonteheuwel at the age of 19 after she got married. Audrey lived there for over 40 years until she moved to NOAH. Audrey is proud of how much she has changed since being at NOAH.

Audrey describes not being impacted by the forced removals that occurred as a result of the Group Areas Act that was introduced. But she was impacted by the racial segregation that occurred at Palmerston Primary School as the class was segregated into whites, blacks and coloureds. A family tradition that Audrey enjoyed as a child was going to see the Coons every year. “Was baie bang vir die atchars” she says as she laughs.

Audrey is a proud South African citizen. She says we are a rainbow nation, we are all human beings, so why be nasty. Audrey says we should obey the earthly laws as the heavenly fathers’.

***“My Creator means a lot. I get my strength, my everything from Him.”***



*Coons Parade, Cape Town, 1960*

## REFLECTIONS ON SCHOOL & WORK

Audrey attended 3 different Primary School's during her childhood. She attended Palmerston Primary School in Wynberg and later enrolled at DRC School in Crawford when she lived with her uncle. The last school she enrolled in is Bridgetown East Primary School in Bridgetown. Audrey started working from a very young age. After school she would babysit and do chores around the neighbours' homes. Audrey started working at 'Movie Star Lingerie' in Lansdowne after finishing primary school and would travel from Bridgetown to work every day. 'Movie Star Lingerie' was a clothing factory shop that produced gowns, nighties, slips, petticoats and underwear. Audrey started out as a 'runner', where her job was to transport tasks between workers, for example, she would be responsible for taking design drawings to the cutting room for the garments to be cut. She would also be asked to try on some of these garments after they had been designed and sewn. Although Audrey faced many challenges such as her psoriasis, she always gave her best, was willing to help out where she could and remains grateful for her employer.



***“Ek’t lekker daar gewerk”***

## LESSONS LEARNT & WISDOMS TO IMPART



Audrey describes herself as a very nervous person, but she is also honest and compassionate to those in need because she knows what it is like to struggle. She can relate to their struggles. Audrey believes that everything happens for a reason.

***“Be a role model for your children -  
don’t do unto others what you  
wouldn’t want them to do to your  
kids.”***



“Ek’t deur baie dinge gegaan” she says as she describes all she has endured in her life. Since being at NOAH, “Ek’t die lewe weer gesien”. Audrey won’t forget what NOAH has done for her because she says she can live again. She says the group sessions that were held in the centre gave her the confidence to be herself. “I can communicate with people and feel well about myself, thank God”. Audrey’s advice to the younger generation is to know that God can reach where no one else can. God has you in the palm of his hands. She says you should always pray about your issues and let God do the work. Audrey’s advice to parents is to be a role model for your children, you shouldn’t do unto others what you wouldn’t want them to do to your kids. She says that parents should raise their children in church. Even if you don’t attend church yourself, send them with someone who does go to church. It will help them to make wise decisions in life.



***“Ek’t die lewe weer gesien”***



# FATIMA DRAMAT



Fatima is a pleasant, jovial and sociable person who has been employed at NOAH for 18 years. She started working at NOAH by volunteering and later became an employee. Fatima's job title is a clinic assistant which entails working closely with the doctor and sister Delia.

Fatima started working at NOAH as a volunteer in 1997/8 to assist with the residents when they are needed to go to the clinic to receive their medication. Fatima became a permanent employee at NOAH in 2002 and has worked as a clinic assistant at NOAH which entails managing the resident's folders, scheduling clinic appointments and dispensing medication. Lockdown regulations have made her job quite difficult as it became difficult to retrieve the resident's medication due to problems with delivery and social distancing.

## JOURNEY TO EMPLOYMENT AT 'NOAH'

Fatima's late father was very good friends with John Dobson and Mrs Dobson, who was the project manager at the time. Fatima came to know about the organisation because of her late father who had a very good relationship with the founders. Her father would always encourage her to volunteer which is how she came to know NOAH.

Fatima was a principle at Schotsche Kloof Primary School in Bo-Kaap before she became employed at NOAH. Being a principle enabled Fatima to volunteer at NOAH as she had lots of free time. She was about 35 years old when she started volunteering. Her role as a volunteer included collecting the medication of residents from the clinic so that they would not have to remain at the clinic for the entire day. At the time when she was volunteering, the ambulance was not able to come out to homes.

Part of her role as a volunteer included transporting the residents to Groote Schuur Hospital when the residents would get sick. After becoming employed at NOAH, Fatima built a good relationship with the staff at District Six as she spent a lot of time there when collecting the residents' medication. Due to the good relationship she has built with the staff at District Six, she became a helper at the clinic and would assist the Clerk, the radiologist and even the pharmacist. "I am all over the place" says Fatima as she laughs.

At the time when the organisation had just started, it was quite difficult for the residents to commute to Woodstock hospital. The residents would have to wake up at 5 AM to walk up the hill so that they could be at the hospital early in the morning. This became incredibly difficult for the residents during winter as it was dark in the morning when they would have to walk. The residents would also have to remain at the clinic from the morning to the afternoon to receive their medication. This became a problem within the organisation that needed to be addressed. This prompted Fatima's father to tell her to meet with Mrs Dobson and offer to volunteer by assisting with the residents.

## LESSON'S LEARNT ALONG THE WAY

Learning about people from birth to old age prepared Fatima well for working with and understanding the elderly. Having worked as a principal and with young children she says that the elderly are no different to the children she used to work with "Once they get older it's like being a child again."

***"The biggest lesson that I've learnt here at NOAH is to have a heart for old people"***

Fatima explains how when she first came to NOAH, she knew a lot of the residents, which helped in building relationships with them. For example, she describes how the grandchildren of one resident who works in the centre went to the same school as her.

Fatima reflects on the many lessons she has learnt from the residents along the way. She has learnt how to have sympathy for the elderly and how to be supportive so that they don't feel lost. "I've given them whatever I could. The same with everybody, irrespective of what you need and who you are I will help, they know they can come to me and ask me for help. I've got compassion for and respect them. I'm eager and willing to assist them wherever I can."





Fatima's work and heart are a reflection of her passion for this community of people. She says, "whatever I have done and continue to do, is always for the residents, for the people in the houses.". She is able to recognise, acknowledge and respect the diversity of residents at NOAH, that they all have different upbringings and experiences and how this might be challenging to navigate within communal living. She says, "we are all different, we all come out of different homes, we were all raised differently. We have to live under one roof with all our differences, and acknowledges how challenging this can be." Fatima will always help residents see the good out of bad situations and the importance of adapting to your circumstances as opposed to letting it get you

***"Whatever I have done and continue to do, is always for the residents, for the people in the houses."***

