



## A special Christmas 'in the company of Angels'

**E**very Christmas is special, but this past one was even more special as we found ourselves surrounded by the 'angels' that came back to us with each Christmas donation.

Thank you so much - they made a magical sight on our Christmas tree, and in several other places around Nazareth house, where the children, hospice patients, and our elderly residents could all enjoy them, and know that they were enfolded by love and care.

The timeless story of Christmas never loses its freshness and beauty - we see it in the eyes of our children every year as we retell it. Images of the lowly stable where a baby is warmed by the breath of the stable animals; the shepherds' wonder as they hear the song of angels; the Three Kings who came with gifts, and were wise enough to avoid Herod on their way home ... unsurprisingly, stay fresh in our minds.

Thank you for being part of our special Christmas, spent

'in the company of angels'.

You were one of them.

*Our residents young and old find comfort in your loving messages, which hung on our Christmas tree.*



### Have you visited our website yet?

This newsletter isn't your only window to the differences you make through your donations - our website is also only a few clicks away to keep you up to date on what you're helping us to achieve, and other happenings at Nazareth House.

Please visit us at [www.nazhouse.org.za](http://www.nazhouse.org.za) and see for yourself.

# Christmas cheer for our seniors – thanks to you and Sister Gladys

**W**ith Sister Gladys' calling and deep commitment to caring for the elderly, it was no surprise that she took on the responsibility of making last Christmas really special for the old people who are part of our Nazareth House family ... her goal being to make it as special as possible like the ones celebrated in their own family homes.

And so it was on that day the parish hall was decorated, and tables were set in traditional red and green.

In the kitchen a delicious dinner was being prepared – choices of turkey, chicken, lamb and beef were on offer, with roast potatoes, fresh vegetables and salads, and ice cream for dessert, and a variety of soft drinks.



The party guests – which included our hospice patients – were absolutely delighted.

But it was Sister Gladys who stole the show, by donning an oversized Santa Claus suit over her habit, complete with beard! As an instant 'Mother Christmas' she distributed her sackful of gifts. There was something for everyone to be enjoyed through Christmas and beyond.

And afterwards, the single word 'wonderful' was the summing up of the occasion.

A single word that we also attribute to friends like you, who help us to take care of those in the greatest need.

Through your caring, your generosity and your encouragement, thank you for being 'present' at Sister Gladys' Christmas party.



## Sister Gladys joins our family

**O**n the 20th October 2008 Sister Gladys Theresa made her final vows to the Almighty God in a traditional ceremony, officiated by His Grace, Archbishop Lawrence Henry at Nazareth House Cape Town.

Incorporating the traditions of the African custom, Sister Gladys was "offered" by her family to The Sisters of Nazareth and the church. An exchange of blankets and fruits of the earth was made between her mother and Sister Mary Ann, the Superior General from London, to symbolise that the love of the Congregation will flow to the family ensuring warmth in the void of Sister Gladys's presence.

Her dedication to the Sisters and love for the elderly has no boundaries, we all feel deeply blessed to have her as part of Nazareth House Cape Town.



# Of achievements ... and experiences

## Achievements

It's always good to look back on a year and see how our children have progressed. 2008 reports were pleasing, and this year everyone has moved up a grade, and some have changed schools.

Awards and certificates are proudly on show at bedside – like that of Amanda\* who is our 'mathematics whizzkid'. And some of the boys from Sydney Cottage were chosen by their gymnastics club to take part in the end of year display. Being good at something is a huge boost for self-esteem, and gymnastics is also a wonderful exercise in precision and self-discipline. (\*Not her real name)

## Experiences

Two experiences have been really memorable. One highlight was going to the theatre to see an evening performance of the popular *High School Musical*. They continue to sing along at home to the recorded music, and re-live the excitement.

## ... and happy endings

We know you'll share our joy in all of these:

Lizzie came to us at the age of eight months – very frail and frequently sick due to HIV.

Her mother had died soon after giving birth, and Lizzie had been placed in foster

care with a very loving family. However, because there was still no treatment for HIV, the family eventually couldn't cope with Lizzie's health crises.

The painful decision was made to place Lizzie at Nazareth House. Her foster family remained close until they emigrated overseas a year later.

In 2003, when Anti-retroviral therapy became available to children in South Africa, Lizzie was one of the first to be put on treatment. And since then, her health has stabilised and she's now strong and healthy, and in high school.

Two years ago, Lizzie's foster family sent her an air ticket to spend six weeks with them over Christmas. And now they've decided that she should become a full member of their family. The adoption process has been finalized, and Lizzie is eagerly anticipating her new life in a new country, from the end of January.



## Message from Sister Veronica

The building of a new year needs to be on the solid foundation of past years. So I thank you for contributing to our solid foundation, and my wish for 2009 is that we can continue to work hand in hand, heart to heart, to improve the world for those most vulnerable – the very young, the very old, and the very sick.

Part of my own solid foundation is the core values of the Sisters of Nazareth. And in a previous newsletter I shared with you my thoughts on one of them: Hospitality.

This time, I'd like to talk about Love.

We only have to go to 1 Corinthians: 12 to learn that 'there are only three things that remain – Faith, Hope and Love, and the greatest of these is Love'.

Love – a simple word of four letters, but made up of so much more ...

kindness, patience, endurance, self-sacrifice, caring, and (perhaps in these days the least popular ingredient of all) commitment.

Let us, together, put Love to work during 2009, and give life to the theory that 'Love cures everyone. Those that receive it. And those that give it. May your year of 2009 be blessed by the giving and the receiving of great love.



Sister Veronica

Sister Veronica  
Sister Superior

## Another year older, but just as 'young at heart'

**A** birthday isn't a birthday without a cake to share – especially if it's a chocolate cake.

This one was enjoyed by our 'birthday girl' and all her friends at Nazareth House.



## When you know that you're 'Family'

**W**hen somebody makes their Will, it's always with the interests of their family at heart ... ensuring that those nearest and dearest to them will be well taken care of when they are no longer present to do it in person.

So when we hear from a friend and supporter that Nazareth House has been included as a beneficiary in their Will, it gives us the most wonderful feeling of being 'family'.

Being named for a future gift is a great privilege which we take very seriously. And something that we really appreciate is being informed about it. Because there's nothing sadder than receiving a gift when it's too late to say 'thank you'.

A Will is one of the most important documents that any of us will draw up during our lifetime. So if you know of someone who doesn't yet have a Will, please do request our free guideline brochure, and pass it on as a special act of thoughtfulness.

## Daring to care and share

**C**ape Town's prestigious Table Bay Hotel has a 'secret society' of Peer Mediators. This group is made up of volunteer members from every department of the hotel's staff with a willingness to live by the group's byline: Dare to Care and Share.

And last December, our St Michael's Hospice patients were the recipients of their caring and sharing in the form of a

wonderful Christmas lunch.

Arriving complete with Chef who did the final cooking of a delicious meal on site, the Peer Mediators spent quality time with each patient, hearing their stories, creating laughter, and giving the joy of undivided attention. Remembering that our hospice patients are drawn from the poorest of the poor, accustomed to being overlooked by general society, this was a gift in itself. But there was more to come.

Carols were sung, crackers were pulled, and each patient received the gift of a beautiful dressing gown with slippers, and a bottle of soothing body lotion. Whilst staff members were each presented with a container of chocolates in recognition of their dedication.

In creating this memorable festive occasion, not only did the Table Bay Hotel Peer Mediators dare to care and share, they also brought life to the true spirit of Christmas ... 'goodwill to all mankind'.

