Have you ever had the experience that one moment you are going full steam ahead, and then the next something small happens, in the bigger picture of things, actually insignificant? But it just throws you totally out of sync? Well, that's what happened to me two Saturdays ago. My cellphone slipped out of my hand and fell into water... Ugh... I'll not bore you with the nitty-gritty details, but enough to say that for the next week+ it took an inordinate amount of my time, energy and money to get everything back online again. And since then a lot of major stuff have happened at Towers which I'm just burning to share with you!

As recently as this past Friday, the High Court of SA in Cape Town ordered that the government is "not entitled to prevent people from their existing rights to distribute and receive food." This in reaction to a court application by the DA and the organization '1000 Women Trust' to the court, challenging the government's attempts at the non-sensical regulating of food distribution during the Covid-19 crisis. It follows shortly on the heals of the DA's letter to the Human Rights Commission of SA (SAHRC) on the same issue. The SAHRC as a result declared that the Dept of Social Development has violated the human rights of people (Sec 27 of the Constitution) by preventing NGO's, churches and civil society to hand out food! Although the case still has to be heard before the court on 19 June, the court declared that for the time being, it's hand's-off for the government on civil society's actions in handing out food!

This naturally has huge implications for our soup kitchen. I'm therefore very excited to have it operational again somewhere in this coming week! I will keep you posted.

In the meantime, since the last UPDATE nearly three weeks ago, we were able to hand out 337 food parcels, and support the following organizations with either food or clothing or both: Omega Old Age Home (Heidedal), Lebone, NG Church Wilgehof, NGKA Thaba Nchu, Thami Day Care, Omega Shelter (Bloemspruit), Eden Shelter, Guardian Angels, the government emergency shelters at Norman Doubell Hall (Heidedal) and Kagisanong Hall (Batho) - which I visit with a Scripture and prayer a couple of times per week. We were also able to assist the SANDF Armour Reserve Force chaplains with 30 food parcels.

All this was done in spite of the logistical struggle to keep on buying food in bulk and packing food parcels. Luckily staff of the NG Church Synod came to our assistance and have taken over about all the packing of food parcels.

And then there was the amazing experience of partnering with the well-known Gift of the Givers organization this past Saturday. They brought 110 food parcels which together we were able to hand out to pastors of nine townships to distribute amongst
their members. The community of expatriates from other African countries in our city, also received a batch.

Another exciting development is that Towers has been given the role to serve as co-ordinator for the DG Murray Trust to distribute PPE clothing and masks to social workers and community health workers throughout the Free State. We believe this will be up and running by the 1st of June.

On a more local level, some of our staff have been working hard in making as many facemasks as possible for vulnerable people. After a few teething challenges, we are now, together with ladies at the NG Pellissier, NG Heuwelkruin and NG Fichardtpark, turning out greater numbers of masks. We already provided the inhabitants of Omega Old Age Home in Heidedal (see photo) with 40 masks (sponsored by a benefactor), and have been handing them out to our beneficiaries as and when they come to Towers. But those who can afford to pay (@ R30/mask) are welcome to contact us for an order.

Like all organizations and businesses, we have started to adapt to the “new normal” with an extensive and thorough Covid-19 protocol (thermometer and all!) at our centre. We are at the moment also utilizing the ample space in our church building for sorting and packing batches of winter clothing to go out as and where it is needed.

In the next UPDATE I’ll share something of the everyday “new normal” activities at Towers. I’m also considering moving these UPDATES to e-mail. Please let me know what would suit you best.

Thank you for your support on so many levels!

Till we chat again.
De la Harpe