

# Silver Threads

The newsletter of The Association for the Aged | February 2018

## Celebrating 60 years of service to Durban's elders, thanks to people like you



60 years have passed since a group of concerned citizens, led by John Conradie and his wife Anna, established Tafta and began taking meals to elderly indigent and housebound Durbanites.



**Inspiring active ageing**



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## Message from our CEO, Femada Shamam



**It is a humbling experience to pen this message for our 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The Tafta story is built on a vision of a better life for older people and, over the past six decades, there have been many great people who helped deliver on this vision.**

Our group of committed volunteers, who to this day continue to support Tafta, worked, and continue to work, tirelessly in every section of the organisation. Special mention must be made of those who served on our board of management and those who now serve on our Council. They remain committed ambassadors of Tafta. We are also very thankful to our donors who faithfully keep the welfare and needs of our elders in mind. The donations we receive in-kind and cash help us inspire a life worth living for our elders.

Over the years Tafta has earned the reputation of being *Leaders in innovative solutions for elders*, often benchmarking the services, products and standards required. This path includes a few challenges

and obstacles. Our talented and committed staff accept these challenges and often use them as opportunities to explore more creative ways of alleviating distress and promoting the well-being of elders.

Our current strategy is focused on three pillars: Excellence, Relevance and Sustainability – and there is also a strong focus on expansion. The population of older people is growing and will continue to grow at a rapid rate. As more people reach the age of 60, Tafta will have to redesign, realign and reposition itself to be responsive to their needs. As an organisation, we are mindful that we must be sustainable both now and into the future. The decisions we make today in caring and supporting our elders and in investing in our

financial sustainability must not compromise our ability to do the same in the future.

Tafta is about the people. It's about directly supporting elders; it's about advocating for an environment in which they can thrive and contribute meaningfully; it's about care, compassion and respect. For the 5 500 people, we support monthly, being associated with Tafta means that basic needs are met: a plate of food, clothing, medical care, and someone to talk to. As we move into a new decade of Tafta's existence, we will continue to promote *active ageing* and position elders as meaningful contributors to society.

We are excited about our future and we welcome our partners, donors, staff and volunteers to help Tafta reach new heights.

## What Tafta means to me



### We spoke to a resident at Tafta Lodge

***"Every day I say thank you to God for the many blessings and the strength to get up and do things for myself."***

**Sally Nareen.**

76-year-old Sally has lived at Tafta Lodge for 15 years, and she couldn't be happier. Her colourful room with its wall of family photos is a reflection of her energetic and vibrant personality. She walks to uShaka, and the local supermarket, goes to gym three times a week and participates in activities like dancing, bingo, bowls and table tennis at the home.

Sally has close ties to a son in Johannesburg and two daughters living nearby. But last Christmas,

she chose to stay at Tafta Lodge rather than go to family. Why? Because she felt sorry for other residents who have no one, and who never go out for Christmas.

*"I wanted to do something special for them on Christmas Day," she said. "Nothing fancy – we just all brought a plate of eats and shared the afternoon together."*

*"It's very nice here," she adds, "the staff are very good to us – if we need anything, they do it right away."*



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# Thank you for giving Christmas Cheer

Providing a special meal for Durban seniors every festive season is a tradition that goes back over 50 years; and . . . last December was no exception. Thanks to generous support from caring people like you, we were able to serve no less than 1 912 meals at 21 Tafta residences and lifestyle centres.

These pictures say it all – how very much our elderly residents enjoyed the opportunity to



dress up and spend a few happy hours in the company of others. There was good food (a full three course of traditional festive fare), laughter, lively chatter, music and dancing : in all, an afternoon to be remembered for many weeks to come.

Thank you for helping to keep this very special event going for so many years, during which you've brought happiness to literally thousands of people! Thank you also to those who contributed to our Christmas Cheer Boxes or helped raise funds for these projects by participating in our Trail Run. Your efforts are a reflection of the true spirit of the season.



# Leave a smile behind

Planning for a future beyond your own can bring great satisfaction – as these two Tafta supporters have discovered.

Although Mrs Botha\* has worked in Durban for many years as a registered nurse, before coming to live at Lucas Gardens eight years ago, she had never heard of Tafta.

"I fell in love with this beautiful place and knew it would be my 'forever home'," she says. Thinking about the future, and realising how much Tafta does to make life easier for the elderly, Mrs Botha decided to leave a legacy to our organisation in her Will.

"I think of it as leaving a smile behind," she said.

Another resident, Mrs Philips\*, also decided to include Tafta in her Will.

"It will give me great joy to leave whatever God has given me to

Tafta," Mrs Philips says. "I've seen what great lengths Tafta staff go to, to make elderly people happy. Happiness comes from security, accommodation, nursing, meals, transport and care. Tafta cares – thank you Tafta!"

Requests from people like Mrs Botha and Mrs Philips are extremely valuable to Tafta – they provide much-needed funds to ensure that we can continue to subsidise accommodation, provide nutritious meals, medical care and services like Home-based Care to those who need it most.

For more information on legacies and bequests, please

contact our Tafta Staff Member: Madeleen van Vuuren on 031 332 3721 ext. 235 or email [madeleenv@tafta.org.za](mailto:madeleenv@tafta.org.za)

\*Names Changed.



Any information you share with us about your intention to leave a bequest to Tafta will be treated in the strictest of confidence.



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# Celebrating Sixty Years



## 1967

*Meals on Wheels is launched.*

**1958:** The Association for the Aged (Tafta) is officially started at the home of John and Anna Conradie initially to deliver food to pensioners in dire straits.

**1960:** Tafta employs its first social worker in response to the growing number of older people in need of help.

**1965:** Tafta agrees to manage Cambridge House, a home for 23 elderly ladies.

**1966:** Laundry and Home Help Services launches – this is the first service of its kind for incapacitated elderly in South Africa.



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**1967:** Meals on Wheels service is launched (and is still going strong today, thanks to wonderful supporters like you!)

**1970:** The Department of Social Welfare introduces a subsidy specifically for Frail Aged Homes.

**1974:** Mayor of Durban, Councillor Ron Williams, officially opens Robert Storm House.

**1977:** Tafta purchases 31 Acutt Street, and renames it Ray Hulett House, to provide accommodation for 104 old age pensioners.



## 1958

*John and Anna Conradie's Home.*

**1979:** Tafta celebrates its 21<sup>st</sup> Anniversary with a banquet at John Conradie House.

**1980:** Tafta purchases Kings Hall, a 17-storey block of flats and shops in Aliwal Street, Durban CBD.

**1983:** Tafta celebrates its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a banquet at John Conradie House.

**1988:** John Dunn House for frail aged in Wentworth admits its first residents.

**1989:** Squirrels Workshop is established with a donation from the Argus Community Project.

**1990:** Tafta Lodge opens and provides sheltered accommodation for 254 elderly residents with limited income.

**1992:** Tafta establishes a feeding scheme for over 1 500 pensioners in Inanda, the site which will later be used to establish the Illungelo Labadala development.



## 1997

*Cook n Care starts supplying nutritious meals.*

**1994:** Tafta's first Life Rights complex St Martin's Village in Sydenham, officially opens.



Established 1958



**1997:** Cook n Care, a commercial meal preparation unit, opens in New Germany to supply Tafta residences and other institutes with over 55 000 nutritious meals monthly.



**2000:** Tafta board approves the creation of a Farrer House residential wing.

**2002:** Margie Smith is appointed CEO of Tafta, a position she will hold for 15 years.

**2003:** Official opening of the village for vulnerable people in Amaoti, Inanda. This was a collaborative project between Tafta and a community based organisation, Illungelo Labadala.

**2007:** Work begins on a frail care home with a specialised psycho-Geriatric unit adjoining Farrer House – the complex is renamed Tafta on Ridge.

**2010:** Ageing in Place is launched with a substantial donation from the Durban Benevolent Society. The service is aimed at alleviating the demand for accommodation for the elderly, by providing care/ assisted living facilities in their own homes.

# 2003

*Illungelo Labadala Village in Inanda is opened.*



# 2012

*The Outspan Retirement Complex is acquired.*

# 2010

*Ageing in Place is launched.*

**2012:** Tafta acquires The Outspan Retirement Complex in Sarnia Road from Trans 50 and is able to accommodate a further 104 pensioners.

**2014:** Tafta runs its first Care Practitioners training course for people wanting to work in the field of aged care.

**2017:** Barns Cottages in Morningside opens following a generous donation from the Barns Trust.

**2017:** The newly renovated John Conradie House, together with the newly built Langelier Towers officially opens. Langelier Towers offers its residents bright new rooms overlooking the Durban beachfront.



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# A community where elders are valued

**N**o matter how old we are or what challenges we live with, life is about continuing to grow; this is the philosophy behind the *Eden Alternative*, which promotes a different model of elder care, being embraced by Tafta.

In older traditions of aged care, the elderly were treated as frail; as if they were ill, decisions were made for them and they were housed in sterile institutions where they were passive recipients of care. The *Eden Alternative* strives to create elder-centred communities that instead encourage meaningful interactions with plants, animals,

other adults and children, and simultaneously reduces the need for expensive and often ineffective medical intervention and drug therapies.

An older person is defined as, "Someone who, by virtue of life experience, is here to teach us how to live." So care becomes a collaborative partnership rather than a one-way street. Together, caregiver and care receiver eliminate the three plagues of loneliness, helplessness and boredom.

At Tafta, we believe that older people are entitled to enjoy a life worth living – and we've already taken steps to embrace the



**Learning to do it the Eden way – staff are inspired to create a new environment for the elders in their care.**

Eden philosophy. Forty-eight staff members underwent Eden Associate training in the last 2 years with additional training planned for 2018.

## Tafta seniors embrace technology



**Tafta Resident, Elsa Maree, turns to Skype and WhatsApp to maintain contact with her family and friends abroad with the help of Tafta's wellness and activity co-ordinator, Pooventhree Pillay.**

**T**afta is helping its residents 'stay connected', with the launch of Media Centres at six establishments. Whether it's online shopping, research, or just keeping in touch with family through social media, Skype and email, the new centres are proving a hit with residents.

"Internet usage among the 65+ age group is growing," says Tafta CEO Femada Shamam. "It's an important way of bridging the gap between them and loved ones far away, re-connecting with friends from long ago, and reducing feelings of isolation and loneliness."

Elsa Maree (71), who lives at Tafta on Ridge, was thrilled to try out the new facility. "You are never too old to learn something new," she said. "I am quite excited and

*feel strongly that we should never limit ourselves because of our age or stage.*

*It's amazing just how much I can get done by just a click of a button. This makes life much more convenient,"* adds Elsa who spends three hours each day on Skype and WhatsApp. "I'm happy to be in touch with my family overseas and also be able to research information on any new medication if I am unsure."

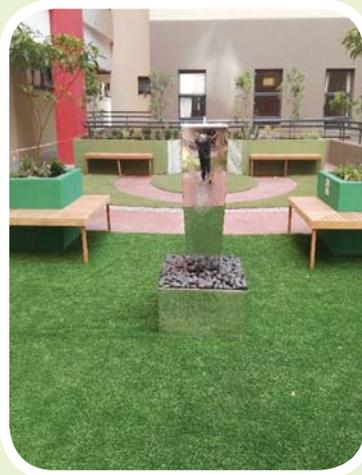
The new Media Centres are one way Tafta is helping seniors who are no longer able to get out and about, connect with the community around them. Keeping active physically is important, but a social connection is equally vital in lifting spirits and creating a feeling of well-being.

## Healing power of a garden

For some reason, elders and gardens just seem to go together. Our residents love spending time outdoors – perhaps it's because they have more time just to sit and enjoy fresh air, flowers and trees, the hum of bees and birdsong.

But for those who live in the City, especially those who are confined to wheelchairs or who can only get about with the help of a walking frame, opportunities to visit a garden are few and far between.

So there was great excitement when plans for a terrace garden were shared with the residents



*A restful fountain provides a soothing background in the new garden, which includes walkways, plants and seating areas.*

of John Conradie House and Langeler Towers. The garden was created with special attention given to the safety, needs and abilities of older people.

## Providing services ... creating jobs

Over the past four years, Tafta has created many opportunities for women to train as highly sought after Carers.

Introduced in 2014, our three-month Care Practitioner training course includes theory, practical training and written exams to ensure trainees have the knowledge and skills to tend to the needs of the elderly. More importantly, the training also focuses on the humanitarian aspects of the role –



instilling the importance of treating elders with kindness and dignity, knowing that for many, a

Tafta home might be their last home.

*"Our training offers a dual benefit," says CEO, Femada Shamam. "It produces much-needed Carers, to ensure that help is available to elderly people, particularly the frail. It also creates opportunities for those who are unemployed to gain income-generating skills."*

*"Being responsible for the welfare of the elderly and working so closely with them every day brings so much of an emotional reward. In this environment, we spend more time with elders, giving them the opportunity to socialise and communicate with someone younger. I feel so inspired knowing I am making a positive difference in someone's life," says care practitioner Mrs Memorial Zulu.*

## Diary Dates

**February:** Tafta 60<sup>th</sup> flag hoisting events will commence at each of our residential homes.



**March:** A 60<sup>th</sup> Birthday Cake Cutting ceremony will be held at all Tafta residences.

**May:** Tafta's Annual Golf Day! Book now to join us for the day or get involved by donating prizes or sponsoring a tee or hole.



**Mother's Day:** Tafta will mark this extremely special event at all Tafta homes with commemorative events.



**June:** The campaign against the abuse of vulnerable elders will once again be symbolically supported by Tafta staff and elders with our annual walk to the Durban City Hall. It is World Elder Abuse Awareness day on the 15<sup>th</sup>, but we will host our march a day earlier.

**Father's Day:** Tafta homes will commemorate the roles played by Dads with a special event in June this year.

# Last word from former CEO, Margie Smith



The odds of success have always been stacked against anyone who sets out to help those who are unable to afford to pay their way. It takes brave and compassionate souls to step into the breach.

In the early days, Tafta's workforce was mainly volunteers, who provided meals and food parcels to the poor and elderly people of Durban. The organisation was founded on the simple precept that care should be given to those who have no way of caring for themselves. This is the driving force that has brought the staff and volunteers, donors and supporters together over the past 60 years, to build a remarkable organisation capable of caring for thousands of elderly

people today.

The strategic challenges have been overwhelming at times, as Tafta grappled with an ever increasing need and a dramatically decreasing funding pool. The completion of our 2020 Strategic Plan detailed, for the first time, how care could be met by a stronger focus on the *Eden Alternative* plan, and the introduction of Ageing in Place and Active Ageing to replace long-term Institutional Care.

The plan acknowledged that the funding crisis besetting the NPO sector could not be answered by placing more reliance on Government and private donors.

Tafta is currently involved in new and exciting projects.

These projects include Tafta being a major shareholder in the prestigious Shoreline Sibaya development amongst others and is actively seeking opportunities to create spin-offs from already established services.

Tafta has a new and vibrant team to lead this remarkable organisation into another era of change and achievement. I wish them and all the people who will be called upon to help them to do more than they think possible!

## Volunteers, staff and friends have their say

*"I think it's a wonderful thing to be able to help other people."*  
Anne Foxcroft, Meals on Wheels 'hopper' for the past 20 years.

Years ago, when Tafta was looking for volunteers to deliver meals to housebound elderly people I thought, "I can do that!" Over 20 years later, Anne is still a valued member of our Meals on Wheels volunteer team. She enjoys helping people who can't get out and about themselves and has a soft spot for elderly people who don't have children.

*"It's more difficult when you have no one to look out for you,"* she says.

*"I have never worked anywhere else – I joined this organisation as a boy of 20 and grew up here."*  
Vincent Nala, Driver

Vincent has been a member of staff for 38 years and cannot imagine working anywhere else. He started as a handyman at Ocean View, before moving to head office as a driver.



*"It has become a part of who I am,"* Vincent says. *"It does not feel like a job because I love what I do."*



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*"As a student social worker, I did a placement at Tafta at the end of my first year. There I found my love and passion for elders, which lead to my deciding to join Tafta when I qualified."*

Robyn Coetzee,  
Wellness Facilitator at  
John Dunn House



*"I joined Tafta straight out of university when I qualified as a social worker in December 1986,"* says Robyn.

*"Apart from a gap while I raised my family, I've been a social worker for 31 years, and I'm very grateful to be part of the Tafta family. It's a wonderful organisation to work for, as we have different solutions depending on the needs of the elders."*

*Social work is about caring for and helping others, especially vulnerable people like the elderly,"* she explains. *"Working with them and their families, and making a positive difference in their lives is very rewarding."*