

2023 - A Year in Review

Human Environment Committee

Green Point Ratepayers' & Residents' Association

2023 was a year of social challenges, but we also celebrate achievements and generous giving. Thanks again to the long list of neighbours who support our gardening and cleaning initiatives as well as our SafeStreet Collective on Main Road and the ID and bus fare programs. Not forgetting the launch of the GPCID. All efforts have added to our spectacular environment and our safety.



Based on a close working relationship with Peter Cookson and his fieldworkers, teams of five under the City's EPWP program are assigned to us to maintain our parks and gardens. The goal is to foster new skills and job readiness. You may have met the current team distinguished by their bright orange t-shirts.



Some individuals have found work in our hood and our most accomplished gardener is now an EPWP fieldworker.... Zainap Adams spent years away from her family, living on the street and occasionally incarcerated until she met Peter Cookson. She entered the Safe Space and attended Matrix followed by recovery and reunification with her family. Photos show how she and the team transformed Thornhill Park and lane gardens (join us on our regular hikes through the lanes). They also remove excessive amounts of litter. We ask that residents be conscious of the negative impact of wet litter if not separated from recyclables. Please connect with me to get with the program.



And perhaps you have seen the EPWP fieldworkers in and around Green Point. Although their area is from Camps Bay to Milnerton, they pay special attention to our hood to engage with our homeless community and try to convince them to accept assistance. They also guide us on the City's 'responsible giving' campaign. We accept that this is a sensitive topic.....however, based on experience, we witness chronic homeless being empowered to recover if supported in a sustainable way. We encourage residents to direct funds and donations to organisations that can offer long-term social intervention. Without endangering yourself, take time to engage and direct them to NGOs in our area - Straatwerk (Strand Street) shares meals and creates work and The Haven Shelter (Napier Street) also serves meals, and their social workers offer personal development programs. Encourage them to seek assistance from Peter Cookson and his team (Social Development, Golden Acre, Adderley Street). We will start campaigning early next year to drive support for the new shelter opening on Ebenezer Road.

The same ideals apply to our SafeStreet Collective on Main Road which was launched in early 2022. Thanks to an introduction by Councillor Ian McMahon and funds from City under PEP, we were able to persuade 16 people living rough to join the rehabilitation program. An important condition on acceptance is that they live in a shelter. As they heal and progress, we facilitate reintegration with their families or accommodation in second-phase shelters such as Loaves & Fishes. These facilities have social workers to guide and monitor progress. Some have moved on to other projects and jobs. We have an intense program for the remaining 9 clients focusing on developing skills and building CVs. Some have certificates for Red Security grades as well as from St John's First Aid. Recently they attended a workshop at PCC Cement to learn how to make bricks and are now inspired to learn more building skills.



They have developed computer literacy skills including working with spreadsheets and refining their CVs at the library thanks to Katherine Moon. All have benefited from attending Matrix and, where necessary, some have spent months at various treatment centres for substance abuse such as Hesketh King or Ramot. We are anticipating celebrating 6 clients securing their driving licences early next year. All 9 clients attend morning discussions with our manager Riedoewaan Galant who constantly raises the need to save from their stipends and to apply for jobs. Physical and mental wellness are also a priority. We have a marathon runner of note and the team does regular hikes, sharing and discussing issues faced and finding solutions whilst having a presence in the neighbourhood. Last but not least, the team is actively gardening and cleaning as well as removing graffiti and needles. Today we celebrated the year with a 'braai' and, encouraged by Riedoewaan Galant, the team will also be giving back by sharing toys they bought for children at St Ann's Home in Woodstock.



The GPCID team have been quietly and effectively enforcing bylaws as well as assisting with arrests. The positive and enduring impact Marc Truss and his team have made from day one (3 July) has surpassed all expectations in transforming Main Road into a safe, clean and welcoming environment for residents and visitors.