



Fairhaven Newsletter

MARCH 2019



FREE REFORMED VILLAGE ASSOCIATION (INC)

Operating the "Fair Haven Hostel"
15 Pine Tree Close, Armadale WA 6112

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Board Members:

Jurrien de Vos (Chairman)
Arnold Schiebaan (Vice Chairman)
Vivienne Van Dyk (Secretary)
Mia vander Lecq (Treasurer)
Harry Kleyn
Martin Visser

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Jurrien De Vos

When one starts a new role, or a new job, there is always a sense of trepidation and uncertainty of what the future will bring. This was also the case when I became board chairman after the AGM last year. As someone not experienced in aged care, or even in the health care system, (I am an engineer), there was a lot for me to learn and come to grips with. I am thankful for the support I receive from the board and management so that we can work together in the beautiful task of caring for our elderly brothers and sisters.

It did not take me long to appreciate the hard work and commitment of our staff in providing the special care and support our elderly need. We can be very thankful that the staff at the hostel provide excellent care for our residents. Working in aged care can be demanding. So when I see the staff working and witness the responses from the residents, I am truly grateful for the blessings we have in Fair Haven. A recent conversation with a resident in the hostel sums up what I see "I didn't realise it was so nice in here. The staff are very caring and looking out of my room I see a wonderful garden. I am so thankful I have decided to come here." But it is not only from the residents in the hostel that I hear this. At a recent open day I spoke with a number of the village residents and they echoed what our hostel resident said. "Moving to Fair Haven

Village has been one of the best things we have ever done. I don't know why we did not come here sooner". Indeed, we can be very thankful for the blessings that our Heavenly Father has given us in Fair Haven.

As board it is our aim to develop a greater engagement with our church community, to create a better understanding of why we have Fair Haven and why we support it and to engender a positive attitude towards caring for our older brothers and sisters within the communion of saints. We can also expect an increasing demand on aged care services as we experience an aging population. The Royal Commission into Aged Care has heard important evidence that understanding and accommodating the needs of Australians with dementia will be critical to aged care going forward. It was estimated that by the middle of this century one in three older Australians will be suffering from dementia and it will shortly become the leading cause of death for Australians. At present, around 50 to 60 per cent of people living in residential aged care facilities have a diagnosis of dementia. Planning for the future will be a big task.

It has been some time since we have undertaken a detailed review of our Strategic Plan. Although this is something that is dealt with every year, the board decided that a complete review was needed,



including involvement from the association. The General meeting in December was the start of the process where input was received from members through a high-level SWOT analysis. A working team has now been formed which includes our management team, representatives from the board and a number of association members who volunteered to be part of the team. This work will take some time to complete, but we will be giving updates on the work as it progresses. The expectation is that it will better prepare us for dealing with the changes in our social environment and ensure that we are

adequately resourced to be able to meet any future needs.

When we reflect on all the activity that is taking place and the change that may be happening, we know that there is one who is unchangeable, immovable, one completely trustworthy that will guide us through all this work and who has graciously provided us with the facilities at Fair Haven. It is our prayer that our Heavenly Father will bless us all as we work through 2019 to the praise of His glory.

LIFE IN FAIRHAVEN

Nick Berkelaar

I have been asked to write a few words about what it is like to live in the Fairhaven hostel.

My wife and I moved into Fairhaven a little over a year ago now, in early September 2017, after I collapsed at home, and had to be hospitalised.

In hospital they informed me that due to my deteriorating health I would no longer be able to care for my wife at home, and that we must move into aged care. We are thankful and grateful that Fairhaven could accommodate both of us straightaway. I was transferred to Fairhaven by ambulance on the 1st of September, my wife had already moved in there a few days earlier.

This was quite the unexpected and sudden change for us, as we had not yet planned, nor were we prepared for moving into aged care. We thought Fairhaven was for old people who couldn't look after themselves and so not for us! Further we had been happy living independently, and I was able and thankful to be still caring for my wife. But our Heavenly Father had other plans for us, and in His infinite love and wisdom He took control!

The move from living independently into aged care was initially very challenging and difficult for us. That doesn't detract from how we have been welcomed nor from the wonderful staff and the facilities of Fairhaven, just that we had lost some of the freedoms we used to have, and it has taken us quite a while to settle in. My wife accepted it earlier than me, and she really helped me and was truly my rock through this difficult time.

It is difficult even now for us to properly explain how we felt. Some suggested that they could fully understand what we were going through, but I chided them, possibly a little too harshly, as they wouldn't and couldn't know unless they had been through a similar process themselves.

As we reflect, we are very glad and thankful with what the Lord provides in His love. And we have again been reminded that it is Father who know best. We are very

happy now and accepting that this is now our last abode on this earth.

The days are good, and the staff very attentive and dedicated to their work. We very much enjoy our relationship with the staff, and they are patient with us, also when we are a little grumpy! Maybe we are getting older after all! They do their very best to keep us fed, fit and engaged, and it is wonderful to be able to participate in the daily activities, mealtimes and devotions together.

We enjoy being amongst the unit holders and residents, but sometimes think that our communication with each other could be better. It can be quite confronting living in Fairhaven, as we witness brothers and sisters become mentally or physically weaker, and eventually passing into glory.

We are very thankful for those that had the foresight and bravery to start Fairhaven all those years ago. It is wonderful to live somewhere where we are together in the unity of faith, whether residents, staff, helpers, management, board or even visitors, all are of the same mind and thought.

Yes, the Lord has richly blessed us. All thanks, honour and praise to our Heavenly Father.



Mr and Mrs Berkelaar

A HAVEN FOR OUR BELOVED DAD

Anke Byl

In June 2012 our healthy Mother aged 83 suddenly passed away from a stroke. Our Father, who was 82, had suffered from dementia for a few years already.

As a family, being nine children, all took turns to look after Dad in his own home a week at a time. This was very difficult and tiring for us as some of us had to be away from our families for a whole week. In time this got too much for some of the family members, so one of my sisters gave up her fulltime job to look after Dad, having a couple of days off when some of us had a couple of days with Dad. It was certainly a difficult time for all of us, but we were not ready to put Dad into a nursing home as yet.

In November 2012, Dad had a urinary tract infection (UTI) which somehow ended in his bloodstream, causing him severe sickness. After two weeks in hospital, the doctors told us that Dad was not allowed to go home anymore as he was becoming a danger to himself and to whoever was in the house looking after him. This was also to my sister's benefit as she was finding it hard cope with it anymore.

Emails and family meetings were held (not so easy meetings to be honest) regarding where to bring Dad. This was not an easy decision.

Since arriving in Albany as an immigrant from Holland as a 20 year old, Dad knew Albany like the back of his hand. Some of the family members wanted him to stay in Albany as that was his home, and had been for the past 60 years or so.

On another note, Dad always did lots of walking but always found his way home despite his condition. We were also blessed in that many people would contact one of the family members to let them know where they had seen Dad so that we could almost always track his movements. The police also helped us on occasion when he refused to get into our car if we had gone to pick him up.

Well, what to do? Somewhere in Albany or Fair Haven? If we were to put Dad in a home in Albany, we as family would have to be with Dad to read and pray when he had his meals. Besides, there was a waiting list in the nursing home in Albany, so Fair Haven it had to be. We were also aware that Mum had already organised a place in Fair Haven for Dad, although she was also not ready to put Dad in there prior to her death.

So Fair Haven it was. We took Dad there without saying where he was going, because if he found out he was going to Fair Haven, we would probably have been in big trouble, as he often said he did not want to go



Mr van Duyn

there. We packed the car with his belongings and told him we were going on "holidays", which he took well as Dad and Mum often drove long distances when they went on holidays.

We had meetings with Dorothy, as Dad being a walker and wanderer he had to be locked up in his room. Hard? Yes, it was!! This was probably one of the hardest things that we had to do!! We felt it was a terrible thing to do to Dad, but we had no choice.

Because of Dad being a walker, we were asked to be with Dad each morning for a couple of hours for coffee and games, and again at devotion time after dinner. When the weather was good we would take him out for walks or take him in the car and go visit family or friends or just for a drive.

It really did hurt us to see Dad like this but we realised there really was no option. He damaged or "fixed" things that didn't need fixing; he even managed to unlock the door and escape on two occasions. He flooded the bathroom and his bedroom by turning on the shower tap, facing it towards the bedroom, and letting it run. He even managed to twist the bathroom vanity faucet. The plumber had no idea how he managed to do that as it was very unusual to see that! So many stories we can tell, and they are great for reminiscing.

Over the years his mind deteriorated more and more, to the point he no longer recognised us. He often suffered seizures, chest infections and pneumonia. He also became incontinent. It is certainly not nice to see your Dad like this. The staff did their best cleaning and looking after Dad. They also had to turn him at regular intervals during the night when he was sleeping to avoid bed sores.

Eventually Dad ended up wheelchair bound, even to the stage that he had to be fed. But yet Dad still had a cheeky smile for us when we came to visit, a smile for the staff and yes, he did have his favourites and they favoured him in return. He would play tricks on them as well, things like scaring them with a "boo" when they turned back to wash him or dress him. He certainly kept the staff entertained on numerous occasions.

We as family continued to be with Dad at those times we were asked to, even some of us coming in to feed Dad. We could all be around his deathbed not so long a go.

We treasured those six years we had with him, even the times when he didn't know us anymore.

We have been extremely thankful for all the staff in their dedication to Dad and the other patients. Nothing ever seemed to be too much for them, and there was always a smile from them. Going to visit Dad was often like going to visit extended family – we didn't just sit with Dad, but we could "visit" with the staff and the other residents.

Looking back it could not have been better and we thank God for what we have in a Christian home like this.

Thankyou very much, Fair Haven. We were certainly very blessed to have the facility and the staff care for Dad over those years.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Our Fair Haven Hostel and Retirement Village has shown over the years of its existence that it has been a wonderful place for our parents and grandparents to be cared for during the 'twilight' of their life on earth. Our elderly brothers and sisters all express their thankfulness that they live in Christian surroundings with brothers and sisters of the same faith.

This is only made possible through your prayers, financial as well as voluntary support. The voluntary support is welcomed in a number of areas such as: evening devotions, therapy, reading to residents, sleepers (for night staff to call on if necessary), baking, and assisting with activities, etc.

The weekly contribution is currently \$8.00 per week. This payment is used for the running and upkeep of the hostel. Payment may be made either by means of cash or cheque placed in an envelope available in each church building and deposited in the appropriate box. Payment may also be made via use of electronic transfer to:

Free Reformed Village Association (Inc.)

BSB: 066 131

Account: 944914

Payments may be made weekly, monthly, quarterly or annually.



Fair Haven Membership Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Member of the Free Reformed Church of: _____

I would like to become a member of Fair Haven and agree to pay \$8.00 per week

I would like to make a donation to Fair Haven of \$ _____

I would like to become a volunteer at Fair Haven

I would like information in regards to: _____

Please feel free to contact me

Signed: _____

Please deposit this form in the Fair Haven box in your church or email our membership administrator on hamelink@iinet.net.au

