

26 November 2023

To the APCC team

It all started on an early spring Sunday afternoon in 2022, with Tersia Burger from Stepping Stones, Dr Hennie Loubser and myself in deep conversations over coffee, contemplating the possibility of a Residentia Palliative Care Unit. Coming back from the meeting, I kept thinking: "How on earth am I going to get the buy-in of an organization that has been in long-term care for the past 66 years? I really have a lot of people to convince to make this possible."

Palliative Care is not a stranger in the world of Long-term Elder Care, as we need to deal with death and dying on a daily basis. Not always under the definition of Palliative Care, but more as an acceptable part of growing old.

But having a specialized Palliative Care Unit, meant that we will be able to bring more support, understanding, dignity and support even younger patients on their last journey, to help them make the time left the best possible quality time.

After many telephone calls, discussions, emails, zoom meetings, Board meetings and consideration of the viability of this, my daughter gave me a Fortune Cookie one day. The note inside read: "When love and skill work together, expect a Masterpiece". I knew the answer was: "Let's do it."

So today we are celebrating 4 months existence of the first unit of Residentia Life.

From day one, Tersia and her Team at Stepping Stones have been supporting us on our journey to get all the boxes ticked. The hurdle was to get accredited to open the in-patient unit. We were ecstatic to receive the news in February 2023 that the unit was approved by the (then) HPCA Board. On the 14th of June 2023, we had the official grand opening with a lot of stakeholders in the Palliative Care Industry and Medical Aid Funds. Everybody supported the need for such a unit in the northern side of Pretoria. Mrs. Rina Marx the MMC for Health said in her speech at the opening ceremony that this Residentia Life Unit would fill a big void, not only for people living towards Pretoria North, Pretoria West and the Moot areas, but also for people living in the Northwest area toward Brits as well as towards the Limpopo area.

Since the opening of Residentia Life, we have been featured on the KykNet programme, Huppel in Jou Stap, as well as in an hour's radio talk on Lekker FM. The December/January Issue of Plus 50, will feature a full-page article on Residentia Life.

On the 14th of July Residentia Life admitted the first patient. To date it has supported 16 patients and their families, of which the shortest stay was 2 hours and the longest stay 56 days. Residentia Life supports families in distress, who cannot cope with long-term palliative care of their loved one in a home environment, in that they can be placed in long-term care without the trauma of having to move the patient again to another facility.

We accepted the challenge to apply for the 2 Star accreditation in October 2023, for submission before the end of October. Our very hard work paid off and we received the news that we've been accredited with the next level of accreditation!

Every day, every new patient, every new policy that needs to be developed is a big learning curve for each one of us. We take it a day at a time and have a dedicated team behind Residentia Life to make it all happen.

At Residentia Life, we know the importance of celebrating life, even during difficult times. Our holistic approach to care thrives on the collaboration of our entire inter-disciplinary team, working seamlessly together to improve overall wellbeing.

Our primary focus is on effective pain and symptom control, emotional and spiritual support, as well as practical assistance, to patients and their families. Life needs to be lived to the fullest.

Our mission is to meet the unique needs of our patients with the utmost dedication and provide them with an exceptional experience.

Patients can enjoy the comfort of private rooms (12 bed unit) equipped with an emergency call system.

Our partnership with Fedics ensures expertly prepared, nutritious meals tailored to special dietary needs.

Patients and families can unwind in recreational areas. In addition, we offer affordable guest rooms and breakfast options for families in need of convenient accommodation.

The facility also features an in-house Hairdresser. On the first floor you will find a fully equipped Gym and Activity Area for Restorative Care, under the supervision of a Physiotherapist and Occupational Therapist. Volunteer Social Workers are also available to support families on a psychosocial level.

A big thank you to Tersia Burger for her mentorship and coaching along the way. Their help with all the documentation that needed compiling. Training, showing and teaching. The

literature from APCC makes things clearer and more understandable. It is a privilege to learn from the best.

Thank you to the Residentia Board of Directors, who trusted me enough to give the go-ahead for the development of this project. This is a new development for Residentia, and I anticipate that we will soon expand to other branches of the 13 Residentia's in the country, as the need in the Community for Palliative Care is high in demand.

Residentia Regards

Ilse Haasbroek

Residentia Group Manager: Care