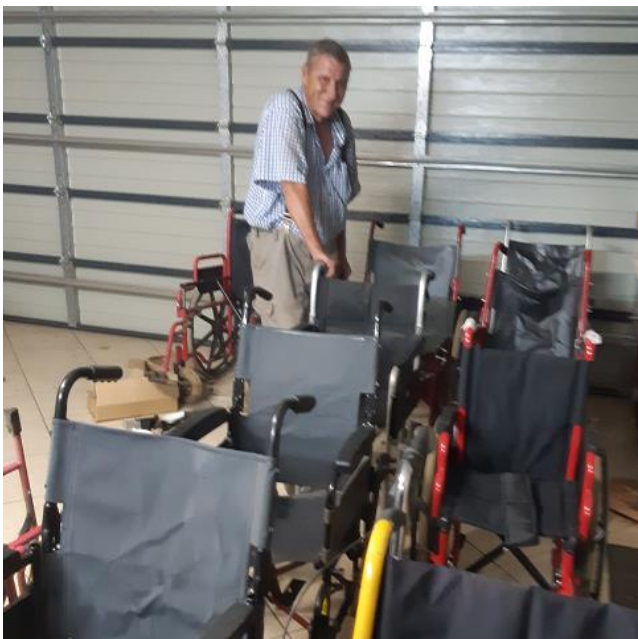


Those wheels go rolling again



There is no place for cars in the garage of house 82, at Bronberg Retirement Village as numerous “emergency” vehicles are parked in there. Wheelchairs, walkers and crutches for disabled residents have found their way there and fill all the available space.

Bert became aware of a need for these items after Doulien had a knee-operation in 2018. He realized that it would be extremely expensive and impractical to buy a wheelchair for such a short period of time. The obvious solution would be to rent these items at a low price for that short period of time.



When he joined the Rotary Club of Pretoria East, he met PP Jan Visagie, the Chairperson of the Services Committee, and Clive Perkins the champion for the wheelchair project in the club. They informed him that the club had new, as well as broken and old wheelchairs that were stored at Niche, in PP Cheryl Jute’s self-store facility. The three RCPE members went to fetch those wheelchairs from storage. Bert also received a few wheelchairs after advertising in the newsletter of the Retirement Village for wheelchairs that were no longer in use.

This interaction led to a symbiotic relationship between Bronberg Retirement Village and the Rotary Club of Pretoria East. The two organizations have taken hands and support each other in various projects e.g. Wheelchairs, donations of clothing and food to projects, knitting for the Mandela Day project. Subsequently a Christmas project was also started for November 2020 in the build up to the excitement of the holidays and festive season.

The challenge for Bert was to restore these discarded ragdoll-wheelchairs to their former beauty again. This is exactly the kind of challenge a retired metallurgical engineer enjoys. Some of the equipment could be restored, while others that were more dilapidated supplied parts for those in a better condition and then had to be retired after all the usable parts were stripped and put to good use.

Out of the fourteen wheelchairs and some walkers and crutches, a lot could be restored. The wheelchairs were donated to Honorary Rotarians and friends of the club for use after operations or illness. Some were donated for use to needy people in the community. Most of the equipment is rented out at a small fee to ensure that it would be returned, and to sponsor future repairs.

Bert Knopjes also applies the project to assist residents of the Bronberg Retirement Village who need a wheelchair or walker for a short period of time. It can be rented at a nominal amount which only assists to repair the equipment. Wheelchairs are R30/month or R10/week; Walkers at R10/month; Crutches at R10/month. The rental period can be up to a maximum of 6 months.

Donations of mobility aids by people who are no longer using them, will gladly be accepted, even if broken or incomplete.





Father and Son

The Rotary Club of Pretoria East donated food, bags of clothing and a wheelchair to Adam Beukes (Snr) and Adam Beukes (Jnr). Adam (Jnr) does not have the full use of his hands. Adam (Snr) lost the use of his legs and also his work a few years ago. He and his son have turned to begging at street corners during lockdown. They now make a daily living by asking for help.

Adam used to have a wheelchair and has often spoken to President Doulien Knopjes about the fact that life has given him such a blow. He then lost the use of his wheelchair as well and must be carried around to ask for donations.

Since the Rotary Club of Pretoria East often receives donations from third parties to distribute for charity, it was decided to give one wheelchair and a few bags of clothing to this family in need.

One of one of the ladies at Bronberg who is a beneficiary of this project has responded by supporting the RCPE Christmas project. This inhabitant off the retirement village is using a Rotary walker and wheelchair, but she is also one who is actively knitting towards our Christmas project.

