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Labyrinth in Long Street Park – Moorreesburg

Since 1998 many attempts were made to upgrade the Long Street Park because of its central position in the village and is of great aesthetic value. Planning and a presentation was made by the then Moorreesburg Business Forum to the former Moorreesburg Municipality in August 1998. Later, Moorreesburg Tourism Bureau took Long Street Park under our banner and further correspondence was addressed. Writings were later made to the current Swartland Municipality, and we thank them for their cooperation in adding a wall in front of the toilets and for painting it.

After an article and photograph appeared in 'Die Burger' newspaper over the labyrinth that was made in Barrydale, Hanlie Langenhoven brought it to the Bureau's attention that it would be ideal for our park. At a board meeting of the Moorreesburg Tourism Bureau held on 10 August 2000, the idea of a labyrinth in the park to management was made. It was referred to the members' meeting of 15 August 2000, where it was then chosen as a long-term development project.

It was decided that research must be done thoroughly and Ms Langenhoven gained much information from the internet and sent it to Kiewiet van Rooyen who took it further. On 11 June 2001, the first letter on a labyrinth was addressed to the Swartland Municipality and on 27 August 2001 another letter was addressed to the Swartland Municipality where permission was asked to proceed with the design and planting of a labyrinth.

A development workshop was held on 22 June 2002 by the Wheat Industry Museum where a Park Committee was appointed and a subcommittee for the Labyrinth was chosen to visit a labyrinth and to continue actively with the project. Hanlie Langenhoven was named convener of both committees.

Members of the Subcommittee visited the labyrinth in Stellenbosch located in the Jan Marais Park and the first sub-committee meeting was held on 25 July 2002. Permission was obtained in December 2002, to establish the labyrinth in the Long Street Park.

After Moorreesburg Tourism Bureau decided to fund this project, Hanlie Langenhoven and Gerhard Andrews of the Parks Subcommittee, along with Welcome Tyaliti, Hetman Moswele and Meno Toontjies, built a 11-lane Chartres labyrinth located in Long Street Park.

We wish to thank all the donors and Swartland Municipality who have helped with the completion of this project. The donors were: MKB (cement), Dicky Huysamen (cement), Fanie Visser (sand), Neels Hanekom - Welgegund (stone), Koos Bester - Dark Valley (stone).

The labyrinth is about 20m in diameter and covers a 728 meter track as a whole. It takes about 8 minutes to slowly walk to the middle, where you can stop, then again walk out via the track which also takes about 8 minutes.



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WHAT IS A LABYRINTH?

Labyrinths date back to the pre-historic times and is geometric shapes that are used, among other things, about your life to reflect, to meditate and to pray for comfort and serenity.

There are mainly two type's, namely the 7-track or 11-track labyrinth. The roads (or pathways) help to balance the two hemispheres of the brain and promotes physical and emotional recovery. The 11 tracks of the labyrinth represents the most important virtues of man (from the outer circle) namely respect, truth, wisdom, compassion, commitment, loyalty, selflessness, non-judgment, gratitude, hope, and of course the biggest of all, in the middle, love.

The best-known of the remaining labyrinths is the one in Chartres Cathedral near Paris, France, which was built in 1200. It is walked as a pilgrimage or for penance if you have to repent for anything. As a pilgrimage, you walk it with the aim to feel God's presence. For penance you walk while you repent, ask forgiveness and also forgive others. In the middle is a clover shaped space which portrays the cross of Christ.

EXAMPLES:

Harvard Medical School - have found that patients who experience the labyrinth walks have the following symptoms in the long term: lower blood pressure, less chronic pain and improved breathing.

John Hopkins Medical Centre, Baltimore - staff used the labyrinth to cope with stress and to relax.

Medical Centre of Central Georgia, Macon - use it in their cardiac rehabilitation program as well as a mourning program where a close relative died.

State Island University Hospice, New York City - it is also used for mourning and survival programs, as well as for stress release.

Schools for hyperactive-, dowe-, swaksiende- and autistic children - think this is a place where these children are calm, listen and concentrate. The extraordinary pace of the walk through the labyrinth's paths have a special calming effect on them.

FOR THE SCEPTICS:

Actually it is very logical - simply by quietly following the geometric path, it will have a calming effect on a person. It forces you to take a break. The shape of the labyrinth can be found everywhere in nature, i.e. on snails, shells, ferns, and the Milky Way in the sky. The human brain also takes on the form of a labyrinth.

It's important to realize that the labyrinth itself has no magical or healing powers, the cure is in the process you follow. The labyrinth is merely a catalyst.

REFERENCES:

Lure of the Labyrinth by Jared Orlin: Essentials (June 2002)

Internet: www.lessons4living.com/labyrinth.htm

www.labyrinthsculptures.com

www.labyrinthos.net

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Tourism Officer



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THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A LABYRINTH & A MAZE:

LABYRINTH

- There is only one way where you go in and out
- Stimulates the right side of the brain
- Increases creativity
- Aid in reflection or meditation
- Labyrinth is low - everyone is always visible
- The only choice that the Labyrinth offers you is whether you want to go in or not
- A true labyrinth has no false or dead end roads to confuse you

MAZE

- There are different paths
- Stimulates the left side of the brain
- Requires analytical thinking
- Symbol of confusion - a challenge
- Maze's sides are higher so that other paths cannot be seen
- As you walk you have to make decisions
- Maze's goal is to entice you to make wrong choices and for you to reach a dead end

HOW DO YOU NAVIGATE THROUGH A LABYRINTH:

There is no correct way to walk through a labyrinth. You can walk as you feel (in joy, slow, hopping in or running in and out). Most people, however, prefer to do this walk for stress release and relaxation. Then it is important to relax and get quiet before you enter the labyrinth. Do not start walking until you are not relaxed. Walk it alone and in silence. Switch off the people and sounds around you.

THE THREE STAGES OF A LABYRINTH

1. First stage is when you get to the centre. When walking, "detoxify" yourself of all negative feelings and emotions i.e. anger, anxiety etc.
2. The second stage is called the stage of brightness or light. When you get in the middle, stop - sit and relax or do a prayer. Here are stones in the shape of a clover which portrays the cross of Christ. Now open your heart for love and forgiveness before you get up and walk out.
3. The third stage is when you walk out. Be open to positive thoughts and feelings like a forgiving mentality, love and compassion. You should be much more relaxed and calm and will find that a positive and clear mind will help problems solve itself. This is the time that you take responsibility for your life and problems.