

Welcoming

Lydia Residence 2026




Guide

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GO INTO THE  
WORLD AND DO  
WELL, BUT MORE  
IMPORTANTLY, GO  
INTO THE WORLD  
AND DO GOOD.

MINOR MYORS JR

# OUR VISION AT LYDIA



Here at Lydia we subscribe firstly to the university of Stellenbosch's values of excellence, Compassion, Accountability, Respect and Equity.

Furthermore we adhere to our cluster values (explored in section 12) and then our values as Lydianers, **pride, respect, integrity, ubuntu and service.**

Lydia is a home, but it is also something much larger: a community that grows and thrives because of the people within it. Our values are not rules to follow, but a way of life we share, a quiet understanding of how we show up for one another and the world.

Lydia is a place to discover, to stumble, to celebrate, and to rise again. It is a home for courage, compassion, and connection, and it asks only that we step in fully, with hearts open and hands ready.

It is the laughter shared late at night, the quiet support offered without notice, the moments of learning and listening that shape who we are. It is in these moments, small and large, that Lydia's true legacy lives: in the women who pass through it, and in the lives they go on to touch.

Our leadership is committed to nurturing these values, ensuring that every Lydianer feels a sense of pride and responsibility in their new home.





02

# LETTER FROM OUR RESIDENCE HEAD

Ms. Ayanda

**Dear Lydia Residents,**

Welcome home! As we step into 2026, I am so excited to greet each of you, both our newcomers and senior Maties. Lydia is a place unlike any other, and you are now an integral part of its story.

My name is Ayanda Mlatsha (Ms), and I have the honour of serving you as your Education Cluster Coordinator for the Vic Meyr Cluster and Lydia Residence Head at Stellenbosch University. But beyond titles, I see myself as someone deeply committed to building community a coach, a mediator, a creator, and a champion of student leadership. More than anything a mother of two beautiful kids (Emihle and Sawongwa), plus a thousand others that you will see soon.

## **A Bit About Me**

My journey has been shaped by a passion for transformative education, especially rooted in the African context.

With more than a decade of experience in higher education and health sciences, I have lectured in mental health, guided students as an academic advisor, and supported the creation of student-centred environments.

I believe deeply in the Africanisation of education and that our teaching, our learning, and our leadership must honour our identities, empower the Global South, and make its voice heard across the world.

My work is not just professional it is personal. I mentor student leaders, coach emerging change-makers, and facilitate experiences that connect theory to real life. I also serve in governance roles, and I pride myself on being a constant builder of bridges: between students, between cultures, and between ideas

One of my greatest honours in 2025 was receiving the SU Rector's Award for Excellent Achievement, making me the only staff member to be so recognized at this prestigious ceremony, an award I took back home to Lydia. It was humbling and it affirmed for me that the work we do matters deeply.



## **What Lydia Means to Me**

Lydia is more than a residence. It's a living laboratory of community, care, and creativity a place where we don't just live beside each other, but transform and grow together. I believe in building experiential learning opportunities right here in our residence: opportunities to serve, to lead, to reflect, and to heal. Whether through leadership workshops, peer coaching, wellness conversations, or simply late-night talks in the common room, Lydia is a space for us to learn from each other.

## **My Commitment to You**

Here's what you can expect from me in 2026:

**Homegrown Leadership:** I will continue to develop programmes that help you take up space, lead with integrity, and build inclusive communities that reflect who we are as Africans and global citizens.

**Well-Being & Wellness:** I will champion mental-health awareness and support networks because I believe that thriving students are healthy students.

**Experiential Engagement:** I will design and support hands-on initiatives where you can learn by doing whether in governance, service, or peer mentorship.

**Your Voice at the Table:** As a governance leader and mediator, I promise to listen, to advocate, and to co-create our space with you.

**Continuous Growth:** I am deeply committed to being more than a coordinator I'm a coach who will walk alongside you as you grow, evolve, and lead.

**Genuine moments of joy:** dancing, laughter, song, and connection together.

## **A Personal Note**

I love Stellenbosch University but, honest truth? I love the people I spend my days with even more. Lydia is about people. It's about connections that last. And as we start this year together, I want you to know that I am here for you, ready to support, challenge, uplift, and celebrate.

So, whether you're stepping foot in Lydia for the very first time, or returning as a seasoned Maties and Lydianer, I am thrilled to welcome you. Let's make 2026 a year of transformation, belonging, and bold, purposeful leadership. Here's to us, Lydianers building something extraordinary TOGETHER!

With warmth and excitement,

**Ms Ayanda Mlatsha**  
**VicMeyr Cluster Education coordinator and**  
**Lydia Residence Head**





# 03

## LETTER FROM OUR PRIMARIA

**Dearest Lydianer (Wow! How exciting is that?),**

It is my honour to welcome you to Lydia.

My name is Caitlin. I'm a fourth-year BAccLLB student, an older sister, an iced-coffee fiend and a self-proclaimed sushi connoisseur. And for the year ahead, I have the privilege of serving as Lydia's Primaria.

When I first arrived in Stellenbosch, I knew no one. I didn't have a map of who I was yet, or where I would fit. I chose Lydia because I liked the colour of her jersey and the sound of her name. What I didn't know then was that this building, and the people in it, would come to change me entirely.

Over the past three years, Lydia has been where I have laughed until I cried, where I have failed and tried again, where I have grown up and softened at once. This community has been one of my greatest joys, and the reason I wanted to lead her.

There's a line by the poet Rainer Maria Rilke that says:

"And now we welcome the new year, full of things that have never been."

It reminds me of you, of this moment you are standing in right now. A beginning. The cusp of something that will be both ordinary and extraordinary in the same breath. You are stepping into a place that will, quietly and consistently, shape you. Lydia will ask you to grow but she will hold you while you do.

There is a kind of magic in firsts: your first morning walking down the corridor, your first house meeting, your first coffee shared with someone who might one day be your best friend. These moments, though small, build the scaffolding of your life here. They will become the memories you carry when you think of "home" at university.

Lydia is more than a residence. She is a heartbeat of people. She is laughter echoing through the stairwells at midnight, hours spent in the quad when you should be studying and the steady hum of work and joy coexisting.

And she is where you will learn that growth is not always neat. Some of your days here will be golden, and others will be heavy. But both belong. Lydia will give you space for each. A place to land softly, and people to help you stand again.

In time, you'll discover your own rhythms here: the corner of the dining hall where you always sit, the patch of sunlight on the balcony, the friend who feels like home. These are the threads that will weave your Lydia story. Hold them close.



To belong somewhere is one of life's greatest gifts. But what makes Lydia truly special is that she doesn't just give you a place to belong, she invites you to become. You'll meet people who challenge you, who teach you new ways of seeing, who remind you of your own strength. You'll find yourself laughing more loudly, speaking more kindly, working more bravely than you thought you could.



When I think of Lydia now, I think of faces, hundreds of them, each one leaving behind a trace of something good. The quiet ones, the bold ones, the ones who made everyone feel seen. You will add your name to that story. You will leave something behind too.

As your Primaria, I am here not only to lead, but to listen. To build with you a year that feels full. Full of joy, full of connection, full of the right kind of challenge. I believe deeply in what this place can do, because it has done it for me.

To the parents reading this: thank you for trusting us with your daughter. We will look after her. We will celebrate her. We will help her find her feet and her place. Lydia is a place that builds people, not just students, but young adults who are resilient, kind, and ready to meet the world.

So, to each of you: welcome home.

Welcome to late-night conversations and early-morning laughter.

Welcome to a year full of things that have never been and to the people who will make them unforgettable.

And we are so, so glad that you're here.

With warmth and excitement,

**Caitlin Soden**

**Primaria 2025/2026**



# LETTER FROM OUR VICE- PRIMARIA & WELCOMING LEADER



**Dear Newcomer,**

My name is Erin Pavitt. I'm a fourth-year BCom Mathematical Sciences student, and I have the privilege of serving as Lydia's Vice-Primaria for this next year.

Before anything else: yes, I'm fully aware that my writing will not compare with Caitlin's masterpiece. When I sat down to write this letter, every idea I had felt like something she'd already phrased perfectly. So I decided to stop comparing and simply write honestly, in my own way, which is quite fitting, because it leads me straight to a quote I have carried with me for a while:

**"A flower does not think of competing with the flower next to it. It just blooms."**

If you ever notice the jacarandas and frangipanis that occupy Lydia, you'll find out that they don't look perfect all year round. They have seasons: bright ones, quiet ones, messy ones, and breathtaking ones. Yet each one grows in its own time, without trying to overshadow the others. That is exactly what Lydia has taught me, that there is space here for every kind of growth. You don't need to compare yourself or rush your pace. You will bloom in your own season, and you will be celebrated for it, not measured against someone else's.

Caitlin said it best when she described how Lydia grows on you, not all at once, but in a way that sneaks up quietly until suddenly you realise you belong here. I never expected that. I thought I would like it, maybe tolerate it, but I didn't anticipate how deeply I would love this place and the people in it. By the time you pack up your room at the end of your degree, you'll realise how much of yourself is tied to this residence, and how much it gave you without you noticing.

If you're anything like I was, you're arriving with more unknowns than certainties. When I applied for student accommodation, I knew nothing, I picked residences based on colours. Truly. I liked Heemstede's blue, Erica's pink, and Lydia because someone recommended it to me. Lydia wasn't even my first choice. But the girl who picked residences like paint swatches turned out to be the girl who would grow more here than she knew was possible, and couldn't ever imagine living anywhere else.

In my first year I was quiet. I was shy, unsure, and honestly had no idea who I was supposed to be. If someone had told me then that I'd spend the next three years learning more about myself than about any degree content, I wouldn't have believed them. Lydia didn't just give me friends, it gave me perspective. It gave me failure and recovery, small victories, and reminders that growth is messy but worthwhile. It taught me that your timeline is your own. You're not behind. You're not ahead. You're becoming, and that's enough.



I came into orientation telling myself I would “put myself out there, but not change who I am.” Looking back, I wish I had let myself be braver sooner. What held me back was embarrassment, the fear of saying the wrong thing, of people judging me. What I didn’t realise then, was that everyone else felt the exact same way.

During Welcoming, everyone is “embarrassing” themselves. That’s the beauty of it. My advice is: the more you “embarrass” yourself, the less embarrassing anything becomes. Welcoming may feel busy and overwhelming at times, but everything on the schedule is there to give you opportunities, to meet people, bond, laugh, grow, and slowly find your place. You will find that university will change you, not in a way that erases who you are, but in a way that opens you. Orientation, especially, was where I first realised how much life there is to live if you allow yourself to be part of something.

My hope for you is not that you get everything right, not perfection, not instant belonging, not certainty, just openness. The willingness to try. To show up. To be seen. To say yes when something scares you just a little. To let people meet you. To let yourself exist fully here. Lydia is full of people and moments that will surprise you if you let them. You’re stepping into a place that will give you more than you expect, and ask of you only this: don’t hold yourself back.

And because some practical advice never hurts, here are a few things I have learned along the way:

1. Never skip class. Missing one is fine. Missing two is a slippery slope.
2. Say yes to almost everything. First year gives you a kind of freedom you won’t get again.
3. Leave your bank card at home. The Neelsie will tempt you into believing iced coffee is a personality trait.
4. Pack light. Future-you, on move-out day, will thank you for this more than you know.

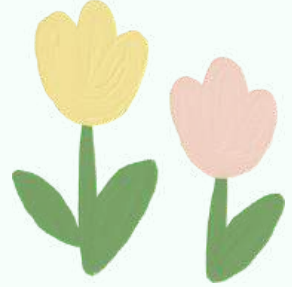
Most importantly: don’t measure yourself against anyone else. Everyone grows differently. Everyone finds their rhythm at their own pace. Lydia is here to hold you through both the good days and the bad ones.

To the parents reading this: Lydia isn’t perfect, no home is, but it is intentional. We care about kindness, about growth, about creating a space where your daughters feel safe enough to stretch and supported enough to rest. They will find friends, guidance, laughter, and a community that shows up for them.

And to you, Newcomer: welcome. I hope this place becomes a home you grow into, at your own pace, in your own season. We can’t wait to meet you!

**With warmth,  
Erin Pavitt  
Vice-Primaria 2026**

# LETTER FROM OUR HEAD MENTOR



**Dear Lydianer.**

I'm a girl all the way from East London, in the Eastern Cape, and I have come to know Lydia and Stellenbosch as my home-away-from-home. Being far from home made me deeply reliant on the Lydia community, and I am so thankful for the warmth and love I've experienced since the moment I arrived. I vividly remember that before moving into Lydia, the thing that made me more nervous than being far from home was meeting the roommate I had been paired with. Three years on, as we chose to stay roommates, I can confidently say I could not have been matched with anyone better.

My vision for the mentors is captured in our slogan for the year: "Guiding growth in the sisterhood through love". The mentors are here to encourage and support you, offering guidance as you navigate this new season and its academic challenges. Guiding growth through love reflects two of our core values: Service and Ubuntu. My hope is that the mentors will build genuine connections with their mentees, caring for one another like sisters. I am committed to ensuring that Lydia's mentors remain actively involved with the lives of their mentees throughout the year.

As Head Mentor, I will be responsible for overseeing the mentor team and the overall wellbeing of the Newcomers.

Lots of love,  
Lize Van Zyl-Smit



## What are Mentors?

Your mentors will be the first person to receive and welcome you on campus, into your new community and new space and to come alongside you in this new season. They will help you make connections and assist you in integrating to your new social and academic life. Mentors will listen deeply and actively, and refer you to the people, facilities and resources that you may need as you embark on your university journey.



# MEET THE HC TEAM

The House Committee, our “HC”, is more than a team; they are the heartbeat of Lydia. Elected by the residents the year before, these student leaders carry the honour and responsibility of serving as the custodians of our home and the people within it.

Together with the Resident Head, the HC oversees the daily life of the house. Balancing the practical with the personal. They plan events that bring us together, represent our voices to the University, and ensure that Lydia remains a space where everyone feels seen, supported, and celebrated.



**CAITLIN SODEN**

Primaria, Seniors, Constitution



**ERIN PAVITT**

Vice-Primaria, Newcomers & Welcoming,  
Safety & Discipline



**LIZE VAN ZYL-SMIT**

Mentor, Academics



**GRACE JANKOWITZ**

Secretary, Culture

# MEET THE HC TEAM

*“Remember to leave room in your heart for the unimaginable”  
- Mary Oliver*



**JENNA OLIVIER**

Financial Manager, Sustainability



**LARA BORNMANN**

Merch, Derby, Media & Marketing



**AQHAMA BANGAZI**

Empowerment, Spirituality & Wellness, Connect,  
Lydia Week



**LINDISIPHO SIWISA**

Social Impact, Maintenance, Services

06

# MEET THE HC TEAM



**LORE DE KOCK**  
Cluster, Socials



**ANKE KELBRICK**  
Connect, Sport, Logistics



**JEAN-MARI ORCHARD**  
Alumni, Dances

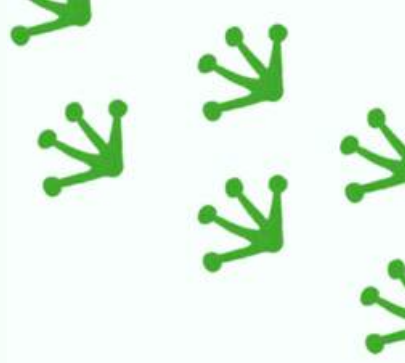


**PRINCESS SLYMPIE**  
Gees/ Spirit

07



# MOVE IN DETAILS



## **Online Q&A session**

When: **18:00-19:00, 17 January 2025**

We know coming to Stellenbosch as a newcomer can be a very daunting adjustment to make, especially if you don't know what to expect! Don't worry, we've got you ;)

On Saturday 17 January, the Residence Head, Primaria and Vice-Primaria will host an online Q&A session where the parents of our prospective Lydianers can join to ask questions about Lydia and Welcoming.

(Please keep an eye out for the link to be sent later on)

## **Move-in day**

On the day, you will be welcomed by the House Committee and you will meet your mentor. You will be shown to your room where you will be able to unpack, make yourself at home and of course, meet your roommate!

## **Lydia Residence, 5 Hofmeyr Street, Stellenbosch Central**

Date: **27 January 2025 (08:00-13:00)**

**Please note: Law students move in on 26 January (a day earlier) due to their academic program.**

**Time: (14:00-16:30)**

**Please indicate during which half-hour slot you will be arriving - you are not limited to half an hour to move in, it's just so that we know when to expect you. This link is for all newcomers, including Law Students.**

**Link:**

Please join us for the annual parent's lunch in the dining hall at 13:00 on move-in day to officially start the Welcoming program!

## **International students**

If you are an international student, take a look at the International Office's webpage here:

**<https://www.sun.ac.za/english/SUInternational/international-students>**

As an international student, you can also book transfer from the airport here: **<https://www.sun.ac.za/english/SUInternational/international-students/airport-transfer>**

# 08

# ROOM FACILITIES AND WHAT TO BRING



## What does your room already have?

- Single-sized bed and a mattress
- Wooden study desk and a chair
- Built-in cupboard
- Curtains
- Dustbin
- Wooden bookshelf
- Mirror



## Some other necessities and suggestions

- Bedding
- Tupperware
- Towels
- Electrical plugs and lead
- Fan (It gets HOT in Stellies)
- Liquid detergent (or pods)
- Shower flip-flops
- Desk lamp
- Room décor
- Cutlery and crockery
- Kettle
- Water bottle
- Desk lamp
- Exercise clothes for CONNECT
- Laundry basket
- Dish washing liquid
- Dish cloth/sponge
- Plastic basin for dirty dishes
- Laundry pegs
- Fridge (Max size 150 liters) if needed
- Hangers
- Lock and key for your room and cupboard

We do not recommend a combination lock - they are not as reliable as a lock and key

- Waterproof shoes for the rain season
- Hat and sunscreen
- Umbrella



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=InImRaN-U3o>

**Check out this YouTube video walking through the halls of Lydia!**



# THE RESIDENCE ALSO INCLUDES:

- Dining Hall
- Quad
- Lydiarga (which is used for studying)
- 5 Sections. Each section includes a bathroom and a small kitchenette with a microwave and toaster.
- Dining hall that includes a water filter and microwaves
- Study area including with three computers and a printer.
- Laundry room equipped with washing machines, dryers, and hand basins.
- Quad with a swing, picnic tables and an outdoor braai.
- Coffee hall. Our coffee hall is a recreational space that includes couches, books, a piano, table tennis and a place to study.
- Balconies with washing lines.
- We have a catering company that prepare three meals day (of various options to choose from) - we will show you how to book these meals.
- We have a Halaal option as well.
- We have WIFI in the whole residence
- Boiler with 24/7 hot water (even during loadshedding)
- Two stoves with ovens
- Snack bar where you can buy prepacked meals and snacks during set times

## MAP TO LYDIA:



# 09 STUDENT FINANCES

## WHAT IS QUOTA?

Quota is the money loaded onto your student account that is available for spending. Quota is used for printing credits, washing machine and dryer credits and meal bookings in the dining hall. Quota is managed on the MySun portal. Don't worry we will show you how this works.

## WHAT IS COB?

COB is also a form of money loaded onto your student account. COB can be used to buy food in the Neelsie student centre and it works on a tap-and-go basis with your student card. COB can also be managed on the MySun portal. Usually Quota is loaded onto the student account and it can then be converted to COB as needed. However, some bursaries load an amount of quota and an amount of COB respectively onto the student account.



# 10 GENERAL INFO



## ROOM POINTS

Throughout the year, there will be various sports, committees and activities that you can do (see our Committee Booklet for more information on what Lydia has to offer). With each activity, you will be awarded room points for your participation. At the end of the year, these room points will be used to determine room shooting list (i.e. the more points you have, the higher on the list you'll be).

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## PARKING

You are welcome to bring your car to campus, but it is not recommended. This is because Lydia only has a limited number of parking bays available and they are allocated based on room points (points you earn for your academics and participating in Lydia and campus activities). As a newcomer, you do not have any room points yet and will therefore, be last on the list. This however, depends on the number of parking bays allocated to Lydia. If there are fewer parking bays than there are seniors who have applied for parking, you will not have access to a parking spot. Honestly, you do not need a car - we are located centrally, and you can walk most places.

There are non-allocated parking bays in the street in front of Lydia, Hofmeyr Street. However, there is no guarantee that you will always find a place to park.

Alternatively, you can register for long term fenced-in parking for a fee. This parking is not close to Lydia.

You can find more information here: <https://www.sun.ac.za/english/welcome/Pages/Parking.aspx>

There are two disabled parking spots available: one at the front and one at the back of Lydia.

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## IT FACILITIES

Lydia has three desktop computers and a printer available for communal use. There are also numerous computer and printing facilities available on campus, so please do not worry if you do not have a laptop. SU may communicate on the availability of laptops for NSFAS and other vulnerable students, so please keep a look out for communication from SU. There is Wi-Fi available all over campus, including in Lydia. For a once-off fee, you will be able to register your mobile devices and access this Wi-Fi. We will show you how to do this during Welcoming.

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## MULTILINGUALISM

Officially, Stellenbosch University's official languages are English, isiXhosa and Afrikaans. In Lydia, we align ourselves with this language policy and strive towards a multilingual and diverse space where everyone is comfortable enough to express their identity and their backgrounds. We firmly believe that language plays a big role in this identity and therefore we want to encourage all our newcomers to feel free to use whatever language they feel comfortable with. Even though English will be used as the lingua franca during Lydia events (including Welcoming), Lydianers are free to speak the language of their choice.

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## INSURANCE

The University will not be liable for the loss or damage of residents' property, and residents will be personally responsible for arranging the necessary insurance cover. This includes fire or water damage and theft.

# LYDIA LEADERSHIP



**MENTORS**



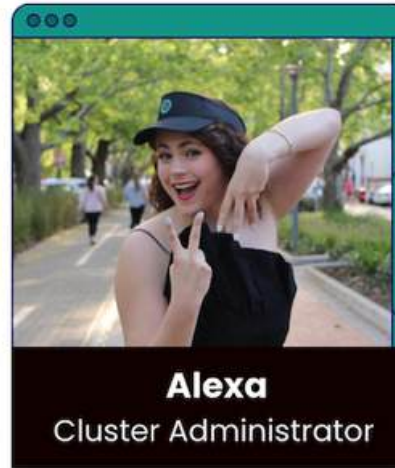
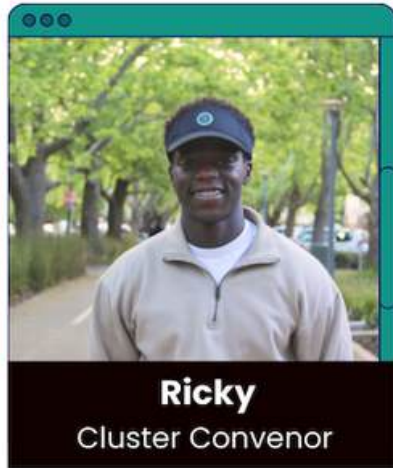
*"Alles vir die huis"*



**SENIORS'  
COMMITTEE**







Wie kuier? VicMeyr

# VICMEYR CLUSTER

**Welcome to the VicMeyr Cluster!**

Welkom by die VicMey Kluster! Wamkelekile kwiqela lendibano leVicMeyr

VicMeyr unites six communities: Aurora, Dagbreek, Majuba, Minerva, Lydia, and Huis ten Bosch, all linked between Victoria and Hofmeyr Street.

We're a collaborative, inclusive space where students connect across communities, share experiences, and build meaningful relationships. Each community brings its own character, and together we're stronger.

We'll see you at Cluster Day and Cluster Athletics- good luck with welcoming!



Camaraderie | Respect | Integrity | Critical Thinking



# VICMEYR SONGS

**Oh VicMeyr**  
**Oooh oh oh VicMeyr x4 (at least)** SONG 1

**Wie maak die jol vol**  
**Wie maak die jol vol**  
**VicMeyr maak die jol vol** SONG 2  
**Yaaaaaa (with beat)**

**Masambe VicMeyr**  
**Let's go VicMeyr!**  
**Masambe**  
**Masambe** SONG 3  
**Masambe VicMeyr**  
**SUKANI SUKANI (hip movements)**



# 13 HOUSE SONG

**Nasi isizulu se-Oak Town yethu  
endala**

**Apho kukho ulwazi nobuhlobo  
Natsi iNdlu esekelwe kubulumko  
nothando**

**YiLydia endla ukuzingca kuthi**

**And if the others ask of thee,  
What may the difference in us be,  
It's Lydia, It's Lydia  
Where virtue's required**

**En sou die ander vra dan  
Wat is dit wat jul anders maak,  
Dis Lydia, dis Lydia  
wat edelheid vra**



WE CANNOT WAIT TO  
WELCOME YOU INTO  
OUR HOME AND OUR  
HEARTS!



## FIND US

email: [hklydia@sun.ac.za](mailto:hklydia@sun.ac.za)

instagram: [lydia.residence](https://www.instagram.com/lydia.residence)

website: <https://hklydia.wixsite.com/lydia-residence>