

PROVINCE OF ROSALIE RENDU



NEWSLETTER



Incorporated
works



The Daughters of Charity
of St Vincent de Paul Services

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GREETINGS

Sister Ellen Flynn

Greetings to all of the readers of this special newsletter! Whomever you are and wherever you are, you are part of the extended family, which make up this publication.

In this edition, we have an unusual and informative piece from our Editor, Riana, explaining the Advocacy work she does for Daughters of Charity Services in the British area of the Province of Rosalie Rendu. Due to the witness they give, all of our incorporated works and projects are engaged in advocacy. Our charities would not exist if the needs were not there. However, Riana is now encouraging us to take our witness outwards, intentionally using our experience and giving a voice, ultimately their own voice, to all those with whom we stand in solidarity. Internally our voices were heard loud and clear in the inspirational and challenging presentations given during our Vincentian Values Week in September this year. If you missed it, you will find the recordings on the website: www.dcsvpservices.org. It was fantastic – do not miss it next year and put the dates in your diary now: **23rd-27th September 2024**. All are welcome!

Shortly before the Vincentian Values week, we were blessed in Britain by a visit from Sister Françoise Petit who is the Superioress General of the Daughters of Charity, the most senior Sister in the world, living in Paris. There are some lovely pictures of her visit to The Listening Heart in Glasgow. She was warmly welcomed wherever she went and was a joy and inspiration to everyone in her simplicity



and her genuine interest and engagement. We hope that one day she will visit Australia too!

The other pages of our Newsletter are filled with all the ways in which lives are lived, changed and enhanced. The pictures are full of meaningful encounters with individuals and effective collaboration with others.

Always there is celebration and the creation of fresh memories. Striking examples of innovation are evident, along with elements of education and wellbeing, which bring purpose and progress to people who are encouraged to grow and develop in all the aspects of their lives. From my own experience, I know that the people we serve bring all these qualities to our lives too, in the mutual relationship with each other which defines the Vincentian Charism!

At the end of November, we celebrate the feast days of Sr. Catherine Laboure (28th) and our Lady of the Miraculous Medal (27th). Let us be united on these special days associated with the birthplace of our shared Vincentian Heritage in Paris.

GREETINGS CONTINUED...

I cannot end this brief reflection without mentioning the horrifying state of our war torn world. Ukraine, the Middle East and many other areas of our stricken world that we do not hear about. Our hearts are devastated by the pictures on our screens and we realise the devastation of so many lives beyond our control.

In most of these places, if not all, members of our global Vincentian Family live and work, standing in solidarity among those who suffer.

Let us unite with them in their distress and hardship and as we celebrate the November Vincentian feast days, asking for St. Catherine and Our Lady to work miracles in the hearts of those who perpetrate violence that they may promote justice and peace. We yearn for helpful interventions on the part of the governments of the countries in which we live.

May God bless you all in every way and keep justice and peace in your every breath.

JUSTICE & ADVOCACY

Riana Rae Brown

Group Communications Manager,
Daughters of Charity Services

Welcome to the 13th edition of our newsletter. It brings me great joy to edit this newsletter each quarter. My hope is for each issue to provide you with a snapshot of the vast reach we have across different communities and demographics within the province. With the amount of hard work taking place, it's not often we have the chance to stop and reflect on our collective impact.

Here in London, where the Daughters of Charity Services office is based, it is a sad reality that 25% of people are living in poverty after housing costs. But perhaps what's even more alarming is 33% of children in London are experiencing poverty too. Recently, Daughters of Charity Services co-signed a letter to candidates who are in the running to become Mayor of London in 2024, asking them to put tackling poverty at the heart of their manifestos.

Infact, child poverty is a prominent issue country-wide. Over four million children in the UK experienced food insecurity last year, with an alarming number going through the school day with very little to eat, and others having to skip meals entirely. Back in June, we co-signed an open letter along with over 90,000 people calling for universal free school meals for all children in England, which was delivered to Prime Minister Rishi Sunak at Downing Street.



But with a general election on the horizon, we need every political party backing our call for free school meals. This month we signed a petition, organised by No Child Left Behind, urging opposition leader Keir Starmer to make free school meals a Labour promise too. And, in support of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and Trussell Trust's 'Guarantee our Essentials' campaign, we called on UK political party leaders to make sure Universal Credit protects people from going without the basics they need to live.

As you may have gathered, we are proactively and proudly joining hundreds of organisations to bring about real change to people's lives through campaigning and advocacy work. Collaboration has always been an essential ingredient to a Vincentian service, not just within the Vincentian Family, but with like-minded groups and individuals too. We are more powerful *together*.

Another crisis high on our radar is the country's asylum system, which is proving to fail so many vulnerable families. In July we joined over 150

JUSTICE & ADVOCACY CONTINUED...

organisations to condemn the Government's Illegal Migration Bill, in particular its plan to detain refugee children who have already suffered the trauma of fleeing their homes and making a dangerous journey to the UK. We then spoke out in response to the shameful passing of the bill, and we continue to fight for the rights of refugees alongside the Together with Refugees coalition.

Last year our attention was turned to the care sector and the immense strain care organisations are under. Staff recruitment and retention remains a persistent issue and many carers are struggling to keep up with the cost of living, despite working long hours and care organisations' best efforts to support their staff. What's more, with a rapidly ageing population and a stagnating macroeconomic picture full of uncertainties, it is becoming ever clearer that the various problems facing English social care will require ambitious solutions from the government.

Earlier this year, Daughters of Charity Services developed a survey that was distributed to thousands of care organisations across England throughout the summer months. The aim was for the survey to gather data from senior-level employees within the organisations to help us better understand the challenges they face and determine strategies for overcoming them.



We revealed some of our preliminary key findings from the survey at this year's Vincentian Values Week in September, with a full report set to be released in the new year. There are clear signs of uncertainty and pessimism about the ability of the social care sector to solve its problems without increased government funding, and the vast majority of the sector agrees that more funding from government, above and beyond what has already been promised, is necessary for solving the sector's problems.

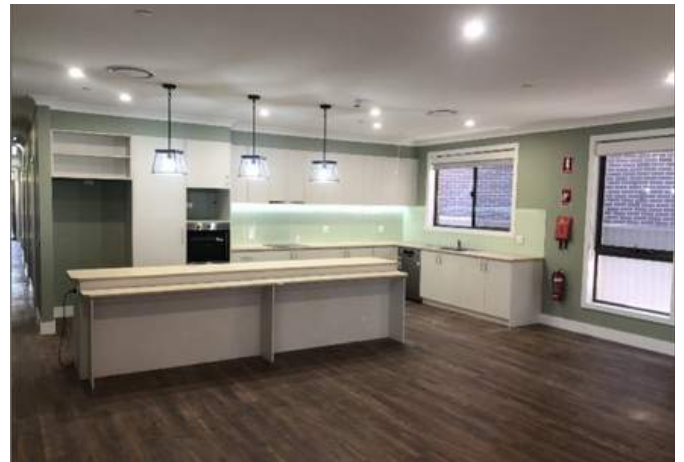
Our hope is for the final report to fuel our advocacy work towards central government and industry leaders by establishing what actions can be taken to achieve a fair solution for everyone. We look forward to sharing the report with you in the coming months and collaborating with others in the sector as we endeavor to improve the state of social care and the wellbeing and status of carers.



SETON VILLA

The beautiful weather over the past three months has resulted in great progress on our final new Specialist Disability Accommodation Improved Livability house, which is the final stage of our three-year Asset Redevelopment journey. As previously advised, this last house will welcome new male residents to Seton Villa, and we already have two of those residents committed and ready to move in during late January 2024.

Our next challenge is to successfully complete our Triennial National Disability Insurance Scheme Recertification Audit, which commenced on 30 October 2023. The audit team from Bsi are keen to be able to speak in person with residents and families in their new homes. Thankfully, the timing of this audit precedes any additional compliance obligations to flow from the recently released Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation of People with Disability Report. It is a very disturbing read and the Australian Government is currently



considering how many of the 222 recommendations will be adopted to hopefully lift the quality of service provision within the Disability Sector.

Once this recertification process has been completed, we will ramp up our conversations with impact investment groups to offer our Specialist Independent Living service to newly built Specialist Disability Accommodation properties in the local region. It is hoped that this initiative will build upon our successful integration of the RASAIID (Ryde Area Supported Accommodation for Intellectually Disabled) community into Seton Villa and continue our growth strategy moving forward.

SETON VILLA CONTINUED...

Vincentian Values Week

I was pleased to be invited to speak at the Vincentian Values Week event on Monday 25 September 2023 on the topic of Empowering Lives with the Theory of Change

This was a great opportunity to share our work with the wider Vincentian family in the UK, particularly around our Side-by-Side Active Support Model that continues to evolve under the guidance of our Participant Experience Lead, Rhondda Vassallo.

Peter Gardiner

Chief Executive Officer





THE LOUISE PROJECT

There has been an upsurge in the number of women attending education classes at The Space, an initiative of The Louise Project and the charity's central hub in Govanhill, Glasgow. There are currently 59 students enrolled for classes from predominantly Romanian, Slovakian, Pakistani and Syrian backgrounds. 24 of the students are from the Roma community, including two Roma students who attend the charity's college class. This is to be celebrated after a big push over the summer to encourage the Roma ladies back to learn English. To accommodate the huge demand for places, The Space now offers an extra English class on a Thursday afternoon as well as the Tuesday and Thursday morning classes already in place.

From July through to September, 46 families were supported by The Louise Project with a crisis. This number was significantly lower than the previous quarter and it is wonderful to see that so many families supported by the project are no longer in crisis. The main issues families presented with were education,

health, housing and welfare benefits. The Louise Project also helped an impressive 518 families integrate into life in the community and the wider city this quarter.

As part of The Louise Project's Hopeful Futures Programme, staff are now running a women's group with the aim of teaching the ladies important life skills that will enable them to make informed choices in life that will result in building a better future for themselves and their children. The group will focus on learning about boundaries, relationships, wellbeing and different tools on how to deal with stress. This is a very exciting pilot programme for the charity and is an important part of its enablement model that aims to break cycles of poverty. Seven women joined the first session in September where they focused on getting to know each other and enjoyed a coffee and a cake together. For the second session the women had the opportunity to take a trip to the cinema. Future sessions will focus on feelings where the women will learn to understand how complex feelings can be and how they are interlinked with thoughts and body sensations.

STOP & BLETHER AT THE LISTENING HEART



THE LISTENING HEART

On 8th September 2023 we were honoured with a visit from Sister Francoise, Mother General of the Daughters of Charity, her assistant Sister Julie and Sister Ellen Flynn, Provincial, to our Listening Heart Project in Glasgow, Scotland. Both volunteers and regular visitors to our centre joined us for this special occasion.

The Listening Heart began to welcome visitors here in February 2023 and officially it opened on the 16th May 2023. At the centre, all are welcome to come in for a chat and a cuppa, and over the past few months many have shared their stories with our volunteers.

On the day of this special visit we were able to greet our visitors in both French and English. This included a short prayer service, saying the Hail Mary in both languages, as the 8th September is the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

During the visit Sisters Francoise and Julie were very happy to chat to all who were present and they were delighted to receive their Scottish gifts.

It was an inspiring visit for everyone. Volunteers and our regular visitors are still talking about the day.

THE LISTENING HEART CONTINUED ...

We hoped to be able to connect with our co-ordinator Sister Maria Robb DC, who was at that time out in Kenya working with some young Kenyan DC Sisters. The Kenyan DC Sisters were excited to think they might be able to chat to the Mother General during her time with us here in Glasgow, but Sister Francoise's visit was short and both her and Sister Julie gave so much time chatting to

those in the Listening Heart. Sister Julie even exercised her sign-language skills and she chatted to some deaf people who visit the Listening Heart.

The visit ended with some Scottish singing '*Were no awa tae bide awa*' to the delight of our visitors.

Haste Ye Back Sister Francoise and Sister Julie.
There's always a welcome here!





OUT THERE

It was a summer full of fun, community and making memories for the people supported by Out There. The charity organised a range of activity days for families impacted by imprisonment to enjoy, with the aim of reducing social isolation by bringing families together who share similar experiences, create new friendships and provide new opportunities for children during the holidays.

Over 100 family members were treated to a trip to Blackpool Zoo in August. Thanks to generous donations, transportation and lunch was also provided on the day. Children who attended wrote thank you letters to funders for their generosity.

Out There was awarded additional funding for a number of families to enjoy their own week-long holidays, including trips to Wales and Blackpool. The holidays provided families with quality time to strengthen bonds and a chance to break away from the worries of daily life.

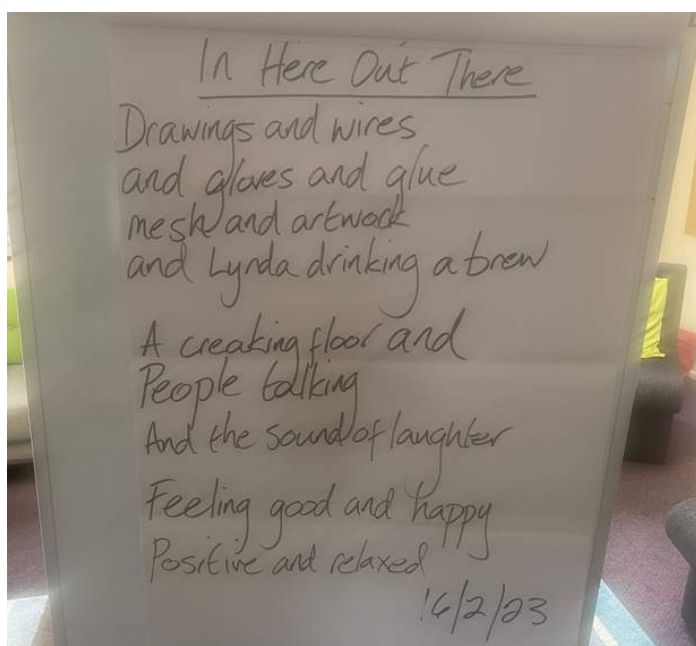
Out There has implemented 'Family Fridays', where on the last Friday of each month the charity provides a social space for families to come together and be amongst people that understand what they are going through. For the most recent Family Friday, Out There partnered with Cracking Good Food to hold a cooking day for 14 family members. Attendees learnt how to make pasta bake using home cooked ingredients and enjoyed eating a meal together with their peers.

OUT THERE CONTINUED ...

Collaboration

Out There's central hub is becoming a home to other community organisations in the area. Over the summer, the Counselling and Family Centre (CFC) moved into the premises. CFC is a mental health charity with over 45 years' experience of counselling children, young people and adults. Out There and CFC are exploring ways of working together to offer families impacted by imprisonment counselling services.

In partnership with the Big Life Group, an organisation that works with people to create opportunities and inspire change, Out There has been working on a pilot project that supports men in Trafford who are on probation. Following the success of the pilot project, Out There is delighted to have been commissioned a contract to continue the work and use the hub for 1-1 support and group activities for men. One man wrote a poem to help express his emotions during a creative writing workshop run by the project:



Recently, Out There was visited by St Vincent de Paul Society's (SVP) Grand Avenue project after connecting at a recent SVP conference. The Cardiff-based project provides support to people on probation, with a focus on the role local communities can play in reducing re-offending and building hopeful futures.

In October, Out There had new accessible ramps installed around the hub thanks to funding from National Lottery Awards for All. The new ramps have replaced the hub's old wooden ramp, enabling people to access Out There's support services safely and with ease.

*Nathan from the Grand Avenue project meeting
Mark, CEO at Out There*



Hutt St Centre

end homelessness



HUTT ST CENTRE

Walking in solidarity to help end homelessness

Monday 7th August marked the beginning of Homelessness Week, when people across Australia were encouraged to spark meaningful conversations and take action to help solve the growing issue affecting more than 122,000 Australians every night.

This year's theme was: It's time to end homelessness. Here at Hutt St Centre, we couldn't agree more - ending homelessness is our very reason for being.

During Homelessness Week, our annual Walk a Mile in My Boots Challenge kicked off. The Challenge invites people across South

Australia to step up and walk a mile or more each day during Homelessness Week.

Walk a Mile in My Boots is our biggest fundraising event of the year, raising vital funds to support Hutt St Centre's health, wellbeing and homefulness services. It also offers a chance for thousands of compassionate South Australians to walk in solidarity alongside people experiencing homelessness.

More than 2,033 people stepped up, walking over 25,943 miles across the suburbs, trails, and beaches of South Australia, and raising an astonishing \$535,358!

Challenge Week culminated on Friday 11th August, with the community coming together

HUTT ST CENTRE CONTINUED ...

to walk The Final Mile. The walk was led by our Patron Her Excellency The Honourable Frances Adamson AC, Governor of South Australia. The Honourable Peter Malinauskas Premier of South Australia also walked with us, along with prominent South Australian media personalities and sportspersons.

It is clear that our wonderful community of supporters are determined to create a better future where everyone has a place to call home. Funds raised will provide:

- More warm meals for people experiencing hunger on cold winter mornings.
- Access to hot showers, lockers, laundry facilities and friendly conversations for people doing it tough.

- Better access to professional support services so, in the long term, people walking through our doors have the chance to find their own place to call home.

In the end, what matters most is that anyone who comes through Hutt St Centre's doors receives a warm welcome and the support they need to take the next step on their journey to homefulness.

While there are people in South Australia who don't have a place to call home, we'll continue working to provide what they need – thanks to the incredible, life-changing support of the community.

Chris Burns CSC

Chief Executive Officer





ST JOSEPH'S

St Joseph's is leading the way in social care recruitment as the UK continues to face a staffing crisis in the sector. The charity held a recruitment day in September, which provided an opportunity for people over the age of 16 to see what life as a Support Worker at St Joseph's is like. The event was a great success with over 30 applicants, 22 of whom interviewed for roles on the day.

Five current staff members at St Joseph's passed their Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQ) over the past few months. Additionally, Margaret Neil, St Joseph's Learning and Development Co-ordinator, passed her Learning and Development 9DI qualification, which means the charity now has its own internal SVQ assessor. Congratulations to all!

St Joseph's recently welcomed a new Activities Co-ordinator, Mandy Burgen, who has already made a positive impact on the lives of the people at St Joseph's. Mandy launched a new Knit and Natter club, which takes place on the last Friday of each month. The club is a great way for budding knitters to have a monthly get together, share ideas, demonstrate their creativity and learn new skills. Mandy also introduced a new Tuesday Club, which aims to promote social inclusion for people living with a learning disability. The club is open to everyone at Joseph's as well as the wider community, and provides a chance for them to enjoy meeting up and creating new connections with others. The first meet-up involved a fun afternoon of dancing, games, bingo and karaoke.

ST JOSEPH'S CONTINUED ...

In September, St Joseph's Board of Advisors delivered a presentation during Vincentian Values Week where they demonstrated why involving people with lived experience at strategic level is vitally important when providing a truly Vincentian service. The Board of Advisors, which is made up of people supported by St Joseph's, shared their positive experiences of being on the board and how they worked with senior staff and trustees to develop the charity's new governing document.

Staff members at St Joseph's have been busy raising funds for the charity's centenary next year. Fundraising initiatives have included sponsored skydives, head shaving, history tours and long treks, all of which will go towards making the centenary particularly special for all of the people St Joseph's supports. The charity is proud of everyone who took part and thanks all those who sponsored the events.

The people at St Joseph's are now embracing autumn festivities with halloween parties and pumpkin carving competitions. Everyone did a spectacular job at designing weird and wonderful pumpkins, but after much deliberation, first place went to Fiona, Margaret, and Susie with their fairy den pumpkin. Second place was awarded to Helen and Linda for their spooky ghost pumpkin display, and Ann Marie scored third for her beautiful flower pumpkin. Well done everyone!





ST CATHERINE'S AGED CARE SERVICES

For the last few years at St Catherines, we have been carrying out a tradition where we host an Annual Candlelight Dinner for our residents and their families within Bethany Villa. This year, on the 12th October, a wonderful celebration was held where beautiful music was played, scrumptious meals and desserts were served to our residents and families, and lots of clinking of full wine glasses echoed in the air. The dinner promoted an opportunity

for all to integrate and socialise together in a very comfortable setting.

Sister Ellen Flynn even managed to join us on the night after a long journey from the UK. We hope for many years this tradition will continue as we believe it is a very important part of creating valuable memories.

Yan Li

Chief Executive Officer



Summer trip to the National Portrait Gallery



SVFP sports day

ST VINCENT'S FAMILY PROJECT

St Vincent's Family Project (SVFP) secured funding from Pimlico Millions and HAF (Holiday Activities and Food Programme, funded by the government) to develop a summer programme that would provide a variety of fun and educational events for young families in Westminster. The summer programme was designed to encourage families to come together during the holidays, create memories from experiences they may not otherwise be able to afford, and offered parents the opportunity to share any of their worries with supportive staff members at SVFP. Over the course of two weeks, from the end of July to August, around 90 children and their parents had the opportunity to enjoy a coach trip to Southend-on-Sea, take a boat trip to Greenwich, take part in a sports day, and visit the National Portrait Gallery and other museums and parks around London.

In September, SVFP re-opened its doors to

families as the new school year started. The project is back at pre-covid numbers, with up to 30 families visiting the centre some days. The needs of families in the area are growing and complex; mums and dads share their anxieties around the cost of living and parental pressures, and how their mental health has been impacted. SVFP's weekly programme is designed to support families emotionally, mentally and physically, offering three free crèche mornings and drop-in consultations on Tuesday and Thursday, as well as 1-1 sessions for parents, baby massage, a Positive Parenting Programme that takes place every Wednesday and health and fitness classes on Fridays. SVFP was delighted to gain additional funding to expand its range of health and fitness offerings for parents. The goal is to help strengthen not only parents' minds and bodies, but also the community. SVFP provides both group exercise classes and personal training sessions for mums, as well as Health Living Workshops. The project has also been able to purchase new fitness equipment, including dumbbells and skipping ropes, thanks to the funding.

SVFP CONTINUED ...

There are some new faces at SVFP. Staff welcomed Faith in September who is working as a full time Family Support Worker at the centre. They also had three new students join the team for a full year who are training to work with children, as well as a couple of students from France who have been helping in the crèche on Mondays. The project also thanks its volunteers, including one mum who was a previous service user at SVFP. She has expertise in finance and has been offering her time once a week to help with the charity's accounts.

As well as the work taking place at the centre, SVFP has established excellent relationships with seven local schools where staff provide regular creative arts therapy to children who may have special education needs. SVFP is also looking to partner with a local youth club to develop a pilot project whereby they will provide creative arts therapy to older children. Levels of anxiety has increased among young people, and this

service will enable older children to access support in a trusted and safe environment that isn't school based.

Members of the SVFP team created an October half term programme for families to get involved in, including a visit to Horniman Museum, a storytelling day, a creative play session at Tate Britain, a Halloween party, and ending with its usual Friday morning crèche and a health and fitness class.

Staff are also preparing for the festive season ahead. Last Christmas SVFP was delighted to receive funds to help families out with the cost-of-living crisis, as well as put on fun and entertaining activities for them to enjoy. Feedback received from parents indicated that families most valued the safe and relaxed space that SVFP provided them over the holidays and gave them a sense of community. Staff are already working on building up the funds to provide a joyful, supportive and nurturing community for all young families in need in Westminster again this Christmas.





ST MARY'S HOUSE OF WELCOME

By Robina Bradley, Chief Executive Officer

Strategic Plan 2022 – 2025

St Mary's House of Welcome (SMHOW) is excited to have launched its strategic vision for the next three years, setting a forward horizon for scheduling of key strategic initiatives. Our plan – developed with broad consultation with Board, staff and community members – outlines our key strategic intent and objectives that will guide our actions and initiatives in the coming years. The plan sets our approach to:

- Demonstrate strong alignment with the SMHOW mission of standing with vulnerable people offering support, solutions, and hope,
- Ensure the financial sustainability of the business,
- Change the service model of the business, clarify its future scope, and indicate the scale of each business line, including NDIS services and missional/discretionary services,
- Specify what services will be delivered in-house, and/or which delivered in conjunction with other entities,
- Result in an executive team structure and clear accountabilities that support the strategy and its associated priorities.

Additionally, our teams developed a refreshed Service Model Framework to reflect our commitment and approach in recognising the impact of trauma on individuals and tailoring our services to best meet their needs.



This strength-based, evidence-based model, based on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, means we intentionally work to:

- Provide a safe and welcoming environment,
- Build relationships and connection,
- Support and coach in emotional regulation.

We look forward to the journey ahead as we work towards achieving our objectives and providing compassionate, trauma-informed services to our community.

Stories From Our Community

Every day, we have the privilege to stand with, and for, our community members. Recently, we received a heartfelt card, along with a box of chocolates, to our dedicated staff. This lovely gift is a testament to the incredible work the Homelessness Team has been doing with this particular service user over the past 18 months, acting as a driving force behind the positive changes in his life. This story beautifully illustrates the work our Community Support and NDIS Workers do

SMHOW CONTINUED ...

every day. Whether it's the small things or the big things, they all matter and contribute to our mission of providing practical support, solutions, and hope.

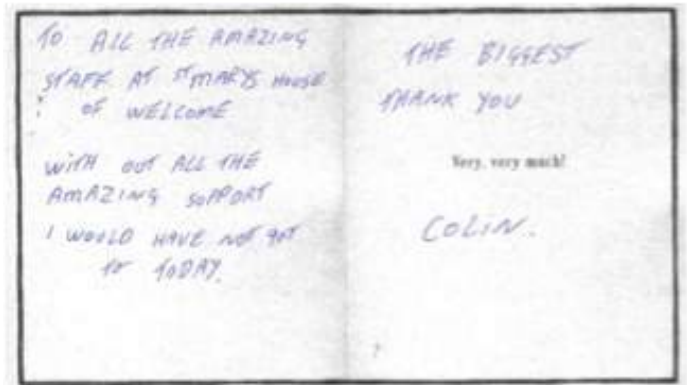
Other wins

We have tremendous housing outcomes for our service users. Recently, a woman in her 50's, who has been coming intermittently to SMHOW for over 10 years, was placed into permanent housing. It is wonderful to see her now relaxed, sleeping and feeling like life has turned a huge corner. She still drops in to connect and gain supports from us.

A New Zealand citizen (Australian resident), who had been living under a bridge for three years, has now been placed into interim rooming house accommodation. The team are now working to achieve long-term and sustained housing for him. The man has now been successful in completing his Services Australia identification card and can claim income support.

Indigenous Garden Program

Following the receipt of grant funding from the local City of Yarra, we have started a special Connecting the Community program aimed at both existing and prospective indigenous service users. The program has engaged 12 indigenous service users to connect and work to build stronger relationships with SMHOW, to build trust, increase our cultural inclusiveness practices and supports relating to court and justice related matters. SMHOW's Connecting the Community Program will promote the following areas of community building:



- A community promotes culturally inclusive community activities - early in the program, participants will complete a survey on desired/priority health outcomes they would like to achieve and understanding of why they attend SMHOW. Health appointments with local engagement services will be arranged e.g. dental health check-ups checks, nursing supports and podiatry work.
- Going out into the community - Outings designed to provide opportunities to engage in social inclusion e.g. coffee making and skills development, local cultural awareness walks, trips to Melbourne Zoo and Melbourne Museum.
- A community creates - Local indigenous art sessions as guided by the service users to facilitate motor sensory skills and pride of output.
- A community together united by pride and culture - Identifying supports in the community co-designed with them.
- A community relaxes together - Sessions in the courtyard with restful mind, music, movies.
- A community supports each other - Many clients want to support the work of SMHOW, and their contribution increases the sense of belonging e.g. by planting our indigenous herb garden and cooking.

SMHOW CONTINUED ...

Generosity & practical support for our Mission

Thanks to the extraordinary fundraising efforts of nine of our supporters, St Mary's House of Welcome has been able to purchase an industrial washing machine and dryer combo that will make a significant difference in the lives of our service users.

Driven by generous hearts and a positive purpose, the supporters embarked on the adventure of a lifetime, bike riding 1,000 kilometres, from the top to the bottom of Portugal. Doing so, they raised over \$12,500 in sponsorship to pay for the appliances, which will not only allow our rough sleeping community to launder their clothing and bedding but will result in cost-savings to SMHOW through not having to have our towels, tea-towels and aprons laundered offsite by a commercial laundrette.

This incredible journey serves as proof that a committed group of individuals can make a meaningful difference in their community. We are immensely grateful for their dedication and the positive change they have brought to our service users.



www.smhow.org.au

We have recently been generously gifted a refurbished \$25,000 coffee machine from our local McDonald's restaurant. This incredible donation will allow us to run a Barista Training Program to some of our more employment-ready service users and NDIS participants in the coming months. Through this initiative, we will be able to empower our community members to gain essential skills, boosting their confidence and employability. It's a pathway to a brighter, more independent future. We're excited about the positive impact this program will have on the lives of many.



Gingerbread House of Welcome – A Sweet Treat so Others Can Eat!

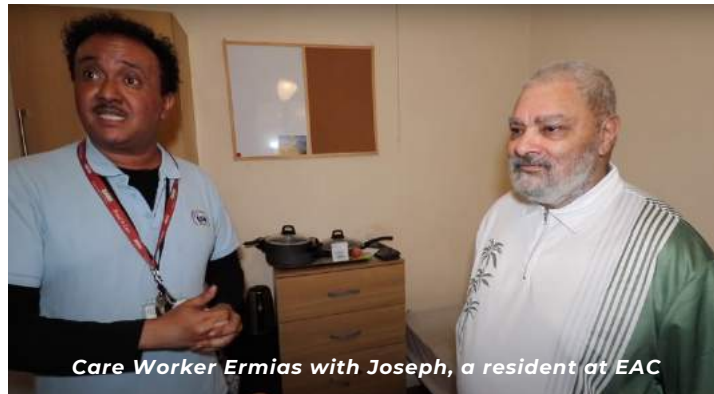
SMHOW is once again excited to be partnering with Melbourne cookie maker, Sweet Caroline, for our second year, to bring delicious gingerbread houses and kits to our supporter community this Christmas season. It is an important fundraising – and profile raising - effort with all profits going directly towards our Welcome Relief Meals Program. It is a fun and festive way for supporters of SMHOW to give back to those in need.

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Vincientian Care Plus

We make your HOME CARE difference



Care Worker Ermias with Joseph, a resident at EAC

VINCENTIAN CARE PLUS

Working with local authorities to seek and resolve unmet needs

In 2018, Vincientian Care Plus (VCP) partnered with a Look Ahead supported accommodation service, Edward Alsop Court (EAC) hostel, to provide a few hours of on-site social care to gentlemen with life experiences of homelessness. VCP's management team quickly recognised many of the gentlemen would benefit from a bespoke, niche service because of their variety of unique, intensive, and often challenging support and health needs, which have had a significant impact on their wellbeing, independence, and integration into the community.

VCP worked hard to upskill the existing care workers at EAC by equipping and empowering the staff with specialist training, including dual diagnosis, complex and challenging behaviour, brain injuries, neurological conditions, substance abuse and respectful intimate and personal care.

VCP eventually secured a block hour contract with the local authority to deliver safe and effective outcome-based care, providing a clear purpose for every visit and a focus on achieving greater independence. Care staff at VCP are dedicated to improving the quality of life of each gentleman they work with at EAC through encouraging independence, empowerment, safety, social connections, and providing a continuity of quality care. VCP is currently supporting 12 residents at the hostel, two of which have already gone on to better living spaces since working with VCP's care staff.

In September, VCP worked with Daughters of Charity Services to create a video on the work taking place at hostel. The video was shown during Vincientian Values Week and demonstrated the change the care workers have made to residents' lives. One resident, Joseph, who had been sleeping rough for 10 years prior to coming to EAC, shared how working with VCP has given him the encouragement and skills to look after himself well. He has since learnt to cook, clean, do his own laundry, has become more active and is even developing healthy friendships.



the marillac
neurological
care centre



THE MARILLAC NEUROLOGICAL CARE CENTRE

It was a busy but exciting summer at the Marillac Neurological Care Centre. Eight students completed work experience placements over July and August, where they spent one week at the centre assisting staff and the residents. Each student brought their own dynamic to the team, and the residents responded well to their vibrancy and enthusiasm. The Marillac forms excellent relationships with its work experience students and many return to volunteer with the charity in the future.

Everyone had the opportunity to enjoy 4th of July celebrations at the centre with a fabulous entertainer and an American themed buffet of burgers, hotdogs, fries, spicy beans and tacos. The Marillac's chef Marta also made a beautiful American flag cake using blueberries and raspberries as decoration.

The events team are always looking for new ideas and themes for their art sessions. In a recent session staff and residents painted the flag of their homeland, which can be seen in a colourful display at the centre. Residents and their families often stop in admiration of the display. In another arts session, residents took part in stone painting and distributed them around the sensory garden for everyone to enjoy.

During Vincentian Values Week 2023, which took place in September, the Marillac's CEO Paul Dixon, Neurological Speech & Language Therapist Tess Essop and Activities Co-ordinator Cathy Gotts held a presentation on the topic of "Retaining Choice in Care for People with Brain Injuries and Complex Needs." They shared how the Marillac's holistic approach to care contributes to residents' sense of choice, well-being and fulfilment by working collaboratively with individuals, families and professionals.

THE MARILLAC CONTINUED...



Pastoral Care at The Marillac

By Sister Rosalie Crowley

Good afternoon and I hope you all had a well-deserved summer break. It has been a busy time with new Sisters coming to my community in Donworth, which has taken a lot of my time. However, things have settled down and I am back giving my commitment to my pastoral care role which I love.

At the end of my last pastoral report I spoke about the end of life for one of our residents and how beautifully she was cared for by the team during her end-of-life journey. Since then, it is with great sadness that we have had two more deaths. One of the gentlemen had been at the Marillac for fourteen years and had many setbacks during his time. It was such an inspiration to speak with his family, who visited him most days. He died peacefully in the Hospital surrounded by his family. The other resident was on a Continuing Healthcare (CHC) Pathway and had settled in beautifully and made some progress. However, sadly they passed away

unexpectedly. May they both rest in peace and we send our condolences to their families and all involved in their care.

My heart goes out to our staff as we have gone for several years, even during COVID, when we had far fewer deaths in the Marillac, which was such an achievement. However, more recently losing long-term residents due to their conditions has taken its toll on everyone involved in their care. We are presently preparing a memorial service to honour their lives and to give family and staff an opportunity to celebrate and say goodbye.

The activities team, as well as their daily responsibilities, arrange monthly events and entertainment to lift our spirits. We had a wonderful BBQ planned for residents, family and staff, but due to bad weather it had to be held indoors. This was a little disappointing as a lot of work had gone into its preparation outdoors. As ever, Marta, our Catering Manager, and her team put on a wonderful banquet that was enjoyed by all.