

SHEKINAH



HOMELESS SERVICES Inc

SHEKINAH VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER

August Edition 2006

Shekinah Homeless Services Inc.
PO Box 146, East Melbourne 3002
383 Albert Street, East Melbourne 3002
Tel: 9287 5568 / 0422 266 122 Fax: 9287 5567
Email: shekinah@pacific.net.au

Volume 5 Issue 2

August 2006

Shekinah Homeless Services Inc:

- Bethlehem Community
Briar Terrace
Corpus Christi Community
The Cottage
The Good Samaritan Inn
Mercy Care
Prague House
Regina Coeli Community
St Mary's House of Welcome
The Way Community
Inside this issue:

Table with 2 columns: Item, Page No.
The Shekinah Ball report 2
Thanks to all who donated to the Ball 3
Volunteer Articles:
- Good Sam Inn 4
- Mercy Care 4
Volunteer Satisfaction Survey 5
Agency News 5
Accreditation News 5
Amalgamation News 5
HACC Training opportunities 6

A word from the Co-ordinator of Volunteers

Dear Shekinah Volunteer

I do hope that you are well and enjoying your volunteering work at one of the Shekinah agencies. A VERY BIG THANK YOU TO ALL OUR VOLUNTEERS FOR THEIR WONDERFUL CONTRIBUTIONS!!

Such a lot has happened since the last newsletter, especially regarding the Accreditation Project and the Shekinah Ball.

Shekinah Ball 2006

The Ball was a great success. Many thanks indeed to all who helped in whatever capacity. A detailed report is on Pages 2 & 3. "The Ball was such a wonderful evening and the companies that donated the food and everything else should be recommended" Dot Hardy, volunteer at The Way Community

Accreditation – Good News!

We have some good news about the accreditation project – please see P.5.

Volunteer Satisfaction Survey

One thing which accreditation insists on is that I conduct a Volunteer Satisfaction Survey every 2 years. As it is 2 years since the last one, I hope you won't mind completing the survey which is attached to this newsletter. Please see P. 5 for details.

Training

Many people have attended the Shekinah training sessions, which is wonderful as it is all extra time which you are donating on top of your usual volunteer hours. When I speak to Volunteer Co-ordinators of other organizations, they are always surprised and impressed by the enthusiasm and commitment of our volunteers towards training. I include on P.6 a summary of the available HACC training which addresses the topics prioritised by yourselves in the Training Needs Analysis.

New Volunteers

Since the last newsletter, we have had several new volunteers who have started volunteering – our thanks to all of you. I do hope you are enjoying your volunteering experience and finding it rewarding and interesting.

With thanks and kind regards to you all

Gill

## THE SHEKINAH BALL

The Shekinah Community Ball was held on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> April this year. The Shekinah Ball is held every 18 months and this is the third that we have had.

The general consensus from the feedback about the Ball this year was that it was very successful and everyone enjoyed it, especially the dancing. The decorations, especially the table decorations, looked wonderful. It was great that so many guests had made the effort to wear Easter hats (there was an Easter hat competition) especially clients, who were encouraged and helped to do so by the agencies. Everyone was very impressed by the number and quality of the prizes and by the fact that there was so much help and support from businesses and organizations.



The Ball is very special because it provides an opportunity for the whole Shekinah "family" to come together and celebrate our extended community. It is an opportunity for our clients to attend a major event, get dressed up, dance and socialize with clients, staff, volunteers and friends of the other agencies. For many participants, this is their first chance to attend a dance, or any kind of formal event, and apply the practical skills and knowledge gained from other services (such as counselling or pastoral care) to a community based situation. It is an event which our clients look forward to for many weeks and which is discussed for many weeks afterwards.

The Ball grows in size each year, and this year over 400 people attended.

### Three Snapshots

To give an idea of the atmosphere of the Ball, I would like to include 3 "snapshots":

"One of the men who came wasn't from any of the Shekinah agencies. He was disabled and rode on a scooter-like vehicle which was parked outside the main hall. He won one of the hampers and was absolutely delighted. I carried it to his vehicle for him and wedged it in. When I went past, half an hour later, he was still sitting there, very slowly & carefully going through every item in the hamper. He told me he had never won anything before in his life."

"When we did the spot prizes, there was a massive rush to the front. One of the winners was a young business executive from the sponsors table. His fancy was taken by a watch & keyring set and he stood there holding it. Then he turned to the older man next to him who was looking through the prizes and didn't seem to find anything he wanted. The young man handed the watch set to him, saying "This is your prize". The older man took it and, over the next hour, went to almost every table in the hall showing it to people. The last I saw of him, much later on, he was showing it to the people sitting on the ticket table by the front door....."

"Before the desserts were served, we had to get all the table decorations off the tables as we had to give the flowers back. They were all stacked on the steps leading to the kitchen with a helium balloon stuck in each one. I grabbed a few helium balloons and went round the hall giving them to any children who were left. When I came back, a little old man was walking away from the steps with a bunch of helium balloons in his hand and a beautiful smile on his face."

I guess this is why we have the Ball.



**SO MANY PEOPLE AND COMPANIES TO THANK**

We had so much help and support from so many people that I would like to say initially **A VERY BIG THANKYOU** to everyone who helped. The Ball Committee really put their hearts and souls into organising it and did a wonderful job. They are: Lara Denes (St Mary's House of Welcome, Anne Dixon (Good Samaritan Inn and Rosie's), Elizabeth McKenzie (Prague House), Judy McRae (Bethlehem and The Cottage), Claire O'Neill (Corpus Christi), Joan Osmotherly (Corpus Christi), Sharon Tooley (Regina Coeli) and, by no means least, Dale Weightman (from Richmond Football Club) who decided himself to join the committee and provided gifts, prizes, table decorations and moral support.

I would like to formally thank all the following businesses, companies & individuals for their kindness and generosity in supporting this event. You have helped to provide an evening which has brought enjoyment and enrichment to those less fortunate, and which has acted to promote respect and social inclusion to the most marginalized members of our society.

**Many of these businesses and companies are based in areas local to the Shekinah agencies. They supported us - please support them if you can!**

<p>Accessorize                  Alliance Insurance Broking Services, Port Melbourne                  Anne Gosley, SMHOW                  Armina Books                  Australian Institute of Management (AIM), St Kilda                  Baker's Delight, Brunswick                  Biggest Lollie Shop, Tullamarine                  Bi-Lo Supermarket, Greenvale                  Breaktime Deli, St Kilda                  Broadmeadows Health Services DPU &amp; Jennifer Tan                  Cadbury Schweppes                  Café Vincent's, Fitzroy                  Carlton Football Club                  Cheesecake Shop, Moonee Ponds                  Coffee 'N' Munch, Kew                  Connie Peidis from GE Pacific Premium                  Dale Weightman from Richmond Football Club                  Emily Peterson from GE Pacific Premium                  Faida Mandozzi from GE Pacific Premium                  Garry Kenny who donated helium balloons                  GE Commercial Finance                  GE Pacific Premium Funding Victoria                  Graeme Skinner who provided Harley Davidson rides                  Greenvale Florist                  Greenvale Fruit &amp; Vegetable Shop                  Greenvale Kebab Shop</p>	<p>Greenvale Newsagency                  Grundy Television (Channel 9)                  Hamper Solutions, Tullamarine                  Handcrafted Flowers, Caulfield South                  Heritage Chocolates, Rowville                  Highpoint Shopping Centre                  Jessica Simon from the City of Yarra                  John Laino Chemist, Greenvale                  Lord's Sandwich Deli, Melbourne                  Marie Conlon, Corpus Christi                  Mighty Muir's - The Good Guys, Airport West                  MPM Marketing                  Mr Phoneman, Melbourne                  NQR Grocery Clearance Stores                  Peter Henricks                  Pilot Light                  Precious Image, Doncaster                  Princes Laundry Services, Preston                  Richmond Football Club                  Rooster Rock, Greenvale                  Rydges, North Melbourne                  Safeways Supermarkets, Carlton, Fitzroy and Reservoir branches                  Santa Maria College - thank you to the teachers and students                  Shikan Hair &amp; Beauty, Doncaster East                  The Body Shop                  The City of Yarra                  Twentyonenine cafébar, South Melbourne                  Village Cinemas, Airport West                  Weightman's Packaging, Mildura</p>
---	---

## VOLUNTEER ARTICLES

### What does it mean to be a sleepover volunteer?

By Marella Rebgetz, a volunteer at the Good Samaritan Inn

I have been a sleepover volunteer at the Good Samaritan Inn once a fortnight for the past two years. The “job description” of a sleepover volunteer is quite straightforward. One arrives before the evening meal, shares the meal with the guests, helps with the cleaning up afterwards, and then spends time with the guests, usually in the lounge room, until retiring for the evening. The sleepover volunteer is a back-up for the worker on duty – another person to help out if it becomes busy, and someone different for the guests to relate to.

My experiences at the Inn have been very varied. Some guests are tired and want to retire early, whereas others like to stay and talk or watch TV. I am always surprised though, how calm most guests are after all they have been through, and how grateful they are for the hospitality we provide. Although it is always unfortunate that children get entangled in these situations too, my favourite nights are when there are children staying. Having no children myself, I love the time spent reading stories, colouring-in or playing games.

The women who come to the Inn represent a cross-section of humanity. I often recall the Bishop in Les Miserables: I believe that the way we treat these women at this vulnerable point in their lives has the potential to be the catalyst for the choices they make next, and hence the women they will become. It is truly hallowed ground that we stand upon, though in the noise, humanity and sometimes almost chaos of the evenings it is not always readily obvious.

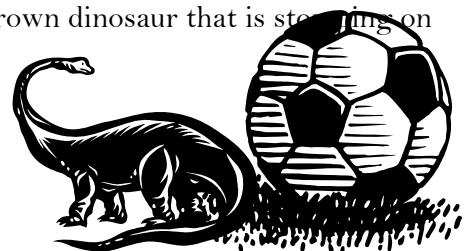
In the time I have been coming to the Inn there have only been three nights when there were no guests. The last time was earlier this year, and as I went to bed I thought: “Wouldn’t it be nice if this meant that nobody needed our services tonight.” The morning news however, brought a report of a woman killed overnight in a domestic dispute. Unfortunately I think there will always be a need for places such as the Inn.

### The Boy

By Maria Di Cocco, volunteer at Mercy Care

“Play Ball?” he says. He leads me outside and we play yet again. We kick the soccer ball, roll it down the slide, ‘post’ it through the large holes in the jungle gym and throw it over the clothes line. Later we draw in the kid’s journal. He is four and English is not his first language. He draws a big daddy and a mummy and lots of spiders with long, long legs. He tells me daddy hit mummy and his big brother gets angry at him and bangs the door.

Later he plays beside me while his Mother is talking on the phone to a refuge worker. She speaks little English, begins to cry and passes the phone to her 15 year old son to speak with the worker. The son does not want to go to a refuge, he wants to stay at his friends house. The mother is torn; she wants him with her, safe. She wipes runny eyes and nose with the back of a hand. The four year old gets a tissue and goes to where she lays on the bed. (She has been hurt and her head aches) He leans over and wipes her eyes, one at a time, gently and clumsily all at the same time. He kisses her cheek, deposits the scrunched up tissue on the bedside table and goes back to the big brown dinosaur that is standing on the floor.





**VOLUNTEER SATISFACTION SURVEY**

As it is almost 2 years since the last Volunteer Survey, I am conducting another one now. I sent out the last one shortly after starting in this role as I wanted to gain an overview of the Shekinah volunteers, how long you had been volunteering and why you started and continued volunteering. The results were very impressive, in that most Shekinah volunteers offer their help for altruistic reasons rather than to help them gain employment or qualifications. It is important, however, both for us and for yourselves, that you also find your volunteering work rewarding and satisfying.

The latest survey will be available through your agency. Could you please pick up a copy there and hand it back to your Contact Person when you have completed it? I have also attached a copy if I have emailed this newsletter to you, but you may wish to remain anonymous and not return an email version. If you are not worried about being anonymous, please by all means email the survey back, if that is easier for you. We are trying to make the process as easy and painless as possible.

Please remember - this is an opportunity to give us some constructive feedback and ideas about how we can improve your volunteering experience. We can't promise to be able to make changes but we'll certainly listen to your comments. I would be very grateful if you could get them back to your agency by the end of August. **THANK YOU VERY MUCH!!**

**AGENCY NEWS**

Some of the agencies have been celebrating Christmas in July. I was lucky enough to attend 2 of those celebrations.

**The Way Community** went out to Sofia's Restaurant in Camberwell. There were about 40 people present, clients, volunteers and staff and we had a great time. It can be hard for volunteers to meet volunteers who work on different days, so this was a good opportunity to meet for the first time, or catch up with people not seen for a while. The food was great too!



I also went to the Christmas lunch at **Bethlehem Community**, which was a lovely, welcoming affair held in the Bethlehem dining room. I had a wonderful lunch with the women, staff and a couple of volunteers who had time to come along. Thanks for inviting me!

**ACCREDITATION**

As you are all no doubt aware, several of the Shekinah agencies have been going through an Accreditation process over the last year or so. It has generated a huge amount of work for managers and other staff members but we decided to undertake it because we know that it will improve the quality of the services provided to our clients, which is the most important consideration. All the participating agencies have now gone through the initial assessment and the news is really good. Out of 17 Core Standards:

- The Way Community & St Mary's House of Welcome have attained 14
- Shekinah Homeless Services Inc has attained 16
- and The Shekinah Women's Services (who were assessed together) met all 17 standards!!



There has been great jubilation and celebration at these results, as I'm sure you can imagine. We now have 3 months to make up the relevant standards and then all these agencies will be accredited. Many thanks to all the volunteers who have participated in this process!

**AMALGAMATION**

I'm sure you know that the 4 Women's Services are amalgamating. This process is expected to be complete by March 2007.



## HACC TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES FOR STAFF & VOLUNTEERS 2006

In response to the Training Needs Analysis conducted as part of the Shekinah Organisational Development Project, we are highlighting the following short courses provided HACC which cover some of the key training topics selected by staff and volunteers as being priorities at the moment.

### WORKING WITH COMPLEX NEEDS/MANAGING CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

Name of course	Dates	Venue
Grief and Loss	Wed 23 <sup>rd</sup> Aug 9.30am – 12.30pm	Riverview Convention Centre, Maribyrnong Blvd off Farnsworth Ave, Footscray (W)
Assisting clients to make active choices about their activities (suitable for direct support & case workers)	Thurs 14 <sup>th</sup> September 9.30am – 12.30pm	DASSI Training Rooms, 88 Herbert St, Northcote (N)
Dealing with Grief & Loss	Wed 18 <sup>th</sup> Oct 1pm – 4pm	DASSI Training Rooms, 88 Herbert St, Northcote (N)
Intro to Mental Health for non Mental Health Workers	Wed 8 <sup>th</sup> & 22 <sup>nd</sup> Nov 9.30am – 4.30pm	Riverview Convention Centre, Footscray as above (W)
Basic medical terminology for non-medical employees	Fridays 10 <sup>th</sup> & 17 <sup>th</sup> Nov 1pm – 4pm	Kangan Batman Moreland campus, Cnr The Grove & Decarle St, Coburg (N)

### CONFLICT RESOLUTION/MEDIATION AND NEGOTIATION

Name of course	Dates	Venue
Understanding Advocacy	Thurs 31 <sup>st</sup> Aug 9.30am – 12.30pm	DASSI Training Rooms, 88 Herbert St, Northcote (N)
Managing & Resolving Conflict in the Workplace	Tues 14 <sup>th</sup> Nov 9.30am – 4.30pm	Riverview Convention Centre, Footscray as above (W)

### CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Name of course	Dates	Venue
Working with the Spanish, Maltese & Macedonian Communities	Thurs 15 <sup>th</sup> Aug 9.15am – 12.30pm	Maribyrnong Town Hall, Cnr Napier & Hyde St, Footscray (W)
Working with interpreters	Thurs 17 <sup>th</sup> Aug 9.30am – 12.30pm	Riverview Convention Centre, Footscray as above (W)

### POLICY AWARENESS/Occupational Health & Safety

Name of course	Dates	Venue
Body at Work: the importance of caring for your bodies at work & strategies to do so	Thurs 14 <sup>th</sup> September 1pm – 4pm	Moreland Community Health Service, 93 Bell St, Coburg (N)
Infection Control	Thurs 16 <sup>th</sup> Nov 1pm – 4pm	Hume Global Learning Centre, 1093 Pascoe Vale Rd, Broadmeadows (N)

### PRACTICAL & PALLIATIVE NURSING SKILLS

Name of course	Dates	Venue
Diabetes	Tues 21 <sup>st</sup> Nov 9.30am – 4.00pm	Riverview Convention Centre, Footscray as above (W)

### OTHER COURSES

Name of course	Dates	Venue
Food Handling & Safety	Fri 8 <sup>th</sup> September 9.15am – 1.30pm	The Concert Hall, Moreland City Council, 90 Bell St, Coburg (N)
Apply Safe Food Practices (part of Cert III Food Safety course)	Thurs 9 <sup>th</sup> Nov 9.30am – 4.30pm	Victoria University – details given on enrolment (W)

It does not matter if you work in the northern (N) or western (W) region – you can apply for either.

**TO ENROL: Paid staff members – please see your manager & then enrol through Gill**

**Volunteers - please contact GILL SEALBY, Co-ordinator of Volunteers, Shekinah Homeless Services Tel: 9287 5568 / 0422 266 122 Email: [shekinah@pacific.net.au](mailto:shekinah@pacific.net.au)**